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IT BEGAN
IN BABEL

Also by Herbert Wendt

I LOOKED FOR ADAM
OUT OF NOAH'S ARK

HERBERT WENDT

IT BEGAN IN BABEL

*The story of the birth and development
of races and peoples*

Translated from the German by
JAMES KIRKUP



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H. W.

Part One

BARBARIANS AND MONSTERS

CHAPTER I THE BIRTH OF THE WEST

CHAPTER II THE AFRICANS DISCOVER AFRICA

CHAPTER III STORM OVER ASIA

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF THE WEST

*A lecture in Athens: Europa and the bull: King Midas
with the ass's ears: The earth is a house of joy: The dream
of an earthly paradise*

A lecture in Athens

Here I am a Barbarian.

Ovid

THE EARTH WAS A flat disk bathed by the ocean, canopied by the heavens and supported by the infernal regions. And the centre was Babylon. Or Memphis. Or Athens. It all depended on whether the observer was a Babylonian or an Egyptian or a Greek. And the inhabitants of the earth were divided into men, barbarians and monsters. The men were the Greeks (or the Egyptians or the Babylonians), the barbarians were the other nations, and finally the monsters, half animal, half human, were the wild exotics. Everything was neatly arranged round the centre of the earth's flat disk, everything had its appointed place.

Yet about 450 BC a man from the city of Halicarnassos in Asia Minor, on his father's side a barbarian, on his mother's side a Hellene, began to explode this beautiful ethnological fantasy. It was through his eyes that the peoples of antiquity learnt for the first time about the folk of other lands, he was the father of that science whose life-story is told in this book.

One summer day in the year 445 BC, this man, widely-travelled and the author of numerous remarkable historical works, was being eagerly awaited in the Agora, which was both the market-place and the ceremonial square of Athens; he was to give a reading from his works. The Athenians had taken their places a good half-hour before he was due to begin, they were mostly well-to-do tradesmen, officers decorated for gallantry in the Persian Wars, and all kinds of literary folk. Some of them were laughing, prepared for a fiasco. Others, who had already read the works of the man from Hali-

carnassos, were quoting to their neighbours queer passages from these books, incredible and even ridiculous statements and opinions.

According to the barbarian, they whispered, the earth was not a flat disk, but a ball—yes, a great round ball floating about somewhere in the cosmos. And—by Hades!—on this curious sort of globe, apparently, lived many other civilized races besides the Hellenes, leading good, happy, quite un-barbaric lives and ruled by just laws. The man from Halicarnassos had seen such people with his own eyes, in Italy and Egypt, in Mesopotamia and round the shores of the Black Sea. This assertion was deliberately provocative, every Hellenic captain, every wool-merchant and trader in vases who had ever been as far as the lands of the barbarians said exactly the opposite, reported savage customs and frightful excesses among the foreigners, told of half-human, half-animal creatures with painted skins, of shaggy, one-eyed, satyr-like monsters.

Were their arch-enemies, the Persians, not barbarians? Had they not invaded Ionia and Thessaly and even Attica? And the Etruscans and the Carthaginians—were not they just common pirates who sacked and plundered wherever Hellenic colonists settled? Finally, the Egyptians—well, yes, Athens was in league with them in order to wipe out the Persians. But had they really any intelligence and human dignity, those brown, animal-worshipping slave-owners? Could one possibly compare Egypt with Hellas? Was it not foolish temerity to draw parallels between the ways of Greece and the uncouth habits of savage foreigners?

Silence fell on the Agora. The long-awaited author stepped on to the speaker's rostrum. He was an active-looking, middle-aged man, somewhat too elegantly dressed, with an artistic copy of an Olympic olive-branch on his robes. His face was deeply tanned by the sun; he smiled, took up his manuscript, then laid it down again and began to speak. He talked about his travels, about a journey through Egypt and the Nile valley right to the frontiers of Nubia, about the steppe-dwellers, the Scythians who lived in the lands beyond the Greek colonies on the Black Sea, about Carthage, about the Indus and the great Tower of Babel. He described his experiences in a very clear, witty and vivid way, in excellent Ionic, without the slightest trace of dialect. The public listened, holding its breath, and applauded the speaker, for he was a good lecturer.

The name of this man was Herodotus. He had won the Olympic

prize not for wrestling or boxing or in the pentathlon, but in the field of literature. But it was not only on account of this honour that his friend and patron, the statesman Pericles, had decided to invite him to give this public lecture in Athens; there was another reason behind his appearance there. The Athenians were to learn about the earth from his lips. For the earth, as the admirers of the man from Halicarnassos had become convinced, really looked quite different from the image made familiar by beautiful but naïve myths and chronicles.

Looking at his audience with a friendly, slightly ironical smile, Herodotus said, 'I have always felt it was my duty while on my travels to note down the myths and legends of other peoples, and to make them known in my native land.' The myths of the barbarians? A few people, their hands still stinging from the applause they had given, were put out by this. After all, here in Athens there were myths in plenty, respectable myths about gods and heroes, sailors and fighters and adventurers. Was it necessary to bring in all those foreign fairytales?

But Herodotus soon dispelled their doubts. 'For example, in Egypt,' he went on, 'they say that Libya is surrounded by water and can move about like a ship.' Everybody laughed and enjoyed this funny story. Everyone present who knew even a little geography knew of course that Libya (which to-day we call Africa) was somewhere in its southern part connected with Asia, and that the Indian Ocean was really an inland sea.

'The Egyptians, it is said, have put their theory to practical proof,' went on Herodotus, 'by sailing right round Libya. When they came back, they claimed that in the course of their voyage they had seen the midday sun standing in the north.' His eyes twinkled as he added, 'You may believe it or not. I myself am only repeating what I was told.' The Athenians were delighted. They thought it was a great joke, this crazy Egyptian myth of a mid-day sun in the north, and their sympathy for the clever traveller increased.

Herodotus next broached a theme with which the Athenians were already familiar. He told of what he had come to know, in sailors' taverns, trading posts, bazaars and colonial bases about the life of savages, monsters and pygmies; he brought together seamen's yarns and travellers' tales, explorers' records and local gossip and wove them all into a colourful, exciting picture of the world. It was a picture that many a well-meaning but unimaginative

tive professor in later periods often failed to understand, and that twenty-three centuries later was to be labelled 'a subjective interpretation of history, distorted by gross errors'. To-day the academic world judges very differently the explorer Herodotus, the 'roving reporter' of his times, who was not just a collector of facts, but also a seeker after the truth, a moral scientist and—a poet.

The Athenians heard about nimble pygmies in primitive forests, about dwarf cave-dwellers in Libya, who ('so it is said') twitter like bats. In their mind's eye they saw shaggy Issidonians with flying manes of hair storming over the Black Sea steppes, glimpsed, deep in the depths of Asia, one-eyed Arimaspeans surrounded by griffins beside a river of pure gold. They could imagine the Hyperboreans, mythical creatures in the lands of the north wind, and the Cimmerians, that dwelt somewhere in the darkness behind the Rhipaean mountains, where the sun never rose. 'You must excuse me if what I tell you is mere hearsay,' said Herodotus. They gladly excused him, because he was a good story-teller.

Herodotus took up his manuscript again. Now came the weightier part of his lecture—a factual and exact description of a nation which the Hellenes regarded as the apotheosis of barbarism, the Persians.

It has always been an unpleasant and unthankful task for historians and sociologists to reveal that their own nation's enemy is human, with human qualities. In the days of the Spanish conquest of America the Indians, for the Spaniards, were the devil incarnate; for Englishmen at the time of colonial expansion and imperialism rebel Zulus were cannibalistic monsters; for the Chinese at the time of the Boxer Rising the Europeans were white demons. Herodotus had doubtless to contend against the same prejudices as every objective chronicler of later ages who tried to depict peoples, races and nations without partiality. He attempted this task, not as a joke, but because of the well-based ethical views which characterize his whole work.

Thanks to his numerous connections, he had had the opportunity to travel in Persia and in all the lands she had conquered. He even had eye-witness accounts from the country of the Indus and from Bactria. He knew all about Persian culture, Persian customs and the Persian religion. The Athenians might now regard the subjects of the great Artaxerxes as their political and military equals—they were no longer barbarians. They could even teach

the Greeks a thing or two. Herodotus smiled, smoothed the folds in his drapery, and read out what he had written about the Persians.

It was absolutely quiet now in the Agora. All faces were raised towards him. The Persians—a theme which struck right to their hearts! They remembered Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea, remembered victories, the improbable and legendary victories of the small bands of Grecian warriors over the world-conquering masses streaming out of Asia. Everyone in the audience was at that moment more Hellenic than ever, more nationalist, more anti-barbarian than before.

They were startled, listening in wonder to the beginnings of objectivity in the writing of history. Herodotus expressed no scorn for the Persians, he simply stated facts. He gave his facts about the various wars, impartially and without prejudice, then proceeded to talk about the Persians' customs—their festivals, the way they made sacrifices, their religion.

'We see our gods,' he said, 'as they were created by Hesiod and Homer, in human form. But the gods of the Persians are invisible and require no statues, temples and altars.' Was this blasphemy? No, for Herodotus was known to be a devout man, and at once he began to praise the gods of the Greeks and the sacredness of fire, oracle, libation and corn-offering. 'But I can tell you many more remarkable things about the Persians,' he went on, scanning the faces of his listeners. 'For example, they do not relieve themselves in the presence of others, they do not spit into drinking-water, and re-consider, when they are sober, all decisions made while they were in their cups.' A few men in the Agora laughed, they had got the point. Others joined in. The Athenians had a taste for sarcastic humour, and besides—this man was a wonderful story-teller.

'I took great pleasure in observing many of their customs,' said Herodotus. 'For example, no Persian has ever killed one of his parents. No one in Persia is ever put to death if he has committed only one crime. These people always weigh good and evil very carefully, and only punish the guilty person if the weight of evil is the greater.'

The audience understood; they thought of one thing and another, of all kinds of happenings which, according to Herodotus, could never take place among the Persians, and some men uneasily cleared their throats. But there was something even better

to come. 'The telling of lies is the greatest disgrace for a Persian: borrowing and lending are also shameful activities. They say that anyone who is a money-lender must also be a liar.' About fifteen money-lenders and pawnbrokers in the audience heard these phrases, and they felt hundreds of eyes upon them, yet they did not leave the Agora. They were hoping that some other profession would come under fire next, and their hopes were not disappointed.

Herodotus directed his glance towards a number of listeners belonging to the upper classes who were leaning against pillars in rather bored attitudes. 'They import their vices and depraved tastes,' he read, bending his head over his manuscript, 'from foreign lands. It was from us, the Hellenes, that they learnt about pederasty and prostitution and the custom of keeping, besides one's legal wife, several mistresses. In fact, they adopt foreign manners with astonishing ease.' Here and there a few men growled imprecations. From one corner of the square angry catcalls were heard, but these were drowned in a roar of applause.

'The most remarkable thing about the Persians,' went on Herodotus, 'is this: they look upon themselves as the greatest race on earth, and consider all other peoples to be inferior to themselves. After their own folk, they hold in highest esteem those who live in neighbouring lands, and so on, till they reach the nations farthest removed from Persia, and these, because they live so far away, they regard as the least considerable inhabitants of the earth.' There was a little pause before he concluded his lecture, 'So that for the Persians a nation's quality is intimately connected with its distance from Persian soil. An astonishing philosophy—I cannot express any opinion about it, I am merely stating a fact.'

He bowed his thanks to the audience, took his manuscript and, still with that ironical smile hovering round his lips, strode through the good-humoured throng whose members were still savouring, like connoisseurs, the different points of the speech. And the statesman Pericles, his attention riveted to the very end, thought to himself that it had been a good idea to hold such a mirror of the virtues up to the Athenians. The poet Sophocles, with visions of foreign lands imprinted on his mind, was thinking what a wonderful setting one of those far-off countries would be for a dramatic work. A young officer called Thucydides, although not entirely satisfied by the rather vague strategical and military passages in the lecture, had been deeply interested, and determined to get in

touch with the man from Halicarnassos. Everyone felt excited, they were all reminding one another of the many new things they had heard. It had been a very good lecture.

For this first lecture in ethnology Herodotus received a fee of sixty thousand drachmae, an amount which ten of the writers of his day could have lived on for twenty years. He put the money carefully by—he would use it to finance further journeys.

Europa and the bull

Crete was not the cradle, but the school of civilization.

William Howells

OF COURSE, THE discovery of the peoples of the earth did not begin with Herodotus, no more than the discovery of the animals with Aristotle or the discovery of pre-history with Buffon. Pre-historic man on his wanderings had already encountered foreign peoples and races. The ways in which they reacted upon one another are shown by fossils, evidence deposited in their various encampments.

Smashed skulls and broken thigh-bones from the late Tertiary period in South Africa demonstrate clearly that the primitive man of about half a million years ago killed his brother Abel, a brother belonging to a different race. In the Mountains of the Dragon near Peking, two hundred thousand years later, a whole clan of primitive men fell sacrifice to a foreign invader. Mounds of skulls at battle-sites from the end of the Ice Age indicate regular wars between Neanderthal and Aurignacian races. The men of later periods acted in just the same way as primitive man did when he met with other tribes and races.

The vaguely-defined epoch between pre-historical and historical times during which the present-day racial groups were formed, must have been a series of violent encounters and battles, of conquests, assimilations and extinctions of whole races. The spiritual deposit of those times comes to us now in the form of the myths and sayings of all the tribes and nations of the earth.

Powerful opponents become giants, horsemen become centaurs, conquered tribes become sly gnomes hiding in forests and caverns, and the adherents of strange cults become grotesque-featured demons. But though the archaeologist's spade has brought much

to light, though the Old Testament, the Egyptian monuments and the Babylonian clay tablets contain a great deal of reliable ethnological data, though the fabulous creatures themselves, who flit through the myths of the world, can all give the present-day researcher much information, yet it is usual to set the beginnings of ethnology in that century in which the great traveller Herodotus and the equally great doctor and anthropologist Hippocrates left their mark.

Herodotus' travels 'broke through the fog and the dark', as an ethnologist once put it, and Hippocrates, the greatest authority on the human body in the Ancient World, broke through the barriers of race and nation. The inhabitants of every land, so he explained, are subject to the influences of climate, water and the nature of their land, and only in this way is one race differentiated from another both physically and spiritually. Herodotus was the first ethnographer, Hippocrates the first ethnologist of whom we know.

It was quite inevitable that it should have been the Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ who made the first general survey of all the then known peoples and races of the world. There were Hellenic colonists settled all along the coasts of the Mediterranean. Greek travellers wandered everywhere between Babylon and the Straits of Gibraltar. The Grecian tongue had become the *lingua franca* of the Ancient World, and Greek culture was a welcome guest even at the courts of oriental despots. And because the Greek colonists, weak as they were, had no imperialistic ambitions, they could look at the world and its inhabitants more objectively than could the adherents of the great conquering nations.

So the writings of Greek historians remain for us the main source of all our knowledge of the peoples of antiquity. The greater part of these writings is concerned, naturally, with the European races of the Mediterranean. The Hellenes were in constant contact with them, their culture was mingled with Grecian culture, their blood with Grecian blood. The ancient histories of Greek scholar-writers offer a wonderful mixture of fact and fable. But it is these very fables that have already given so many useful pointers to modern ethnologists and archaeologists. A seed of historical truth is always present in even the most improbable legend.

A large section of the Greek myths centres round an event of universal historical significance that took place during the second millennium before the birth of Christ in the region of the Aegean

Sea. Fair-skinned tribes from the north, Indo-European warriors and herdsmen, over-ran, in the course of a thousand-year-long migration, the ancient civilized nations of south-east Europe and Asia Minor, assimilated them and took over their culture. This event is one of the themes of the *Iliad*, and we find it also in the *Oresteia* and in the adventures of Theseus and Ariadne, in epics and myths, tales and legends of the gods, stories of warlike expeditions, of heroes, of man-eating monsters.

It is of the utmost interest for us that the island of Crete should play a leading part in the landscape where Greek mythology took root. From Crete come the Titans and Zeus, father of the gods. Many mythical figures are connected with Crete: Prometheus, Hyperion, the musician Orpheus, the demi-god Heracles. It was to Crete that Zeus, in the form of a white bull, abducted the Phoenician princess Europa and there fathered three sons upon her. It was these sons who founded the Cretan nation. It was in Crete that Daedalus constructed the Labyrinth and the first flying apparatus, it was from Crete that Icarus began his fatal flight to Samos, that was to be a flight into the sun. It was in the Cretan Labyrinth that the Minotaur dwelt, a man-eating monster, half animal, half human, an offspring of the unnatural coupling of the queen of Crete with a sacred bull. It was there, too, that the Cretan princess Ariadne helped the Attic hero Theseus to find his way in the Labyrinth and slay the Minotaur. Another Cretan princess, Phaedra, later became the wife of Theseus.

To-day we know that this world of myths was not originally Greek, and not Indo-European; it was a pre-Grecian cultural inheritance, created by a people who are still one of the great mysteries of ethnological and archaeological research. What race were the pre-Hellenic Cretans descended from? How were they able to develop their Minoan Titan-culture on their remote island? Why and how did they suddenly vanish from the history of the world, leaving apparently no trace?

Present-day researchers regard Crete as the place in which the greatest European culture first came into being. Already in the fourth millennium before Christ there were cities in Crete with houses of three storeys, and the foundations of the tremendous Palace of Minos at Knossos date from the fifth millennium B.C. Three thousand years later this palace had grown to colossal dimensions, a structure unrivalled anywhere in the Ancient World, with its grandiose façades, flights of steps and ceremonial halls,

with its luxurious apartments and treasure-houses, bathrooms and water-closets, all provided with installations of the highest artistic and technical refinement. It was in Crete that the bull-dancers held their sporting events that were also religious cults. There were to be found works of art of the greatest beauty and charm, the *Prince in the Field of Lilies*, the *Snake-goddess*, her breasts bared, dancing in an elegant robe. The name 'Europa', now the name of our continent, originally referred to Crete.

Modern science has not only unearthed the ruins of Crete, reconstructed buildings, restored paintings and tried to decipher its hieroglyphic script, it has also devoted itself to the interpretation of Cretan and ancient Greek myths. It is an uncommonly interesting task for the ethnologist to winnow historical facts from the tales and legends of ancient peoples and races. But it is also a dangerous undertaking. There is a temptation for the researcher to rely too much on his imagination, on the other hand he can give interpretations that are altogether too neatly rational.

Crete was once synonymous with Europe. What does the word 'Europe' mean? And what conclusions can the scholar draw from the myth of the Phoenician princess Europa and the sacred bull? Does it point to the fact that the Cretans may have come from Asia, from the lands inhabited by the later Phoenicians? The bull was worshipped in Asia also. In Asia there were cultures whose buildings and works of art recall those of Crete. Over a period of thousands of years there must have been contacts between Crete and Asia; as late as 1200 BC a race of people from the Cretan-Mycenaean region settled on the Syrian-Canaanite coast—these were the *Pelishtim* of the Jewish scriptures, the Philistines of the Bible.

But all this does not tell us very much. There were bull-cults also in Africa and India. And it was only after the overthrow of Crete that the Philistines colonized Palestine. The contact between Asia and the Aegean is made clear a second time in the Europa myth. The Phoenician prince Cadmos, the brother of Europa, having departed in search of his sister, is wrecked on the Greek mainland, remains there, teaches the primitive inhabitants reading and writing and establishes pre-Hellenic, Mycenaean culture in Greece.

Here we have a splendid symbolizing of historical reality; Cadmos and Europa were actually brother and sister. That means that Crete and pre-Hellenic Greece composed a single cultural entity. Mycenaean culture was also familiar with Cyclopean

masonry, luxurious refinements and works of art of the highest quality. The Cretan hieroglyphic script was also used in Mycenae. And before the Indo-European invasion Greece was also called Europe. Can the Cretans have colonized Greece in the Copper or Bronze Ages? Or did pre-Hellenic Greeks establish the Cretan empire? Or—and this is the most likely hypothesis—were both peoples, Cretan and Mycenaean, parts of a great race that once dwelt in the region of the eastern Mediterranean?

The name 'Europe' is obviously derived from the northern-semitic word *ereb*. For the inhabitants of Hither Asia *ereb* stood for all that was dark and mysterious, and therefore Europe was 'the dark part of the earth'. All that we can deduce from the myth of Europa and the bull is that a group of seafarers, presumably belonging to the same race and with a common speech and culture, dwelt during the Copper and Bronze Ages on the shores and islands of the Aegean and—perhaps—also in western Asia, and their cultural, commercial and political centre was Crete.

Up to the second century before Christ, Crete was a major power in the world. Cretan ships sailed over the whole of the Mediterranean from western Europe to Hither Asia, from North Africa to the Crimea. For the island was an ideal meeting-point for all the ancient trade-routes, it lay equidistant from all three continents. Cretans could bring tin from the west and sell it to the orient, copper from Cyprus for sale in Italy and Spain, and they shipped Negro slaves from Egypt to Knossos. Egyptian and Hither Asiatic cultures were as familiar to the Cretans as were the megalithic cultures of the Atlantic seaboard. Perhaps Cretan culture was imported from many different lands. But the Cretans gave it a new look, they created a style of their own, which in its brilliance, facility and liveliness was completely opposed to the stiff works of art, heavy with religious tradition, of Egypt and Hither Asia. The Cretans were the first purveyors of culture in the west. All Hellas is based on Crete, and on Hellas were based the cultures of Rome, the Middle Ages and contemporary European civilization.

Yet the Cretans were certainly not Europeans in the modern sense of the term. In the Palaeolithic Age and far into the Bronze Age the European lands of the Mediterranean were inhabited by brown-skinned, dark-haired races of unknown origin, but who—perhaps—were descended from the Aurignacians of the Ice Age. In Spain they were called Iberians, in Italy Ligurians, in the

Aegean region Pelasgians. They developed cultures, founded Cretan sea-supremacy, and prepared the ground in Greece for Hellenic ceramics and the cyclopean structures of Mycenae.

Then, about four thousand years ago, when wave after wave of the Indo-European invasion swept over them, these ancient Mediterranean peoples were overthrown and assimilated by the conquering races. A region stretching from Spain to southern Asia was Indo-Europeanized by this invasion. Celts settled in Spain and Italy, Illyrians in Italy and on the Balkan peninsula, Achaean, Aeolian, Dorian and Ionian Greeks settled in Greece and on the eastern shores of the Aegean. Indo-Europeans, who had migrated to Hither Asia and had assimilated the long-established inhabitants to become the Hittite race, extended their influence over a large part of Turkey and present-day Syria. Medes and Persians established kingdoms in Iran, Scythians swept through southern Russia and Middle Asia as far as the boundaries of China, and Hindus occupied the seats of ancient Indian culture.

In the course of these race-wanderings—or more exactly, in the year 1425 BC—Crete was also overwhelmed, and passed on her culture to the Achaeans and later to the Dorian Greeks. The overthrow of Crete is wrapped in mystery. Did the eruption of a volcano on the island of Santorene destroy the palace at Knossos and the whole of Cretan civilization? Did Achaean Greeks, the fore-runners of the later Dorian Greek conquerors, reduce Cretan might to ruins in a great crusade? Did pirates from somewhere or other lay Knossos waste? Were the 'seafarers' who soon afterwards descended upon Egypt, and the Philistines, who two centuries later settled in Palestine, originally Cretans—refugees from the sacked kingdom of Minos?

A vague indication is given in another ancient Greek legend. This is the story of King Minos, Theseus, Ariadne and the frightful monster named the Minotaur. In those days, we are told by the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, the Cretans were in possession of a great navy and had conquered most of the islands. Even pre-Hellenic Athens, according to the legend, had to pay tribute to the king of Crete. The Athenians had to send human sacrifices which every nine years were offered up to the Minotaur.

Everything is clear so far; King Minos symbolizes the power and the glory of Crete. Among the youths and maidens whom Athens had to send as sacrifices to the Minotaur was Theseus, the Attic prince. But the Cretan princess Ariadne fell in love with

him. She secretly gave him a ball of wool, by the help of which Theseus could find his way in the Labyrinth, where the Minotaur dwelt. So Theseus was able to kill the Minotaur, find his way out of the labyrinth by the help of 'Ariadne's clue', and save the Athenian sacrificial victims. Theseus then remained in Crete, but he married, not Ariadne, but her sister Phaedra.

There is a classic example of how mistakenly such a myth can be interpreted when it is considered in a purely rational way. The Roman historian Plutarch thought that the Minotaur was not a monster, but a human being—a Cretan general who at one time had abducted the maiden called Europa from Asia, then seduced the wife of Minos and tyrannized the people of Crete. King Minos, who was incapable of dominating the tyrannical general, was delighted when Theseus overcame him, and thereafter absolved the Athenians from paying sacrificial tribute and out of gratitude gave Theseus his daughter Phaedra's hand in marriage.

But the modern scholar interprets things quite differently. The Labyrinth is presumably (as Sir Arthur Evans thinks) identical with the king's great palace, and the place where the Minotaur dwelt was the ceremonial square where the sacred bull was worshipped. The Minotaur symbolizes the Cretan cult of the bull, human sacrifices appear to have been made to the sacred bull of Knossos. So that the deeds of Theseus are a symbolic legend portraying the victory of the Indo-European Hellenes over the power, the bull-cult and the religion of ancient Crete. And the fact that Theseus had connections with two Cretan princesses could mean that the Hellenes did not conquer Crete by force, but overcame her slowly, and gradually assimilated her people.

This is borne out by a really sensational recent archaeological discovery. When Evans was excavating the ruins of Knossos in 1900, he discovered more than two thousand clay tablets inscribed with Cretan characters. A part of these writings, reminiscent of Egyptian hieroglyphics, come from the early and middle periods of Minoan culture, that is, round about four or five thousand years ago. They are known to scholars as Linear A script, and no one has been able to decipher them. The other writings, in the so-called Linear B script, are late Minoan; they belong to the times of the first Indo-European migrations. But in this case it is not a question of letters taken from the alphabet of some Indo-European race, but of hieroglyphs which are obviously a development of Linear A, and it was assumed that the contents of the clay tablets were

written in the Cretan tongue, of which we know absolutely nothing.

Whole generations of researchers have devoted their lives to attempts to decipher the Cretan texts. As far as Linear A is concerned, they have met with no success. But in 1953 the London architect Michael Ventris astounded the scholarly world with the assertion that Linear B was not written in the Cretan language, but contained Greek texts written in Cretan script. Another Englishman, John Chadwick, supported this claim. One year later various clay tablets from Mycenaean palaces were examined, tablets containing all kinds of catalogues, accounts, statistics, and lists of names and figures. They were written down in hieroglyphics like the Cretan scripts—but the language was an Hellenic dialect.

We can, therefore, be certain of at least one thing—that Greek was already being spoken in the region of the Aegean when the old cultures were still in existence, when hieroglyphics were still being used, and when Knossos, Mycenae and other centres of Minoan and Pelasgian might were still standing. If this is the case, then the influence and absorption of ancient Mediterranean cultures during the Indo-European migrations were much slower and less violent than we have been led to believe.

The Achaean Hellenes did not destroy Knossos. They may have infiltrated slowly, first in the Mycenaean city states on the Greek mainland and then in Crete. Perhaps they came as mercenaries, as labourers, as welcome settlers who brought the horse, till then unknown in Crete, and whose battle chariots played their part in the bodyguard of the king of Crete. They rose in the world, occupied key positions, propagated their own language, became scribes, court officials, officers. At some time or other they succeeded in suppressing the Cretan cult of the bull, and one of their descendants mounted the throne, and from then on the Cretans had to learn the speech of the newcomers. As these had no script of their own, they were compelled to use the old hieroglyphs in order to set their meaning down in writing.

It may have been like that. And what about the destruction of the palace of Minos? Fresh migrants came from the north, Cretan strength had been broken by Hellenic infiltration, and the new order had not yet had time to establish itself properly. It may be that rebellion broke out over the whole island. For half a century all over Crete the palaces were in flames, and during this period, from 1475 to 1425 BC, chaos reigned. Then the Achaeans

succeeded in developing late-Minoan culture from the wreck of the ancient Cretan civilization, a culture which three centuries later reached out to include another Hellenic off-shoot—the Dorians.

Crete and Mycenae lived on in Hellas. The ancient, culture-loving Mediterranean races also lived on, in Greece and Crete; they mingled with the Indo-Europeans and a new people was in this way brought into existence. Their cults and traditions were incorporated in the Greeks' treasures of myths. The name of their first mother, Europa, became the name of that continent in whose cultural life Crete lives on to-day.

King Midas with the ass's ears

Wearing horns, he gathered together a host of womenfolk, taught them secret arts and mysteries and then began a triumphal progress over the whole of the inhabited world.

Diodorus on the cult of Dionysus

IN CAVE-PAINTINGS from the Stone Age we often find masked wizards, garbed in animal skins, wearing horns on their heads, who are performing magical dances to conjure up wild game. There are pictures of men who have dressed up as animals in countless primitive and cultured races: Red Indians dance the Bison Dance, African hunters stalk their prey having first disguised themselves with ostrich feathers, and there is a host of exotic gods with animal heads. These animal masks belong to the magic rites of the hunt, to totem culture, to the age-old religious belief that men can turn themselves into animals, and animals into men.

Even in the all-too-human ambiance of the Greek myths we find such creatures: the centaurs, sirens, satyrs. Maenads and *sileni* swarm through the wooded slopes of hills. One of the attributes of Dionysus is the panther-skin. The ass plays a role in the mysteries of Dionysus; the generative powers of animals are worshipped, and Dionysus himself and his companions often appear wearing animal masks.

The Dionysus cult seems to have developed from age-old fertility rites. The inhabitants of Asia Minor preserved these mysteries and handed them on to the colonizing Greeks. And although the mysterious ceremonies and incantations, the ecstatic orgies and

transports were rather strange to the Greeks, they must nevertheless have stirred primeval memories, and inborn passion for the frenzied rhythms and raptures of wine. At least, that is the explanation given by Plato for the triumph of the old, outlandish god of the fields and the woods over the other gods of antiquity.

In Asia Minor too, in present-day Turkey, must once have lived some of the ancient peoples of the Mediterranean, perhaps relatives of the Cretans and Mycenaeans, perhaps pre-semitic groups from Hither Asia. The ancient Anatolians appear as Phrygians, Lydians, Lygaeans, Cappadocians, Carians, Cilicians, Hittites and Lycaonians of Greco-Roman tradition. Nothing definite can be said about their racial and linguistic origins because even in Herodotus' time they had long been infiltrated by Greeks, Hittites, Persians and other colonists and conquerors.

In the third millennium before Christ a civilization must have arisen in eastern Anatolia, the kingdom of the *Hatti*, the pre-Hittites. In the second millennium BC immigrant Indo-Europeans gained control over this region and founded the Hittite state; their power was considerable, for they conquered northern Syria and even attacked Babylon and Egypt. These Hittites, however, were definitely not of Indo-Germanic stock, as is still falsely asserted, but were a typical mixed race with a characteristic mixed-race culture. Their language was Indo-European, but they wrote a Babylonian-style cuneiform script and occasionally used hieroglyphics also. In appearance they recalled other Hither-Asiatic races: they were of medium height, looked robust and stocky, and had very prominent noses.

About 1200 BC the Hittite kingdom fell into the hands of savage mountain tribes. New Indo-European races broke into Anatolia, who were related to the Balkan Illyrians, Thracians and Macedonians. On the west coast of Asia Minor, which had not formed part of the Hittite state, Greek colonists settled. After that, for century after century Asia Minor was the battlefield and watershed of the most divergent races. Cimmerians from the Crimea, Assyrians from the Tigris, Persian conquerors, hordes of Scythian mounted troops, Alexandrian Greeks and Roman legionaries left traces behind them there, until finally in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries AD the Ottoman Turks came, apparently from the Altai region, and laid the foundations of modern Turkey.

But the inhabitants of Asia Minor founded two more civiliza-

tions before being wiped out entirely: the Phrygian and the Lydian. The first was a culture devoted to the worship of Dionysus, in which animal cults and nature-magic predominated. From Phrygia comes the god of wine and drunken ecstasy, the Bacchanalians, the goat, and horse-hoofed demons, the wizards in panther-skins. The references to Phrygia in ancient Greek literature tell us what a primitive pre-Hellenic culture looked like. For the ethnologist they are a veritable mine of information.

The Phrygians, too, were a mixed race, brought together from primitive and highly-cultivated ancestors—pre-Hittites, Hittites and infiltrations of tribes related to the Thracians. For a while their political and military power was so strong that they attacked the frontiers of Assyria, and the monarch who led them on these expeditions was called Midas.

Now the Greeks called every Phrygian king Midas; the same name was given throughout Hellas to slaves, and finally to everyone coming from Phrygia. So that it is impossible to say if the Midas who fought against the Assyrians was identical with the legendary ruler who turned everything he touched to gold and was given ass's ears by the god Apollo. The Greeks told countless tales about the Phrygian monarch—and in them all is the note of biting, mocking sarcasm.

To the Hellenes, Midas was no hero, but a figure of fun. He begged Dionysus to give him the power to change everything he touched into gold; whereupon his food, the water he washed in and his wine all turned to gold, so that he very nearly died of hunger and thirst. At a musical contest he gave the palm not to Apollo but to the satyr Marsyas, and as a punishment Apollo made him grow ass's ears. He concealed these ears under a high-crowned cap (which is still known to-day as the Phrygian cap), but the reeds by the lakeside whispered the truth to every passer-by: 'King Midas has ass's ears!'

It was the ancient nature-cults and totemic symbols that the Greeks were laughing at. Herodotus knew that; on his journeys through Asia he had seen plenty of magicians, priests, princes and warrior chiefs who wore animal masks, head-dresses of animal fur, horns, ass's ears or the like. About AD 200 there appeared in Athens and Rome an author who interpreted the Midas-legend absolutely correctly: this was the biographer and historian Flavius Philostratus.

Philostratus is well known to all students of ancient literature

as a keen advocate for the preservation of ancient customs. He analysed the historical background of the *Iliad*, wrote a history of the Olympic Games and also several works of an erotic nature which were later held to be pornographic and were therefore republished in collections for connoisseurs. But first and foremost Philostratus was an acute interpreter of long-dead nature-mysteries and nature-religions.

According to Philostratus Midas gave his decision in favour of the satyr instead of Apollo because the world of satyrs and woodland spirits was the world he knew best. For that reason at certain festivals he wore an ass's head or mask. The ass, an attribute of Dionysus, was indeed the totem of the Phrygians, and Midas (or one of those Phrygian leaders who was called Midas by the Greeks) was not only king, but also magician, shaman, and arch-priest of a primitive religion. Drunken orgies, the playing of flutes, spring festivals with rose-wreathed dancers, animal and fertility rites—all these dionysiac mysteries appear also in the Midas-cult. The encounter with the Phrygians was for the Hellenes a step backward into the life of primitive man.

Phrygia to the Greeks was the kingdom ruled by a fool. They looked upon the neighbouring Lydia as the kingdom of the criminal Tantalus. The demi-god Tantalus, who offered up the flesh of his slaughtered son to the gods in order to test their omniscience, and who then had to endure the tortures of the underworld, represents in the myths, the ancestor of a Greek master-race settled in Lydia. But we are also given here a picture of the ancient custom of human sacrifice.

In many nations it was the custom to offer human sacrifices to the gods or to the spirits of the dead. Numerous discoveries of heaps of skeletons seem to indicate that this cult was most widely practised in the Early Stone Age. It was not only slaves, prisoners of war, ageing kings, widows and the servants of defunct rulers who were sacrificed; in certain cultures and in certain circumstances one sacrificed one's own children. Such ceremonies are often mentioned in the Old Testament; Abraham wishes to sacrifice Isaac, and Jephtha slaughters his own daughter.

The Lydians were originally poor mountain farmers living in central Asia Minor, perhaps of Asiatic stock, perhaps of ancient Mediterranean issue like the Cretans and the Mycenaeans. Their Asiatic origins are suggested by the statement of Herodotus that Lydia was first founded by colonists from the region of the

Euphrates, therefore from a region in which ritual human sacrifice formed a large part of the local cults and religions. Many myths of gods and heroes testify to Lydia's connection with Crete and Mycenae. Thus the country was at first influenced by the Hittites, then by Ionian Greek colonists. In the seventh and sixth centuries before Christ, Hellenized Lydia finally founded a state which for a short while enjoyed extraordinary political, economic and cultural sway, until in 546 it succumbed to the invading Persians.

The Greek historians paid particular attention to the Lydians; Herodotus often gives detailed accounts of this little state. He handed on to posterity the information that the Lydian king Kandaules was descended from the demi-god Heracles. He re-tells the celebrated story of Gyges and his ring. He relates the rise and fall of Croesus.

There is a reason for this particular interest: for the Greeks, Lydia was an outstanding object of study, for in her the Orient and the Occident had fused into one. It was here that the West's first coins were minted. There was a city called Sardis in which, though a debased Greek was spoken, the streets were full of oriental life.

Trade and caravan routes converged here, and brought in money from tolls and taxes for the Lydians. Herodotus tells us that the girls earned their dowries by prostitution; a whole district of Sardis was inhabited only by these strange dowry-hunters. There were grim sepulchral mounds and cities of the dead such as we find elsewhere only among the Etruscans, and underground cults which perhaps found an echo in the Tantalus myth. To the superficial observer, Lydia at its peak was perhaps for a brief space a gay and happy land in which man, enjoying a life of ease, lived and let live. But those who investigated more deeply found in the underground cults of Lydia something strange, archaic and demonic.

The West came to birth in Crete and Mycenae. Asiatic cultural influences streamed over Asia Minor, the bridge between Orient and Occident, to take their place in the spiritual world of the West. But Asia Minor probably had yet another, even more astonishing and decisive part to play in the development of the West. The first Italian culture derives perhaps from Anatolia.

The earth is a house of joy

This scandal to human thought.

Barnaby Barnes

LET US NOW RETURN to Herodotus. Ten years after his triumph in Athens, at the age of forty-one, he again drew the attention of the Hellenes; he helped to found a new city.

The scene was set in southern Italy, on the gulf of Tarentum. There, for close on three hundred years, had stood the two Grecian colonial cities, Croton and Sybaris. They were rivals. Croton was famous for her athletes; Sybaris enjoyed the more dubious reputation of being the home of bankers and racketeers, of drunkards, gluttons and voluptuaries. Naturally, the city of athletes finally conquered the city of pleasure; Sybaris was razed to the ground. The surviving Sybarites, rudely awakened from their *dolce far niente*, began, with the help of Athenian settlers, to build a new colony further inland.

The new Athenian-Sybaritic community was called Thurii. The leading spirit of the enterprise was Herodotus. He settled in Thurii, and was able from then on to study Italy and its inhabitants at first hand.

He made a historical-ethnographical survey of the Etruscans which in itself would have justified Herodotus' removal from Athens to Thurii. At that period Etruscan ships, often accompanied by Carthaginians, were roaming the Mediterranean. These pirates would board Grecian vessels, slay the most valiant fighters with their rough but well-made bronze weapons, or even with swords made from a new metal called iron, and wave banners depicting their lucky symbols of the golden spider, the giant kraken and the sinister sea-polyp, with which they had apparently concluded a magical pact.

Even beyond the Pillars of Hercules, in the little-known western and northern seas, on whose coasts could be found tin for the making of bronze and amber and gold for luxurious adornments, the Etruscans, so it was said, were quite at home, pillaging and plundering. They brought ivory, precious stones and raw materials from all quarters of the known world, and sold them, it need hardly be said, at the highest prices. No wonder that they were unpopular throughout the length and breadth of the Greek-speaking world.

Herodotus was not influenced by this understandable prejudice

on the part of his countrymen. He wanted to find out how the Etruscans lived, from what country they originated and how they had reached Italy.

We do not know if he visited Spinae, the city of the golden kraken, or if he was acquainted with the metropolis of the dead, Caere, and the Etruscan capital Tarquinii. We do not know if he saw the fearfully grotesque pictures and statues of giants, reptiles and fabulous beasts, the monuments and caricatures of Vulci, the urns, shaped like human heads, of Clusium and the many wall-paintings and friezes rich in erotic and obscene subject-matter that are to be found in the land of the Etruscans. But at least he knew about them and drew his own conclusions.

The Etruscans were unbridled materialists, enjoyers of life; this was their reputation in Rome, in Greece, in the Middle Ages, even in modern times. One can see it clearly in their art, in their luxurious way of life, in their treasure-hoards. At mealtimes they reposed on couches of flowers. They ate and drank out of gold and silver vessels. They were served by naked girls, and stirred their sexual appetites by the contemplation of bewitchingly lovely dancers wearing transparent veils. They worshipped Phallus and Vulva as gods; their festivities always ended with wild orgies; their wives had intercourse with many men, whose common possessions they were. Even on the walls of their graves and houses of the dead they painted naked, drunken, dancing figures. Such behaviour, the Mediterranean peoples asserted, was unsuitable and reprehensible. Herodotus, the researcher, thought otherwise. He opined that such customs were asiatic in origin.

He believed the religion of the Etruscans to be asiatic also. Their belief in miracles, their hunger for life, their terror of death were all asiatic traits. Before every fresh undertaking the *Haruspex* was first consulted; this was a custom that was later taken over, like so many other Etruscan habits, by the Romans. The *Haruspex* was a priest who sacrificed fowls, and foretold the future from their liver and entrails; he could tell the future also from all kinds of phenomenon, from thunder and lightning; and in the cities of the Etruscans the inhabitants believed his prophecies.

The Etruscan cities of the dead were more beautiful and more richly decorated than the cities of the living; here, death was celebrated as the highest of all earthly joys. Every dead person had his own dwelling—a house of many rooms, provided with couches on which embalmed couples, their arms clasped round

each other in eternal sleep, lay between pillars carved with phallic and vulval symbols. Here married couples were locked together, eternally conjoined; there was nothing to substantiate the rumour that the Etruscans practised polygamy. On the contrary, these pirates considered the legal wife to be the equal of her husband, and in the regions of the dead they continued to live side by side.

And in these dwellings of the dead the demons lowered. Phersu, the masked one, and Saru, the hammer-bearing messenger of death glared down from the walls and pillars. Ancestral mothers, pitiless as fate itself, and bull deities, lascivious, devourers of human flesh, guarded these final resting-places. Close by, on rapidly painted frescoes, handsome boys played the flute and girls held a zither in their hands. A naked couple danced, with restrained sensuality, the dance that the embalmed dead had once so often, so passionately performed, full of the love of life.

Fate, the unalterable law . . . the Etruscans believed in it, believed in predestination, in the power of zodiacal symbols, in an (alas) so brief and soon-to-be-ended twelve thousand years of life on earth, where creation and destruction, birth and death were fundamentally one. It was an Asiatic faith, a faith the Babylonians paid homage to and had been held by the peoples of the Aegæan—a faith that was only too well known to Herodotus.

Herodotus was familiar with fate cults and death cults, with ancestral mothers, bull deities and demons from the past history of his own land. Mycenæ with its cyclopiian walls, burial shafts, gold masks and sophisticated adornments rose up out of the shades. Crete, the once-great, now wrecked sea-power, made itself known with its technical discoveries, its flights of alabaster steps, its courtyards, water-systems, textiles, ingots of copper, porcelains, sensual women, terrifying monsters and the man-eating Minotaur.

But the trail led further east than the Aegæan, towards Asia. There were found the animal masks, the dionysiac orgies, the cities of the dead in Asia Minor, the girls of Sardis who would give themselves to any man for money, the secret cults, the human sacrifices. In Asia Minor generative power was worshipped; prayers were offered up to woman, to Mylitta and Cybele. There men smelted ore, forged metals and hoarded precious gold, as Midas and Croesus had done. The idea of resurrection, the belief in a heavenly paradise and in the awakening of the dead—these were oriental concepts which were accepted in Lydia, Caria and

Syria, in the lands of the Tigris and the Euphrates, as far as Persia and Egypt even.

Where, then, should one look for the originals of the Etruscans? Herodotus made linguistic comparisons, sought out historical evidence, made contacts with members of the pirate race and questioned them. His deductions finally centred on Lydia. According to Herodotus, the Etruscans were simply Lydian colonists who had settled in Italy. And this is how it came about.

There once ruled in Lydia a king called Atys, who had been brought low by wars and famines. Therefore he had commanded his son Tyrrhenos to depart from Lydia with half his people and find a more favourable place to settle in. Tyrrhenos undertook a number of fruitless expeditions with his Smyrna-built fleet to the islands of the Aegean, where there were certainly opportunities for pillage, but no chance of settling, and to Egypt, where the ruling Pharaoh stood firmly against the entry of these unwanted guests. Tyrrhenos wandered round the Mediterranean with half the people of Lydia until he finally found a new home in Italy, among primitive traders, fisher-folk and mountain farmers of Celtic, Ligurian and Illyrian extraction.

Tyrrhenos was the name of the king of the wanderers from Asia Minor. The Greeks called the Etruscans Tyrrhenians. In Lydia there had been a town called Tyrrha, on the Aegean islands of Lemnos and Lesbos there had dwelt a short-lived race of pirates called the Tyrsenes, in Egypt there had been an invasion by the Turusha, the 'Tursa of the seas'. In western Spain there existed a fabulously rich trading centre, the Tarshish of the Phoenicians, the Tartessos of the Greeks, inhabited by the Turdetans (a colony of the people of Tyrrhenos, or Etruscans?) In Lydia they prayed to a god called Tarku, in Etruria to Tarchon.

A coincidental resemblance of names? In the Ancient World people did not believe that mere chance had devised a puzzle consisting of the names of towns, peoples and gods. Herodotus' interpretation of the myths was held to be the true one.

Strabo, who lived at the time of the birth of Christ, still believed in this version. His report on the Etruscans follows almost word for word that of Herodotus. Moreover, Strabo points specifically to the great part the Etruscans played in the founding of Rome, a view of history which failed to coincide with the general opinion of the Greeks, who claimed that Rome was originally a Grecian colony. 'Tyrrhenos and his Lydians,' wrote Strabo, 'founded

twelve cities in Italy. Their leader was a certain Tarko, after whom the city of Tarquinii is named. This Tarko was so precocious that it was said he was born with grey hair. At that time the Etruscans were very strong under the leadership of a single master. But later when each city became a kingdom, they had to give way to the pressure of their neighbours; otherwise they would never have taken to piracy on the high seas, because they lived in a blessed land.'

According to Strabo this is how Rome was founded: 'a throng of people from Corinth' came to Italy and were assimilated by the Etruscans and by the original inhabitants. Tarquinian Etruscans elected the first kings for this new Roman state and 'made Tyrrhenia beautiful' by a synthesis of Greek and Etruscan cultural elements. Countless traditions in ancient Rome derive, as Strabo stated, from the Etruscans. Among other things, he cites the following: the triumphal robes, the consular and senatorial ornaments, the lictors' staves, axes and trumpets, the ceremonies of sacrifice and prediction, the music which the Romans used at public festivals—in short, a host of things from public and private life without which it would be impossible for us to imagine the society of ancient Rome.

But already a few years before Strabo and four hundred years after Herodotus, a countryman of the latter, Dionysius of Halicarnassos, a sceptical Greek historian living in the Rome of Augustus, protested, in a learned, argumentative treatise, against all vague and unproven theories about the oriental origins of Rome. Dionysius asserted that the character of the Romans and their civilizing and political greatness stemmed entirely from Greece. Greeks, he said, had colonized Italy, bringing their great gifts of culture and thought to the barbarians, the western world was a Grecian world. And what about the Etruscans? Well, they must have originated somewhere in Italy, a seafaring tribe with strange customs and an even stranger language; they had achieved a certain military and economic importance through the influence of Greece.

Dionysius could no longer ask the Etruscans themselves about their history, as Herodotus had done. They had long ago disappeared, had been overwhelmed and assimilated by Rome. Their language was forgotten, and their script, running from right to left, became indecipherable. Tyrrhenos was made into Greco-Trojan Aeneas, and the land-hungry Lydians, disseminators of bronze culture, fleeing their unhappy fate, became refugees from Ilium.

Dionysius' hypothesis was accepted right up to the present day, while Herodotus' researches were dismissed as pretty fairytales.

But in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the graves began to be opened. The archaeologists' spades brought to light sarcophagi, reliefs of demons and fabulous creatures, representations of palm trees which resemble Babylonian paintings, and portraits of almond-eyed, smiling men and women.

'On the opening of the Etruscan graves, many archaeologists had a strange and shocking experience. At the very instant when the graves were exposed to the light, the diggers saw, with horror, the reclining figures of the dead couples, richly clad, undamaged, just as they were in life—and a minute later, on the first breath of air from the outer world, they saw these human shapes melt and dissolve, like ghosts, into dust . . .' writes the Etruscan scholar Sibylle Cles-Reden.

To-day men are digging into the graves, into the mounds of earth, and diving in the estuary of the Po to discover traces of Spinae, the pirate city of the golden kraken. Fishermen and boat-boys are bringing up, out of the slime of the lagoons, urns, ornaments, large fragments of silver and golden statues. Scholars are poring over inscriptions on old grave-stones, and Etruscan art is displayed in exhibitions. And always there are arguments about who was right—Herodotus or Dionysius.

The Etruscans do not fit into the picture that scholars have painted of the great wanderings and migrations during the second millennium before Christ in the Mediterranean area. We can be sure only of one thing: the Etruscans appeared like a comet at the end of these migrations, and they were perhaps set in movement by the invasions from the north. Apparently they appeared out of nowhere, out of the vastnesses of the east, out of a gold and bronze civilization, soaked in primitive culture, and took root exactly in the centre of the new Indo-European settlement area, Italy.

It was a current that battled against the main stream. Etruscan is unrelated to any dead or living language. Until now, no one has succeeded in deciphering the texts which have come down to us on grave-stones and linen scrolls—texts which in the time of Herodotus could be read by countless people in Italy. The young Italian scholar Licinio Glori from Rome did indeed astonish the world in November 1957 with the announcement that he had succeeded in translating almost a tenth of the ten thousand or so Etruscan inscriptions that have come down to us. Etruscan, in

Glori's opinion, is 'the first-born child in the Indo-European language family, whose mother-tongue has been lost'. But the scholarly world remains sceptical, and for a very particular reason.

The one fairly lengthy Etruscan text we have is the *Liber linteus*. This consists of twelve hundred words which were found on the linen cerements of an Egyptian mummy, evidently the body of an Etruscan woman who had died in Egypt. The *Liber linteus* is now in a Yugoslav museum and is the crux of all Etruscan text decipherments; comparative philology can do very little with the names on grave-stones, but a text of twelve hundred words offers much greater possibilities.

In the years between 1830 and 1866 the orientalist Franz Bopp began the study of comparative philology and formulated the concept of the Indo-Germanic (or Indo-European, as it is known to-day) family of languages. It was proved that many such groups of languages exist, and that it was possible, by grammatical comparisons, to establish what group this or that language belonged to. Languages whose origins had hitherto baffled researchers, like Sanskrit, were revealed as members of the Indo-European family, while others, like Basque, are unconnected with any other language group. Etruscan, too, was found to belong to no group in the Indo-European family; the *Liber linteus* defied all attempts at translation. The philologist says quite firmly that the Etruscans cannot have been Indo-Europeans.

The veil that still hangs over this mysterious people has not yet been lifted. On the contrary, with every new digging and every fresh attempt at a solution of their script the Etruscans become more and more complex. Their true nature seems to lie concealed in their mosaic pictures, masks and demonic caricatures. Yet many things point to the possibility that the track we must follow in our search for this lost race has already been mapped out by Herodotus.

Scripts and traces of culture of an Etruscan nature have been discovered in Lemnos and Egypt, therefore in those regions in which, according to Herodotus, the ancient wanderer Tyrrhenos landed with his followers. There are cities of the dead in Etruria as well as in Lydia; in both places they are built not near the living-quarters, but a long way away from human habitations. Etruscans and Lydians had the same cult of the dead. The interior of a Lydian burial-mound indeed does not tell us much, for the diggers—mostly consular officials in Turkey with an interest in archaeology—

found there only a few stone sculptures, a small quantity of ceramics painted with a dark geometrical pattern and two or three ornaments of gold and bronze.

This is not surprising. The Persian, Macedonian, Syrian, Roman and Ottoman conquerors in the course of two and a half thousand years plundered and sacked Lydia so completely that most of the works of art from the kingdom of Croesus have vanished without a trace. And whatever they left behind fell into the hands of later grave-robbers, who smashed everything they thought was without value, and sold the rest—gold and ornaments—in the market-places of Turkey.

However scanty the archaeological findings in Lydia, the cities of the dead, the cult of the dead and the many other parallels with Etruria gave philologists and ethnologists pause for thought. These things are more weighty and more revealing than unproven hypotheses; they show that old Herodotus is more worthy of our credulity than his many followers in the field.

The dream of an earthly paradise

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for your strength is laid waste.

Isaiah 23, 14

FROM THE EARLIEST times, seamen's taverns have been the hotbeds of all kinds of rumours, gossip, stories, fables and anecdotes. Here the sea-serpent was born, and visions of wonderful lands and islands of the blest. Seamen love to spin a good yarn and to excite landlubbers with tales of cities of gold, islands of women and cannibal coasts. One should not hold it against them, for they are providing literature and art with an inexhaustible stock of raw material.

But at the same time they give valuable hints, without being aware of it, to the researcher. Where there is smoke, there must be fire. Wherever a sea-rover said he had come ashore at a city of gold, there must have existed some unknown trade centre. Wherever sailors said they had met Amazons, they must apparently have encountered the remnants of a matriarchal society. Wherever the log-book speaks of an earthly paradise, it must refer to a region where the seafarers—whatever the reason might have been—were well received, and found the place suitable for settlement. So it is understandable that ethnologists, geographers, sociologists and

business experts have at all times gladly shared the companionship of rough sea-going men.

It was a very old and faded seaman's yarn that Herodotus heard on the island of Samos, a yarn as storm-tossed and weather-beaten as the little tavern in which it came to his ears. A captain from Samos, so the story goes, had seen with his own eyes, over two hundred years ago, beyond the Pillars of Hercules the golden city, the mythical Tartessos, the city that was the secret dream of all the Hellenes but which they never hoped to see, for the Phoenician-Carthaginian sea-robbers controlled the Straits of Gibraltar. The name of the captain from Samos was Kolaïos. He had long been laid to his rest in a foreign grave or in the depths of the sea; his experiences, however, handed down through the centuries, were still fresh and living to the people of Samos.

Herodotus looked into the matter. There still existed on Samos colossal bronze statues which were said to have been part of the cargo brought back by Kolaïos from his fabulous journey, there were also silver anchors and casks and a brass tankard ornamented with griffons' heads. And the most remarkable thing was that Captain Kolaïos had not looked for the golden city, but had simply chanced upon it, on a routine business trip which should have taken him to Egypt. At least, that is what Kolaïos had told his countrymen.

When Kolaïos and his men wanted to turn their ship towards Egypt, Herodotus reports, the ship was blown off course by an easterly wind. The storm must have been tremendous and the ship must have drifted for a most unusual distance, for the mariners sailed the whole length of the Mediterranean from east to west and came, without once touching land, to the Straits of Gibraltar. Whether it had been Kolaïos' intention or not, they did not now turn back. The ship, says Herodotus, sailed through the Pillars of Hercules and with the help of the gods reached the city of Tartessos, which had never before been visited by Greeks. That is why, when Kolaïos returned to Greece, he enjoyed the very greatest success.

What sort of city was this Tartessos? Every Carthaginian dealer could have given information about it, Phoenician chronicles and Jewish religious works were full of references to the golden city, the 'most excellent among markets', as Ezekiel calls it, full of all kinds of wares—silver, iron, tin and lead. But the business metropolis of the west bore another name—it was called Tarshish.

And this city of Tarshish—so we read in the ancient prophets—stood for several hundred years under the threat that 'the day of the Lord' would come and it would be overthrown completely, so that no house would be left standing and no inhabitant would live to tell the tale. This is actually what had happened in Herodotus' time, not a single house was left standing in Tartessos, and heaps of rubble, encroaching waves of sand and banks of mud and slime were all that was left of the former paradise. A Greek contemporary of Herodotus, driven ashore there by a storm, had found neither traders nor any possibility of trade, but only a Carthaginian military outpost keeping a very unfriendly guard upon the coast.

Now there actually had existed such a Hellenic adventurer, a man cast in the same mould as Captain Kolaïos. He lived shortly before Herodotus' time and dwelt in the Grecian colony of Massilia, the present French port of Marseilles. His name was Eurythemenes. Unfortunately Herodotus tells us nothing about the life and deeds of this Eurythemenes, so that we know very little about him. The captain from Marseilles presumably passed through the Carthaginians' closely-guarded Straits of Gibraltar (he may have been a guest on a Carthaginian ship) and travelled along the west coasts of Africa and Europe. In a book of information about sailing which he left behind him and was found again long afterwards he reports on all kinds of animal life on the banks of West African rivers, and on the rough winds in the Bay of Biscay. Furthermore, he gives accounts of the city of Tartessos and of the journeys made by its inhabitants to the British Isles, so rich in tin.

So at that time Tartessos must still have been in existence. In writings from Roman times which are based on Eurythemenes' book, we read of a towering castle-city, of a river rich in tin whose waves washed up bits of the metal against the city walls, and of a delta which surrounded the mercantile city on every side. Eurythemenes does not seem to have been particularly excited by his visit to the golden city. Tartessos had lost much of its splendour then; it lay within the Carthaginian spheres of interest, and had long since been overshadowed by Gades, the Phoenician-Carthaginian competitive trade port. A few decades later the Carthaginians gave short shrift to Tartessos, already threatened by the invading sand-dunes, floods and shifting river-beds: they destroyed their old rival so completely that to-day nothing can be found of the original island city.

Eurythemenes' report tells us a little about the geographical

situation of the wonderful city. Tartessos must have been in south-western Spain, maybe on an island at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, as is usually assumed nowadays. But who were the inhabitants of Tartessos? To what race had they belonged? What language did they speak? And—the old but ever-new question that every ethnologist asks—where did they come from?

Herodotus was able to deduce one thing about them. They were highly cultivated people, with their own language and literature and a wise set of laws which, it is said, were over six thousand years old. One of their mythical kings, Gayon, who because of his great herd of cattle was famous even in the most westerly regions of Oceanos, is the very person we meet in the Hercules legends and from whom the ancient hero and superman stole the oxen. Another king, not quite so mythical, was called by the Greeks Arganthonios. He is alleged to have ruled for eighty years, from 630 to 550 BC, sympathized with the Hellenes and given a friendly welcome to Captain Kolaïos.

Certainly Kolaïos cannot have been the only Greek who sailed to Tartessos during the reign of the grecophile king Arganthonios. In fact during diggings in the region of the Guadalquivir delta Greek weapons and implements from the seventh century before Christ were discovered. In 1940 the Spanish researcher into pre-history Garcia y Bellido drew from this discovery the conclusion that there must have been a lively trade between Hellas and the far-off western city of Tartessos. There was even a Greek trading station called Mainake at that time in western Spain. Following the Carthaginian conquest and closing of the Straits of Gibraltar the old trade connection was broken. All that was left for the Greeks was the dream of a golden city, of a fairytale land, of a loveable, hospitable and far-away folk at the paradisaical edge of the world.

This dream could never have fixed itself so strongly in the minds of the ancient Greeks if the contact with Tartessos had simply been a fleeting episode in the life of Kolaïos. A literary work of world importance points to quite other and much older connections between the Aegean and the western paradise. It tells of a rich Phaeacian land on the shores of the ocean, of high-towered walls, paved streets, a great harbour, its docks full of fast-sailing ships, a matriarchal form of society and a highly-developed bronze culture. This book, written something like two to three hundred years before the storm-tossed voyage of Captain Kolaïos, is Homer's *Odyssey*.

The depiction of the Phaeacian land in the *Odyssey* is so amazingly similar to that described in Greek Tartessos traditions that one can hardly avoid coming to the conclusion that Homer must have known already of the golden city. The Phaeacian fortress has walls of brass, silver door-posts and a golden door; it is furnished with carpets and chairs, all its appointments indicate the highest refinements of luxury and culture that Odysseus, certainly a man of the world, cannot admire enough. And this kingdom lay, a small pocket of culture, cut off from its rather uncivilized surroundings inhabited by gigantic, cave-dwelling, stone-throwing and man-eating primitive peoples—exactly as Tartessos was surrounded by primitive Iberians, Basque pastoral tribes, Celtic fisherfolk and African hillmen. The geographer Richard Hennig writes, 'If we put all this together, I cannot think of a more likely situation for the powerful maritime Phaeacian kingdom than that which was occupied by—Tartessos.'

What makes this hypothesis even more convincing is the fact that it was thought out, not only in the studies of modern professors, but in the mind of an ancient geographer also—the already-quoted Greco-Roman Strabo from Amasia in Pontus. Now Strabo was in fact an enthusiastic admirer of Homer; he considered the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to be not only a great poet but also one of the greatest geographers and ethnographers in the history of mankind. He cited various happenings in the works of Homer—wonderful lands, fairytale cities, giants and so on—and claimed they were historical, geographical or ethnological facts in poetic disguise.

Generations of scholars, right into the nineteenth century, passed over Strabo's enthusiasm for Homer with apologetic smiles, until Heinrich Schliemann from 1872 to 1882 dug up Troy and proved that Homer's *Iliad* was not a mythical tale but true history. Would the same hold good for the *Odyssey*? Professorial pontiffs still smile superciliously. Yet Strabo insisted two thousand years ago that Homer was usually giving a picture of actual events and places in his writings; he wove myths as decorative ornaments into the historical truth of the happenings he described. His aim was the same as that of a historian, to tell the truth. He gives us the truth in the Trojan War and the voyages of Odysseus, and adorns them both with fables. For, marvellous to relate, says Strabo, Homer is not interested in anything that is not based on the truth.

And now for Strabo's report on Tartessos. The ancient geo-

grapher from the Grecian Black Sea town of Amasia describes in detail and with almost polemical eloquence how fortunate a region it was where Tartessos stood, even in Roman times, 'full of so much fine silver, gold, copper and iron such as was known in no other land', and how the inhabitants practised the very ancient arts of mining so that they were able to make of their kingdom 'a natural and inexhaustible treasure-house'. Then he speaks about the city of Tartessos itself and the character of its inhabitants, who, he claims, were full of 'gentleness, sociability, and, due to their great wealth, subject to indolence'. According to Strabo, it was these traits of character that were responsible for the dwellers in the golden city 'being utterly overthrown by the Phoenicians' and for the fact that later 'only descendants of the Phoenicians dwelt in this region and in the surrounding lands'.

The close of this interesting historical sketch takes the form of a section in which Strabo puts forward the same astounding assertion as Hennig did two thousand years later. 'The poet Homer, so fertile in words and knowledge, lets us assume that he, too, was not altogether ignorant of these regions. He learnt about the riches and other advantages of the Tartessos area, for the Phoenicians did their utmost to make these things known. The fact that Odysseus and his crew penetrated to these parts is proved by the holy sanctuaries and relics and numberless other monuments in Iberia erected by those who were returning home from the Trojan War. And so Homer made it the land of the blest.'

How did Homer get hold of these facts? Obviously not from the Greeks, for in their early history they feared the open sea, and preferred the more comfortable and relatively harmless navigation of their coasts. But they knew the traditions, travellers' tales and histories of their predecessors in the Aegean, the Pelasgians and the Cretans. So that the *Odyssey* presumably is based on ancient Cretan and Pelasgian seamen's yarns; the same may be said of the stories about the Phaeacian kingdom, about the golden city and the wealthy folk of Tartessos. Cretans were once business partners of the Tartessians, transporting the precious metals of western Europe to the Mediterranean and telling tales about their adventures and odysseys in their home ports. And as the Phoenicians later told somewhat similar stories, the myth was constantly replenished with fresh material.

Between 1905 and 1911 the historian Adolf Schulten began his great excavations in south-west Spain, which have since been con-

tinued by Schulten himself and by Spanish and English archaeologists. They found remains of stones in the ruins of very ancient buildings; a marble relief was also found, and a ring with unidentified script superficially resembling runic writing. But Tartessos itself was never found. Nevertheless from the discoveries and researches that have so far been made it is possible to reconstruct a little of the golden city's past.

From about 2500 to 1200 BC an earlier city of Tartessos existed in south-west Spain. It was inhabited by an unknown race with their own age-old script who exploited the rich sources of mineral ore in the Spanish mountains as well as British tin, and developed a flourishing bronze culture. The early Tartessians seemed to have left their traces all over western Europe. It is probable that the dolmens were erected by them, those singular megalithic graves composed of four supporting stones and one roof-stone which are to be found along the Atlantic coasts of Spain and France. Furthermore the bronze beakers, the woven baskets in four to five thousand-year-old layers, in short, those many cultural remains which were found indicate that at the most flourishing period of ancient Egypt and ancient Babylon there had been a similar blossoming of culture in the extreme Occident.

But about the year 1200 BC Tartessos was wiped out. The Etruscans, the Tyrrhenian vagrants of the sea, went as far as Spain and founded on the site of the old mercantile metropolis their own Tartessos. They took over the culture and the wealth of their predecessors, lost contact with the Etruscan republic in Italy, traded with the Phoenicians, calling themselves 'the people of Tarshish', just as the pre-Tartessians had traded with the Cretans, and received Captain Kolaïos and his contemporaries as 'Turdetans.' Finally about 500 BC they succumbed to the great might of Carthage.

This exhausts all our knowledge about the golden city. We do not know where the earlier Tartessians came from; it is impossible to guess whether they were Cretan colonists or perhaps ancient fore-runners of the Vikings from the north. We do not even know whether the Etruscans wiped out completely their unknown predecessors in the twelfth century or whether they merely formed a tenuous master-class in Tartessos. King Arganthonios, the host of Captain Kolaïos, may have been a descendant of the pre-Tartessians, a prince with Cretan-Pelasgian blood in his veins, a hyperborean Viking, an Etruscan sea-dog—we do not really know.

There are many theories about what race the pre-Tartessians belonged to. Some say that Bronze-Age Germanic tribes from the lower Rhine settled here. Other conjectures centre round Scandinavia, in whose pre-historic rock-drawings many subjects from southern Europe and North Africa are found. Also put forward are the white-skinned primitive Sahara tribes with their refined Capsian culture in North Africa's Palaeolithic Age. But obviously there is no need to look so far afield. The Spanish, southern French area is an ancient cultural region, and has been since the end of the Ice Age; there for eighteen to twenty thousand years the Cro-Magnon race created its tremendous cave-paintings, developed its culture and paved the way for a break-through of quite a new attitude towards the world and to life.

It was in southern Spain that megalithic culture first came into being, the culture of the huge stone graves; it shook off the old hunting, fishing and sylvan cultures of the west-European Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Ages, enjoyed great prosperity and developed a religion resembling ancestor-worship. Megalithic peoples began to take to the sea, made voyages to Brittany, England and the North Sea. It may have been their descendants who in Spain laid aside their stone implements, discovered the use of copper, found out new alloys and set up new centres of industry in certain regions. Tartessos may have arisen out of such an ancient centre of production.

The dream of a submerged paradise persisted over the centuries; it became the equivalent of Utopia, a *Fata Morgana*, a trauma. It still lives to-day in the hearts and minds of men. It is, of course, Atlantis. The Atlantis-fable in Plato's *Timäus* and *Kritias*, the fable about the sunken island beyond the Pillars of Hercules that was once so rich and splendid has the same characteristics as seamen's tales about Tartessos and Homer's description of the Phaeacian realm.

In the days of the Emperor Augustus the Greco-Roman historian Diodorus wrote, 'The Atlantans were the most highly cultivated people of the western ocean. They dwelt in a fertile land and founded great cities. But they distinguished themselves from their neighbours by the piety, hospitality and philanthropy, which great Homer has already mentioned.' Diodorus, an outstanding researcher, to whom very ancient and now vanished proofs were available, informs us further that the first masters of Atlantis had drawn into the protection of their unwallled city many different

and scattered tribes, and had persuaded these tribes 'to abandon their lawless ways that were no better than those of the beasts'. They then introduced agriculture and studied astronomy 'and made many other useful discoveries'. Finally they 'gained control over a great part of the inhabited earth, especially over the lands to the west and north'.

Diodorus knew Plato's Atlantis story, he knew Homer's poems about the Phaeacian kingdom and the stories about the golden city of Tartessos. But he was acquainted with other materials useful to the archivist, and his historical picture, in which the three dream lands are wedded to form the single kingdom of Atlantis corresponds amazingly to the results of modern investigations by Schulten, Hennig, García y Bellido and Bonsor. As Schulten says, 'the parallels between Atlantis and Tartessos are so striking that it can hardly be a question of coincidence'. In the later parts of his history Diodorus becomes a poet and a dreamer. He settles all kind of gods in Atlantis—Uranus, Pandora and Hyperion, Atlas and Kronos—and 'this', he readily admits, 'is a myth'.

Later poets and dreamers as well as scholars and researchers were not as careful and correct as Diodorus. They mixed up fact and fancy, ignored the exact geographical indications given by the ancient authors and have sought for Atlantis in Africa and America, Sweden, Ceylon, Crete, Spitzbergen and even Heligoland. They made up tales of sunken continents, of falling moons and every kind of geological misfortune. They connected the people of Atlantis with the Mayas, the Caucasians, the inhabitants of the Canaries, credited them with the creation of various types of culture and even with the discovery of gunpowder. They sought out obscure analogies between the Ice Age, the Deluge and the disappearance of Atlantis, distorted wish-fulfilment dreams, nightmares and subconscious longings into monstrous grotesqueries, a wealth of study-material for psycho-analysts.

If Plato did not create a purely instructive fable (as his pupil Aristotle claimed) in his writing of the Atlantis story, if no vague account of American or African realms reached the Mediterranean (which would be most unlikely), then the material for the Atlantis myth was brought to light in seamen's taverns and workshops, in the company of rough, talkative sailors and shipmates. For the fable is identical with the yarn of the Phaeacian kingdom, and with hospitable, paradisaically rich and suddenly-vanished Tartessos.

CHAPTER II

THE AFRICANS DISCOVER AFRICA

The chariot of the gods: Five youths cross the Sahara: The gift of the Nile: Harchuf and his discoveries: Secrets of a corpulent lady

The chariot of the gods

*Scepticism serves one's interests best.
Diodorus*

THE CARTHAGINIANS smiled and remained silent. They had given a friendly welcome to the inquisitive foreign traveller from Greece, because that was how they received all foreigners in their modern, hospitable metropolis. They had provided him with quarters in a many-storied house near the stock exchange, and placed male and female Negro slaves at his disposition. But they remained silent. Herodotus could find out nothing from them about their expeditions, discoveries and overseas garrisons.

In such cases it was always their custom to keep their own counsel. The Carthaginians were extremely desirous of having peoples from all four corners of the earth—Greeks, Persians, Egyptians—visit their city to buy and sell. But they did not want foreigners to start spying into their business affairs or to try moving in on Carthaginian colonies and spheres of interest. Carthage would not tolerate smuggling or interference in her colonial affairs.

Herodotus strolled appreciatively through the streets of the metropolis, his alert gaze taking in everything—high, many-storied houses, factories, arsenals, the stables for the elephants and the temples of Moloch. He passed by the slums, in which the black slaves were housed, and arrived in the harbour district. Hundreds of ships lay in the basins, and chained Negroes were labouring in the docks and wharves, sweating and staggering under the weight of sacks and bales which they bore from the ships on their naked, gleaming backs. Well-disguised secret police stood about at street

corners keeping a suspicious eye on strangers, seamen and dockers. Herodotus felt vaguely uneasy. He turned away from the pier and entered a terraced restaurant for refreshment.

His journey, so carefully prepared, to the hub of world trade seemed to be a failure. He knew there were stock-holders, exchange-jobbers, men rolling in money, plantation-owners and barracks crammed with foreign legionaries in Carthage. He knew all about the modern architecture of the African metropolis, the grid-like pattern of the streets, the stinking dye-factories; he knew about the war-elephants, the slave markets and the queerly marked bits of cloth which the Carthaginians used for money. But this was not what he was really interested in.

He wanted to know from what region the Carthaginians brought their Negro slaves, what races lived beyond the Pillars of Hercules and what Carthaginian explorers had seen in Africa and on the unknown islands rich in purple dye and tin. But the Carthaginians only smiled, and remained silent. Originally Phoenician colonists, these brown-skinned 'Kinahni', as they called themselves, were seamen, traders and pirates from the land of Canaan, far away in the east. It had to be admitted that they were superb navigators, excellent business-men, daring pirates. But suddenly—probably about three hundred years ago—the Phoenician trading colony of Carthage had become independent and overshadowed with its wealth of ships and markets the homeland of Canaan.

Carthage was free, independent and rich; Carthage was the leading power in the west. Half a million people lived in this city, more than Phoenicia's greatest cities, Tyre and Sidon, had ever known. The inhabitants were concerned not only with business and manufactures but interested also in mathematics, technical research and the arts. They knew how to maintain their supremacy. 'Without our permission,' the Carthaginians were wont to say, 'you Greeks couldn't even dip your toes in the Mediterranean!'

A man appeared in the restaurant; he was one of Herodotus' local connections who had been out seeking for information. He had discovered a clue. Some Carthaginian seamen knew of a man who was said to have been to the West African colonies in the deep south, where, so rumour had it, a locust-eating tribe of pygmies were to be found. The man was a Persian, a cousin of the murdered emperor Xerxes. The Persians had heard about the explorations of the Carthaginians and Egyptians in Africa, and had devised the bold plan of sailing right round the continent. But the

man whom they had chosen to carry out this scheme had been convicted of criminal activities; he was of the highest birth, a prince.

Herodotus was amazed by this news. He had himself taken to the aforementioned seamen, talked to them through an interpreter and questioned them with the utmost scepticism. Certainly there must have been a person known as Prince Sataspes. The seamen weren't lying. But there was something suspicious about the affair.

Herodotus wrote, 'Prince Sataspes had raped a young girl of excellent family. When Xerxes condemned him to be impaled for his crime, the prince's mother, an aunt of the king, begged for mercy for her son and said that she herself would inflict upon him an even greater punishment: he would be compelled to sail right round Libya.' Presumably the mother's proposal was dictated not by a desire to further geographical science but from a wish to get her son out of the reach of Xerxes. At any rate, Xerxes consented to the offer, and Sataspes found himself a ship in Persian-occupied Egypt, hired a crew and set sail.

He sailed through the Mediterranean to Carthage and there produced a written request of Xerxes asking that the prince might be allowed, as a special favour, to undertake a journey through the Carthaginian North and West African territories. Apparently the Carthaginians gave their permission. They let the prince pass through the Straits of Gibraltar, allowed him to take a southerly course from there and spend several months navigating the west coast of Africa. But suddenly, so it was said, Sataspes' course was interrupted by something unspecified in the sea; and he had to return home by the same route.

Neither Herodotus nor later chroniclers would have bothered to devote any space to Sataspes if the gossip of the Carthaginian sailors had not included the first mention of the pygmy race in West Africa. Sataspes had declared that he had seen 'little men clad in palm leaves'. Herodotus reports, 'These little men left their dwellings every time Sataspes set foot on shore, and fled to the mountains. Sataspes' crew followed them, but did them no hurt, only took away their cattle.'

We know to-day that such pygmy races are to be found in West Africa only in the region of the Equator; these are the Bagielli and Bekwi pygmies of the Cameroons and Gaboon. Had the princely voluptuary sailed straight to Equatorial Africa and found traces there of the elusive pygmies inhabiting the primeval forests, pyg-

mies that were to be discovered by Paul du Chaillu in the middle of the nineteenth century? Was his course impeded by drifting masses of seaweed, contrary winds or currents in the Gulf of Guinea, causing him to return to Egypt?

Herodotus was doubtful. And present-day scholars too are very doubtful, not indeed about the presence of pygmies in West Africa, but about the truth of Prince Sataspes' account. His tale in fact is nothing more than a wondrous mish-mash of extracts from the most varied sources—Carthaginian reports and journals found later in their archives. His voyage along the coast of Africa, the little men of the jungle, the palm-leaf clothes, the drifts of seaweed that stopped the ship and the return of the vessel from the Equatorial regions—we find all these things in Diodorus' account of the Phoenician-Carthaginian discovery of the Canaries and above all in the splendid records of the two Carthaginian brothers Hanno and Himilko.

Herodotus noticed that Sataspes' experiences were in fact Carthaginian experiences. But it was, as we would say to-day, 'a good story', and he published it, though with every reservation. And the Carthaginians went on smiling and satisfied that the Greek stranger had been palmed off with a lot of journalistic junk, they went on keeping their own counsel. Despite all his researches, Herodotus never knew of the accounts written by Hanno and Himilko of the greatest voyages of discovery at that time.

In the middle of Carthage stood the temple of Baal, strongly guarded by priests and watchmen, for entry was forbidden to foreigners. Later, in its archives, the Romans, after the conquest of Carthage, found the reports on those expeditions about which Herodotus had vainly sought information. One of these relates the discovery of the Canary Islands, where the Phoenician-Carthaginian colonists found dye-producing plants, substitutes for the costly purple obtained from snails, and, in the words of the original, 'wiped out many inhabitants, so that the knowledge might not be passed on'. The second account, by Admiral Himilko, tells of voyages to the tin-producing islands of the northern seas, presumably to the British Isles, and to the oceans of seaweed 'that can hold a ship marooned'. Here we may mention a modern but as yet very vague hypothesis that the Phoenicians may possibly have discovered America. Finally, the third account, by far the most valuable ethnological document from those times, contains a true

portrait of the West African tribes and races written by the President of State himself, the Suffete Hanno.

About 500 BC, Hanno was the head and the minister of war of the mercantile republic of Carthage. Two such Suffetes, elected by the Senate (which meant, practically speaking, by the Carthaginian Wall Street), stood in those days at the head of the state, and together with the senators, the business bosses and the Supreme Court directed the destinies of Carthage. The fact that one of these two presidents went on a world tour leads us to conclude that this journey must have been an unusually important voyage of discovery and colonization—comparable to the great deeds of Darius, Alexander and Napoleon. Sixty vessels, each manned by fifty rowers, took part in the expedition. About thirty thousand men and women, both Carthaginians and North Africans, the future settlers in the new colonies, sailed with them. It seems quite clear what Hanno's intention was in organizing this great export drive of men and women; he wanted to estimate the extent of Africa, open up valuable supplies of raw materials, and put himself forward as the protector of the coloured races of the earth.

He could not have guessed how huge Africa really was and what awaited him there. The Carthaginians knew the interior of North Africa as far as Mauritania and the Fezzan; through Libyan intermediaries they obtained their Negro slaves; they caught tunny-fish off the coasts of the present Senegal, and they must have assumed that the continent came to an end somewhere below Cape Verde. Hanno believed that sixty ships, thirty thousand colonists and a correspondingly adequate supply of provisions would be ample for the carrying-out of the undertaking. It was a pardonable but disastrous error.

The giant fleet set sail, and called at various points in Mauretania and on the Senegalese coast. Hanno entered into relationship with nomadic shepherd tribes, founded settlements and had temples erected. The first wild elephants were sighted, the first Negro inhabitants of the coastal areas showed themselves, 'wild Ethiops that dwell in a land full of wild beasts'. The Carthaginians reconnoitred the bays and estuaries between Gambia and Liberia. They encountered black-skinned cave-dwellers, who ran away from them so fast that they could not be caught even by horsemen, as well as savage hordes from the primeval forests who rained an avalanche of stones upon the landing-boats. But then, near the present Cape Palmas, the coast turned eastwards. Had Hanno

already reached the southernmost part of the earth? He hoped so, and encouraged his rowers to even greater efforts.

How this hard-headed statesman sailed on to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, to Togoland, Nigeria and the Cameroons provides us with a minor literary masterpiece. Recent explorers have had exactly the same experiences in the wonderland of darkest Africa: forested mountains rising out of the sea, the air sweetly scented by all kinds of exotic perfumes, fires flickering along the shores and then being extinguished, and out of the bush in the hot nights the unbroken throbbing of the tom-toms' signals, the whirring of insects and the chants and shouts of the natives.

Hanno wrote, 'For days and days we saw nothing but forests, but at night there were many fires. We heard the throb of drums, the sound of flutes and cymbals and human cries. The whole region was filled with scented airs. Swollen streams fell shimmering into the sea. Because of the burning heat we could not set foot on land.' This was the Equatorial zone, apparently the world's end—and it stretched on further and further, east and south-east.

The Carthaginians passed the volcanic mountain of the Cameroons, 'the chariot of the gods, with high-leaping flames at its centre, and these seemed to reach right up to the stars'. They saw many kinds of natives, pygmy races, fleet jungle-men, Bantus wearing animal skins, and finally landed in a large bay. This was in all probability the bay beside Cape Esterias in the Gaboon. Here it became clear to Hanno that he was still far from circumnavigating Africa, and that on this trip at least, owing to the lack of supplies and of fresh water, he would be unable to go any further. His practical and business-like Carthaginian nature shows itself here: the savage tribes, the primeval forests and the fire-belching mountain were of no commercial interest to his city. It was impossible to colonize this place, and he could confidently return home.

But first of all his companions had yet another wonderful experience, which may have given rise to so many later satyr and cyclop myths and persuaded earnest scholars, right up to the nineteenth century, that there were 'wild guinean bushmen' in the primeval forests of Africa. The Carthaginians discovered on an island or a peninsula within the bay a horde of gorillas. Hanno must have taken the great man-like apes for primitive human beings, and he tried to capture some of the strange fur-clad 'forest men', hoping to take them as slaves to Carthage.

He did not succeed. The gorillas fled, defending their retreat with stones against the Carthaginian soldiers, and escaped by dexterously clambering up a steep cliff. Hanno says, 'We only caught three females, but they did not wish to come with us and bit and scratched our officers so severely that we had to put the creatures to death.' Hanno had them skinned, set sail, and after months at sea returned home, where he reported to the astounded senators that Central Africa was without any economic or political interest for them and inhabited solely by drum-beating black men, terrified gnomes and sharp-clawed hairy men. The three gorilla skins passed into the temple archives.

Three hundred and fifty years later the Greek historian Polybius took part as war correspondent on the Roman side in the siege and destruction of Carthage. He discovered the archives, took possession and made full use of them, informing his contemporaries that the Carthaginians 'had once possessed the whole of Africa, apart from those regions which are inhabited only by nomads'. That was somewhat exaggerated; but all the same Hanno found out more about the West African coast than all the European explorers who came after him until the fifteenth-century Portuguese Prince Henry the Navigator.

Thanks to Polybius' investigations, the chroniclers of the Ancient World were able to tell their tales about lissom dwarfs, hairy cyclops and other West African wonders. But Hanno's descendants did not enjoy these posthumous honours paid to the greatest of all Atlantic sea-rovers. After the third Punic War only a heap of ashes remained to mark the site of Carthage and its lofty civilization.

Five youths cross the Sahara

Merciful heaven! Can we have lost
our way?

*From the Sahara diary of
L. E. Almsay*

IN LIBYA, NORTH-EAST of Syrtis, where the Egyptian realm began, the Halicarnassian compatriots of Herodotus had founded a colony called Cyrene. It was a flourishing centre of trade, dependent for its wealth upon the export of hides and wool and on the production of fine vases. The present-day Cyrenaica is called after

this Cyrene. In a contemporary description the Grecian colonial city is depicted thus:

'Because of the excellence of the soil, its fine horses and wealth of all the fruits of the earth, Cyrene grew to be a great harbour city. Many remarkable men lived here, men worthy of the defence of freedom against the neighbouring barbarians. Philosophers, mathematicians, poets and grammarians belonged to their number, all honoured by the Egyptian kings.' The Grecian chronicler did not mention that numerous scholars belonged to the academy of Cyrene, who devoted themselves to the study of the North African races. Cyrene became one of the leading centres of ancient ethnology.

There was a good reason for this. Interested travellers in Africa could converse there with all kinds of native peoples, with Hellenic settlers and traders, Egyptian priests and handworkers, Jewish and Syrian immigrants, Libyan farmers and dark-browed nomads from the oases of the Sahara. Cyrene was a first-class centre of news and information, a meeting-place of the most varied peoples, races and cultures.

Herodotus often used to stay in this Greek city. There he gathered ethnological material about the Berber tribes of the desert, and tried to find out through them something about the North African interior, 'the land of long sand-dunes, whose aspect is as the waves of the ocean'. He heard about the *Fata Morgana*, 'a quite marvellous manifestation, which at certain times, particularly when the wind is still, displays on the steady air herds of standing, moving or running beasts'. He learnt of the Amazons, warrior women, 'who are said to have dwelt long ago in Libya'. And one day he chanced to hear an almost unbelievable tale.

Five reckless and high-spirited royal sons of the Nasamonian tribe, young Berbers who dwelt in southern Cyrenaica, had traversed the great sea of sand and had reached the heart of darkest Africa, the region of primeval forests, mighty rivers and Negro races. They succeeded, so Herodotus was told, in reaching a broad river with thickly forested banks, where they made contact with a hitherto unknown race of men. The Berber youths paid for their thirst for knowledge by being taken prisoners by the natives, who later however released them, and they were able to make a successful return to their homeland.

So this was the first crossing of the Sahara, the first overland expedition to the heart of Africa—an achievement which was not

equalled until the nineteenth century by the great explorer Heinrich Barth. And this great journey was carried out apparently by primitive barbarians, by nomads living on the confines of the Libyan desert! Herodotus, with his fine nose for geographical data, must have greeted the information as first-hand evidence.

He found interpreters, asked further questions of the Libyan authorities and then wrote the adventure down. He wrote, 'The Nasamonian youths, after crossing the great desert of sand, saw a plain where trees were growing, and went to them to pick fruit. But while they were picking the fruit, little men of below middle height surprised them, seized them and carried them off. The Nasamonians understood nothing of what they said. The youths were dragged through great swamps, after which they reached a village where all the inhabitants were as small and as black-skinned as their captors. In the neighbourhood of the village flowed a great stream from west to east, and they saw crocodiles in it.'

A great river full of crocodiles—in Herodotus' opinion that could only be the upper reaches of the Nile. For in those days people believed that the Nile had its source somewhere in West Africa, then flowed through the centre of the continent, turning in a southerly direction from little-known Nubia, then north to the realm of Egypt. And Herodotus had heard that pygmy savages lived on the upper reaches of the Nile, pygmies similar to those in Sataspes' report (or rather, in the Carthaginian sources on which the prince had drawn).

These last were, anyhow, nothing new; their presence was based on Egyptian accounts, which we shall discuss later. Already Homer in the *Iliad* had described a flight of cranes flying southwards that 'threatened a tribe of pygmies with death and destruction' in the swamps of the Nile. Besides this, Herodotus knew of other reports about the human dwarfs; according to these, the pygmies were said to live in caves 'in the southern regions of Black Africa, in the vast marshlands that stretch to the edge of darkness', and they had for neighbours dog-headed and satyr-like creatures, baboons and other apes, as we should call them to-day. Had the Nasamonian youths actually discovered this fabulous pygmy swampland on the unknown, vainly sought-after reaches of the upper Nile?

A glance at the map of Africa shows us that this cannot possibly have been the case and that Herodotus and other ancient

authors were also mistaken in their assumptions. If we discount a few oasis tributaries, the only large east-flowing river south of the Sahara is the Niger. It is to the Niger that all ancient references to the 'West African Nile' belong; even as late as two hundred years ago there were still geographers who, on account of the Niger's curious course, took it for a tributary, if not for a source of the Nile. And this despite the fact that since Roman times it had been established that the Nile flowed from East African lakes and the 'Mountains of the Moon'. It was not until the great explorations at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the statements of Ptolemy, Strabo, the Roman Emperor Nero and the philosopher Seneca were confirmed and light finally thrown on the nature of this river. So that the five youthful adventurers can only have travelled across Libya, the Fezzan and the present-day territory of the Tuaregs to the upper course of the Niger.

But is it possible that a small troop of half-savage Berbers could have conquered, two and a half thousand years ago, this most difficult of all the routes across the Sahara, which in 1850 demanded of the great explorer Heinrich Barth all the force he could muster and the death of many of his fellows? Horneman and his fellow-travellers died here in the sand, and Joseph Ritchie, Barth's companions Richardson and Overweg, and Major Alexander Gordon Lang was murdered here by the natives. In the *Odysseus of the Sahara*, René Caillé called the journey 'a martyrdom more terrible than death'. How was it that the Nasamonian youths were able to endure such a martyrdom? Moreover, does their account really fit the Niger? Were there pygmies by the Niger too?

Scholars are still arguing over these two questions to-day. Heinrich Barth, the discoverer of the way from Libya to the Niger, had full confidence in the Nasamonians' account, referred to it again and again. He carried, along with the Bible and Koran, the works of Herodotus—'daily companions,' as he wrote, 'constantly respected, and precious'. Georg Schweinfurth, too, the re-discoverer of the pygmies, believed in the account. But other scholars cast doubts on its authenticity, saying the most likely explanation is that the five Nasamonians had simply reached a large oasis, infested with crocodiles, in the Fezzan in southern Libya, and that there they had encountered dark-skinned people from the Tibbu tribe.

The sceptics base their doubts chiefly on the report of the black-

skinned dwarfs. And here indeed the evidence seems to go against Herodotus. The African pygmies are not black, but light-brown. The most northerly and westerly groups do not live near the Niger, but in the primeval forests of the Congo and the Cameroons. And between their territory and the southern Sahara lies a wide belt of savannah and scrub, peopled by bronze-skinned Fulbe and darker Sudanese. If the Nasamonians had really got to the Niger, then—so the critics affirm—they would not have met 'little men below middle height' but tall, strapping Sudanese Negroes and tribes whose members were well known all over the Mediterranean region as slaves of the Carthaginians.

Yet one cannot dismiss the whole story as an ethnological fairy-tale. Maybe conditions were different in Herodotus' time. The Carthaginians, it is said, obtained their slaves through Libyan intermediaries. But how did they reach Carthage? Was there at that time a slave-route across the Sahara? Was it possible to cross the murderous wilderness in those days? And above all—what kind of people were the Nasamonians?

The Roman author Gabinius writes, 'They adorn themselves by curling their hair and beard; they wear golden ornaments; they polish their teeth and file their nails. We very seldom see them touch one another as they stroll around, for they do not like their hair-dressing to be disturbed. Their horse-borne warriors have spears and swords; they guide their unsaddled horses with the help of cords which they use as bridles. The foot-soldiers use elephant skin for their shields; they carry small broad lances, wear unbelted robes, very full, and across the breast animal skins. Some also use war-chariots on whose wheels sickles are fixed . . . On their journeys across the desert they tie their water-flasks under the bellies of their horses. . . . In their manner of living they are very simple and modest. They have many wives and children and resemble the wandering shepherds of Arabia. Their kings rear excellent horses . . .'

From all this we gather that the Berbers, although living a nomad life, were highly cultivated people. Moreover, ancient sources reveal that in the distant past there must have been a lively traffic in slaves along age-old routes which perhaps led as far as the Niger and Lake Chad, and that the Berbers regularly used these routes in order to bring slaves to North Africa.

About 20 BC, using such a route, the Proconsul Cornelius Balbus succeeded, in the course of a 'geographical expedition,' in

overcoming the capital city of the Garamantans in present-day Fezzan. A hundred and twenty years later Julius Maternus, the Roman lieutenant from Numidia, was conducted by a chieftain of the same Garamantans much further south. Having undertaken a search for gold in the southern Sudan at the instigation of the Emperor Domitian, he reached 'the region of the Ethiopians, called Agisymba, a haunt of the rhinoceros'. Earlier this Agisymba had been held to be the same place as the Oasis of Air, but to-day scholarly opinion is inclined to think that a Tuareg or Tibbu chieftain led Julius Maternus along an ancient well-known trade route right through Tibesti to the region of Lake Chad. About the same time a Roman officer named Septimus Flaccus of Libya journeyed 'as far as the Ethiops', therefore probably to Negro territory on the far side of the Sahara.

The Berbers make their appearance everywhere in ancient writings as Nasamonians, Tehennu, Atalantans, Getulians and Maurusians, and always as highly civilized, warlike people, well-informed about their native land. The Phoenicians and Egyptians had contacts with them. The Carthaginians and Romans tried to colonize their territories. Finally, in two great invasions, in the seventh and eleventh centuries AD, the Arabs overran them and practically wiped out the old Berber kingdom.

So Herodotus' bold explorers can hardly have been half-savage sons of the desert. They used war-chariots, they raised cattle, horses and other domestic animals. In the city of Garama, the present-day Djerma in the Fezzan, they possessed a flourishing metropolis and had established many other towns in what are now barren stretches of the Sahara. In North African Arab myths there is frequent mention of these wonderful towns, of 'cities of brass,' of houses 'white as a dove,' of fortifications 'that reach up to heaven,' where now only sparsely-watered oases break the monotony of the sea of sand. They were able to establish a network of caravan routes that linked all the North African states with each other. So that it was quite possible for them to push further on into darkest Africa.

At that time this was only possible if the Sahara had still not taken on the character of a murderous, waterless waste. It must once have been a fruitful savannah land, rich in trees and wild life. That this was at least the case in pre-historic times has been proved by recent researches in North Africa. Oswald Spengler, Leo Frobenius and others accept that about the fourth millennium BC

the country began to change into a wilderness; the change went on slowly and steadily but even in the second millennium BC, at the height of the ancient Berber civilization, the change was not yet complete. Everywhere in the encroaching desert there were fertile stretches of country, well-watered, and dotted with lakes and swamps. There were steppes with bush and scrub. The mountains which to-day are simply barren rock were covered four to five thousand years ago by a dense primeval forest. Doubtless wide stretches of sand lay already between the bush and the cultivated lands, but the pre-historic Berbers, who used the old overland routes, still had enough room to avoid these zones of death.

Does this still hold good for the time of Herodotus in which the Nasamonian expedition was undertaken? Opinions are divided on this subject. The German geographer and Africa scholar Fritz Jäger states, 'The Sahara was no barrier to the spread of human and animal life. Water-loving plants, too, could propagate themselves over regions where to-day there are only dry savannahs or even steppes, . . . we can still, in certain favourable places, find traces of their existence.' Observations and measurements seem to indicate that the Sahara had the same climate three thousand years ago as it has now. Herodotus calls the Sahara 'a frightful wasteland, where neither water nor vegetation nor animals are to be found, a land without any drop of moisture in it'.

On the other hand English students of Africa believe that it is a man-made desert. They put forward the theory that the numerous traces of human life in historic times which are scattered over now uninhabitable tracts of the Sahara indicate that the formation of the desert in the last few thousand years is not the result of climatic change, but of human activity. In the days of Herodotus there were sufficient oases, water-holes, roads, cultivated fields and dams in the wilderness to keep off the drifting sand. These stretches of cultivated land of course need constant attention if they are not to be eroded, and choked with sand. Following the political, military and economic revolutions of ancient times, however, whole tribes in North Africa left their native parts. Others were slaughtered, or dragged away into slavery by robber bands or by soldiers of some great power. Yet others destroyed with their own hands their wells and fountains, in order to harass the invader, and in this way, through the work of human hands, the Sahara finally became what it is to-day.

Whatever the correct theory may be, it is certain that large areas

of the present desert were in those days inhabited by farming tribes, and that in ancient times at least three routes, in constant use, led across the Sahara from north to south; these routes are marked on old maps, and can be traced by signs on rock walls, dried-up river beds and by the skeletons of men and beasts who died on the way of thirst and fatigue. The first two routes by which Carthaginian Negro slaves, ivory, gold and precious stones were transported, ran from Morocco and from Tunis to the region in which Timbuctu now stands. The third route, along which the Romans journeyed to Agisymba, ran from Libya through the Fezzan to Lake Chad.

In the Neolithic Age, in which the Saharan cultures came into being, we find an even more favourable picture. The whole of North Africa was populated by huge herds of animals and covered with trees and grassy steppes, in which a nomad race with light skins, able to read and write, and gaining a living by fishing and hunting, have left us innumerable memorials of their culture. The French explorers Henri Lhote and Monsieur Dalloni discovered pillars, pyramids and rock-inscriptions in widely separated regions of North Africa. The Germans Leo Frobenius, Hugo Obermaier and Hansjoachim von der Esch investigated in the Hoggar and Tibesti *massifs* innumerable drawings of men and animals which are of an astounding realism. The Egyptian Hassanein Bey and the Hungarian L. E. Almasy finally brought together such a wealth of proofs relating to the primitive Saharan cultures that several scholars in their enthusiasm went so far as to claim that the cradle of humanity must have been in North Africa.

They found paintings and drawings in which clearly recognizable bush and savannah animals are depicted, giraffes, elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, antelopes, lions and ostriches. The hot rock is covered also with pictures of war-chariots, of archers, swimmers, masked wizards, dancers and spectral, gigantic hands. Remains of megalithic structures were found, as well as stone memorials to the dead, cavern graveyards and mounds, ancient granaries and citadels that were constructed, without mortar, of enormous blocks of stone. In the various archaeological layers were metal ornaments, glass, pearls, leather, terracotta ware, clay pots and drums, but most important of all there were the fertility symbols, statues of the Great Mother, a female figure holding her breasts with both hands.

The oldest of these finds date from the Mesolithic Age, the

latest from the beginning of the Bronze Age. These prove that for several thousand years an early, highly developed culture was in existence in the region of the Sahara, similar to the early cultures of western and southern Europe and of the Near East—to all appearances a matriarchal culture.

The Berbers inherited this Sahara-culture. They, too, had a matriarchal form of society right up to the times of the Carthaginian, Greek and Roman colonizations. Herodotus' references to 'Libyan Amazons' and Diodorus' long report *On various races of war-like women in Libya* are proofs of how strange the Greeks found the remains of the ancient matriarchal system. In ancient writers again and again we encounter such accounts of Amazons, from Spain, Italy, Africa, Hither Asia and the Black Sea district. In every case they refer to peoples in whose lives it was the custom to recognize matriarchal rights, where there was a cult of womanhood and where both sexes had equal claims in inheritances.

This was a type of culture which the Europeans of the Mediterranean despised as being 'barbaric'. This adjective, at first applied to all foreign races, came to be given only to the North Africans. The Romans called them 'Barbari,' and to-day they are still called Berbers. These ancient matriarchal societies do not seem to have succumbed to the Europeans; on the contrary, everything seems to indicate that the Berbers of the primitive Sahara took over and developed the oldest culture in Europe, the culture of Cro-Magnons of the Late Ice Age.

The Cro-Magnon race, whose colourful cave-paintings in southern French and northern Spanish caves are universally admired as the first documents of the human creative spirit, spread over the whole of north and middle Europe in various migrations about twelve to fifteen thousand years ago. They covered the greater part of Asia and later even spread to wide areas in America. But one branch of the race remained in Spain, and from there Cro-Magnon men went to settle in the regions of the Atlas Mountains, and in the course of the Mesolithic Age they also appeared in what were then the savannah lands of the Sahara. In the neighbourhood of the Algerian town of Mechta the skeletons of the original inhabitants of the Sahara have been dug up. These Mechta men were tall, long-limbed and big-boned, they had a high-domed skull, a broad face and a prominent jaw. Their relationship with the Cro-Magnon race is unmistakable, as well as their resem-

blance to the original Berbers, before these were altered by admixtures of Arab and Negro blood.

According to authoritative writers on pre-history, the Cro-Magnon men must have been blond and blue-eyed. The fair-skinned Libyans depicted on ancient Egyptian monuments are also blond and blue-eyed; among the Berbers in the Atlas region there are still blond Cro-Magnon types, tall and blue-eyed, with broad cheek-bones and an almost square jawbone. The traces of Cro-Magnon man can be followed deep into Central Africa. Ethnologists frequently refer to Mesolithic Age Africa as 'white' Africa, and surmise that European man must at that time have occupied a large part of 'black' Africa.

These fair-skinned, large-boned Cro-Magnons encountered in the eastern part of the continent small-boned Mediterranean types with long skulls and dark hair—Egyptians, Hamites, descendants of the Palaeolithic Age Aurignacian race, and bearers of quite a different culture. The result was mixed races, mixed cultures, mixed languages. In the south, the Berbers came into contact with the Negroes, and further mixings of races and cultures took place. Later they were merged with the Arabs, their habits and customs disappeared, they had to contend with the ever-growing desolation of the Sahara and became nomads wandering from oasis to oasis, 'unexpectedly descending out of the desert upon unfortunate travellers, robbing and killing, living frugally under the open heavens, thieves and warriors acknowledging no king, no law, no justice,' as Diodorus wrote, four hundred years after Herodotus.

But with the quotation from Diodorus we are anticipating the course of events. Even in Herodotus' time there existed Berber kingdoms of considerable magnitude. They reached from the Atlantic to the borders of Egypt and from the Atlas Mountains to Lake Chad. Even in the bend of the Niger—and this is of especial significance when we think of the Nasamonian report—there was, right up to the Middle Ages, a state founded by fair-skinned Berbers, the glittering kingdom of Ghana. The ethnologist Diedrich Westermann writes this about Ghana in his *History of Africa*:

'Like other Sudanese states it goes back to a Berber foundation. During long periods Berber tribes entered the Sudan and obtained political leadership there . . . In the royal succession to the throne matriarchy was the rule, according to Berber custom; that is, succession went to the brother or to a sister's eldest son. Court life

was magnificent, as in the upper classes especially there must have been great prosperity brought about by a lively trade in gold. On ceremonial occasions the king wore jewels and a golden head-dress; he was enthroned beneath a silken canopy, round which stood ten horses decked with gold . . . The entrance to his tent was guarded by huge dogs wearing collars and bells of silver and gold . . . The king was able to call on an army of two hundred thousand men.'

This description closely resembles the accounts given by Arab travellers in the early Middle Ages, when Ghana was already in decline. But Ghana was no exception. In the whole of West Africa right to the tropics archaeologists have found innumerable culture elements from the Mediterranean region which point to a constant and intensive influence exercised upon the Negroes of the Sudan by the 'West Africans'. So we must assume that the Berbers in North Africa kept in contact for a long time with the Berber-influenced Sudanese states by using the aforementioned routes—perhaps on horses, perhaps by caravan.

At the same time these routes were transport routes to the north for the 'black ebony' of classical antiquity and for tens of thousands of Sudanese slaves. And these slaves in their turn have been assimilated into the Berber races of North Africa and have endowed peoples like the Fulbe, the Tibu and the Tuareg with those Negroid characteristics which differentiate them from the pure-blooded early Berbers.

After this excursion into the history of the Sahara and its inhabitants let us return to Herodotus' notes made in Cyrene. If highly cultivated Berbers at that time had in practically all North Africa to the Sudan founded kingdoms and cities, carried out colonial undertakings and transported slaves, then the questionable Nasamonian expedition may have been only one among many. It may have been a reconnaissance patrol which went further than the normal route and led to a region until then unknown, which attracted special attention only because an inquisitive chronicler from abroad succeeded in digging out the story and publishing it. It could have been simply one of the routine expeditions that Herodotus accidentally caught wind of because he happened to be in Cyrene at the time, and which he wrote up not knowing about the old-established overland routes.

It is hardly possible to ascertain now to what region the Nasamonian explorers penetrated. Their 'little black men' can hardly

have belonged to the Tibu, for these dark-skinned, now strongly Negroid nomads of the mid-Sahara who from time to time suddenly appear with their herds of cattle at isolated oases are real giants of men. And the Tibu seem, according to the investigations of Heinrich Barth, to be the direct descendants of the ancient Garamantans, a well-known Berber tribe every word of whose language the Nasamonians could have followed.

We find a small clue in the region of the Niger. There still lives in this area a tribe of brown steppe-huntsmen, culturally close to the South African bushmen, but much bigger in stature, called the Mahalbi. This remnant of an African primitive race could possibly be the result of a mingling of pygmy-like hunting tribes with Berber infiltrations. Perhaps the Nasamonians saw such primitive steppe-huntsmen, who must have made quite a different impression upon them from that of the familiar Sudanese Negroes. That they should have described the skin colour of the newly discovered race as 'black' is excusable, even Europeans tend to say all Africans, whether coffee-coloured, bronze-coloured or golden-brown, are 'black'.

In Cyrene Herodotus interested himself in yet another Berber tribe, the slender, proud and very warlike Atalantans. In his day it was easier to do so than now. When the French explorer and priest Charles de Foucault tried at the beginning of this century 'to overcome the people's distrust, to eliminate its prejudices and establish brotherly love one for the other,' he was put to death.

The descendants of the Atalantans are called the Tuareg. They live in defiant independence, just as once they did as nomads in the dry belt of the mid-Sahara, noble-spirited and hospitable, faithful and courteous, so long as one does not try to interfere with their freedom, but fearsome and unpredictable if one tries, with European presumptuousness, to approach too close. They are the last guardians of the old splendours of the Sahara. Only a few Nasamonians remain in the small oasis of Audjila, where they speak the same tongue as in the days of Herodotus.

The gift of the Nile

We stop before the Sphinx, who gives us a fearsome look; her eyes still seem to be alive.

Gustave Flaubert

THE ETHNOLOGICAL treasure-house of Grecian Cyrene and with it western research had narrowly escaped destruction. It was in the year 569 BC, therefore a century before Herodotus, when Nebuchadnezzar was reigning in Babylon, the Jewish prophet Ezekiel was in exile waiting for the Messiah, when Solon in Athens was dispensing his famous laws, Croesus in Lydia was piling up treasures of gold, the island of Samos was making a happy living out of piracy, and Persia had freed itself from Assyrian domination in order to take the first steps towards world mastery.

In 569 the Pharaoh of Egypt—called Wahab-Re by the Egyptians, Hophra by Biblical writers and Apries by the Greeks—decided to send troops against Cyrene in order to wipe out the flourishing Hellenic colonial city in North Africa. It was not because he disliked the Greeks, but because his crack regiments forced him to do so. These troops were in fact Berbers, Libyan soldiers, and for the last five hundred years the great kingdom of Egypt had been dependent on Libya.

Libyan kings had occupied the throne of the Pharaohs during the tenth, ninth and eighth centuries BC. It is true that they were superseded in the seventh and sixth centuries first by Ethiopian-African priest-kings and then by Egyptian-Saitic Pharaohs, but the Libyans still held key posts in Egyptian affairs. The once powerful and richly cultured kingdom of the Nile was now only a shadow of her former self. The threads of political, cultural, economic, military and social life were in the hands of foreigners.

Assyrians and Jews who had fled before the armed might of Nebuchadnezzar settled everywhere in the Nile delta. Greeks dominated Egyptian trade, Phoenicians the Egyptian navy and Libyans the Egyptian army. There were tense relationships between the foreign elements—above all, between the Libyans and Greeks. The Saitic Pharaohs were reputed to be Grecophiles, which did not suit the Libyan generals and officers. And so Wahab-Re (in any case a weak ruler who had been unable to save the allied kingdom of Judah from Nebuchadnezzar's advance and so was partly responsible for the exile of the Jews to Babylon) had to give way to pressure from the Libyans and send an

army against Cyrene, the spiritual and economic centre of Greece in Africa.

He did this most unwillingly and would obviously have preferred to ally himself with the Greeks against the power-hungry Libyan officer-class. On his first defeat at the hands of the Greeks he showed his true colours by declaring that his Libyan troops were unreliable elements and sending out a general to bring them to order. Unfortunately this general, called Amasis by the Greeks, was, like all Egyptian army leaders, a Libyan, and put himself at the head of the Libyan troops, arrested Wahab-Re and had himself proclaimed Pharaoh. Wahab-Re was later throttled by Libyan soldiers. That was as good as the end of the Egyptian kingdom, which lasted only another forty-four years, when the Persians broke into the disorganized land and made it a Persian province.

What the Greek historians have to tell us about Egypt before the Persian invasion relates almost entirely to the reign of Amasis. He ruled for forty-three years, turned out to be a really intelligent and peace-loving ruler who even left the hated Greeks alone, and an affable soldier-king who liked to chat and go out drinking with ordinary men, without giving a farthing for rigid Egyptian court ceremonial.

This Berber from the Libyan desert was a good diplomat. The Greeks were allowed to remain, and he even let them have a new area to settle in, but he taxed them very heavily. He entered into relations with Babylon, with Croesus, with the tyrant Polycrates; he even sought the good graces of the Persians by giving the Egyptian princess Nitetis, daughter of the murdered Wahab-Re, in marriage to the Persian emperor Cyrus. It is one of history's ironies that the Persian conqueror of Egypt, Cambyses, was the son of Nitetis and therefore a nephew of Wahab-Re whom Amasis deposed and murdered.

The rule of Amasis is closely connected with the mysteries of the legendary 'veiled goddess' of Sais. The soldier-king was a religious rebel—the second in Egyptian history. The first, Amenophis IV, or Akhnaton, as he later called himself, lived in the fourteenth century before Christ. He was a poet, a religious enthusiast who had replaced the ancient animal-worship by a monotheist sun-cult. But the old religious forms gained the upper hand again, and the incensed priests of Ammon and Apis erased Akhnaton's name from the annals of Egyptian history. The Berber king Amasis was more successful. He introduced the worship of Neret, the Libyan

goddess of fertility and of the chase, into the capital city of Sais. She was a typical Berber matriarchal deity and was named Neit by the Egyptians. This is one of the curiosities of Egyptian religious history. The clarity, modernity and grace of Akhnaton's monotheism had not been able to vanquish the bull, ibis and jackal-headed gods of Egypt, instead, the conquest was made by an archaic fertility figure that was descended from the dawn of human history.

The insurgent Amasis stood at the end of Egypt's history, but at its beginnings lay the Nile mud, which came from the interior of Africa, spread itself over the annually-flooded river valley and proved to be an excellent fertilizer. And even in the Neolithic Age men were sowing wheat and barley there. These Neolithic children of the Nile were East Hamitic Africans, related to the present-day Galla, Somali and Masai in East Africa; the later Egyptians were their descendants. The language of the Egyptians was an East Hamitic dialect, as is spoken to-day by the natives between the Upper Nile and the Masai steppes. Egyptian skeletons, statues and countless pictures of Egyptians in their temples and monuments show the same racial characteristics as the Nubians and the Nilotic tribes, the brown-skinned hunters of the steppes and the savannah husbandmen of the Sudan.

Therefore Egypt was a great kingdom created by Africans, the most important African kingdom in the history of the world. Of African origin were such great personalities in world history as Rameses the Great, the Sun-King Akhnaton, the many Pharaohs who bear the names of Amenophis, Thutmosis and Setos. Of African inspiration are the Pyramids, the golden burial-chambers, the statues, plastic arts, temple friezes and other great Egyptian works of art. The Sphinx is an African monument, the hieroglyphs are an African script, and Ammon, Isis and Osiris are African gods. So great was the achievement of the Africans in the Nile valley that all the great men of ancient Europe journeyed there—the philosophers Thales and Anaximander, the mathematician Pythagoras, the statesman Solon and an endless stream of historians and geographers whose works are all based on Herodotus' outstanding descriptions of Egypt, to which the second volume of his history is entirely devoted.

Herodotus spent only four months in Egypt. Nevertheless in those four months he travelled the whole length of Egypt from the Nile delta to present-day Aswan. Not much was left of the old

Egyptian splendour, he had to restrict himself to a hunt for source materials. Artaxerxes' occupation troops were stationed all over the country, and somewhere in the delta region the Egyptian prince Inaros was still fighting a hopeless battle against the Asiatic invaders. Persians had slaughtered the sacred bulls of the priests of Apis. Persian troops were stationed even in the Libyan desert and on the borders of the Sudan.

The three thousand-year-old civilization was at an end. Only the priests, who were once the richest caste in the land, retained their memories of Egypt's greatness, only the ancient inscriptions and libraries could give a little more information about the past. Herodotus, provided with much less material on the history of the land than a modern Egyptologist possesses, wandered through a dead and ruined landscape.

Yet he brought back such a wealth of information from this brief expedition that the work of to-day's scholars pales by comparison. And this despite the fact that, as in Libya, he had been dependent upon interpreters and must have been constantly beset by difficulties in translation, by misunderstandings and false reports.

He studied 'the gift of the Nile,' the fertile fields of the valley that were manured by African mud. 'The river,' he wrote, 'overflows and waters the fields and after the flooding flows back within its banks. Then each man sows his field and lets his pigs out on it; they trample the seeds into the earth.' Herodotus also interested himself in the hieroglyphic script, which he was unable to decipher, visited the temple of Memphis, and the Pyramids of Giza, which seemed to him to be one of the seven wonders of the world. He came across mummies of kings, officials, wealthy citizens and animals and tried to find out why bodies in Egyptian graves did not decompose as dead bodies do in other parts of the world. His investigations were a great piece of scientific research.

Only the wealthy upper classes in Egypt could afford to be mummified and so achieve, as they thought, immortality after death. Immortality was extremely expensive. If a Pharaoh, a minister, a feudal lord or any sacred animal died, the embalmers would remove all the internal organs except the heart and the kidneys, which most races regarded as the centres of power and ability. Then the body was bathed in wine, anointed with oil and stuffed

with cloths, wood shavings, sand, herbs, resins and various essences. Sometimes the heart was represented by a scarab, the stone image of a sacred beetle.

There followed various drying processes which often lasted for months, and finally the embalmers wrapped the prepared corpse in tar-soaked linen bands and inscribed rolls of papyrus. If the dead person was of the highest rank, they would lay a gold mask on his face, and then he would be placed in a sarcophagus. The Priest would give him statues of servants or even the dead bodies of his domestics as companions, and place beside him food for the journey into the beyond.

There were yet other, rather revolting methods, Herodotus discovered and described three of them. For a non-Egyptian, this mummy cult must have been a strange, mystical and somewhat grisly ritual, especially for a materialistic Hellene who could think of the realm of the dead only with horror. It was as foreign to him as the cosmetic refinements of the Egyptian ladies, mystical as the animal-worship in Egyptian temples, disgusting as the Egyptian marriage contract, according to which a man was obliged to obey his wife!

Yet Herodotus knew that he was treading the honourable remains of an age-old human culture, and transmitted what he felt to his readers. It is astonishing how factually and objectively he describes the Egyptian religion, that singular cult of sacred bulls, cats, jackals, ibises, crocodiles and beetles. He tells how a piece of land is dedicated to each sacred animal, and the animal is fed with the products of its own little garden, or a certain sum is set aside for the animal's food. Whoever kills such an animal is himself condemned to death, indeed, very often 'the people do not wait for the judge to pass sentence, but band together and do the criminal to death in the most frightful manner.' If a dead dog or a dead cat is found in a house, then the inhabitants put on mourning, shave their heads and do not venture to touch any of the food which may happen to be in the house at the time. And if an Egyptian is travelling in a foreign country, he buys, wherever and whenever he can, cats, hawks and other creatures and takes them back to Egypt, 'even if in doing so he runs himself short of money for his return home'.

How does Herodotus interpret this animal-worship? It seemed obvious to him that it originated partly in an age-old fertility-cult,

was connected in part with the domestication of animals and finally was an aspect of sympathetic magic, which insisted that one should try to propitiate dangerous beasts of prey. Moreover, the Egyptians believed that the soul was immortal, that it was transmitted through the bodies of animals and manifested itself in them.

For the modern ethnologist the Egyptian animal-cult is the extremest form of totemism that has ever existed in human history. Herodotus, too, suspected something of this. Some Egyptian tribes, he explains, had in the dawn of time used pictures of animals as distinguishing marks, had named themselves after these animals and later 'made it a law not to slaughter any of the depicted animals, but to pray to them, look after them and honour them'.

A few writers like Erastosthenes, Strabo, Claudius, Ptolemy and finally, in 1579, Johannes Helffrich added a little to the knowledge handed down to us by Herodotus. But it was not until May 1798, when Napoleon began his Egyptian campaign, taking along with him a whole staff of scholars, that modern Egyptology was founded. A draughtsman in the Napoleonic army called Dominique Vivant Denon prepared countless drawings of Egyptian antiquities, while a staff of French explorers eagerly collected them for French museums. This is how universal interest was first awakened in the wonders and mysteries of the age-old land of the Nile, an interest that was to lead to the opening of the pyramids and sarcophagi, the decipherment of the hieroglyphics and the unearthing of numberless artistic treasures.

It is only now being discovered that the Egyptians are not only worthy subjects of ethnological research, but that they, too, left behind them extremely interesting material for the study of foreign peoples. In Tell-el-Amerna innumerable clay tablets were found covered with Babylonian cuneiform characters, the letters of Hither Asian kings and vassals to Pharaohs Amenophis III and Akhnaton. To-day they are regarded as the most important early documents on the history of Palestine. In the temple of Deir-el-Bahari, the ceremonial temple of Hatshepsut, there have been found indications that allow us to infer the former existence of relationships between Egypt and South-East Africa. The well-known story of Sinuhe the Egyptian describes the experiences of a banished Egyptian dignitary in Syria.

Egypt's greatest achievement in this direction was connected with the African interior, for everything known to the Ancient

World about the sources of the Nile, the Negro and Hamitic tribes of East Africa and the pygmies of the Congo was drawn from Egyptian accounts. Until well on into the Middle Ages these sources were practically the only factual bases on which Europe could rely for information about Africa.

Harchuf and his discoveries

He who rebels is doomed; therefore
bow the neck before authority!

Egyptian saying

ON HIS FOURTH journey Harchuf was at last successful. He caught the creature that he had sought for so long, transported it back to the north's more civilized regions, and at once informed his employer. The latter, highly delighted with this unusual capture, showered Harchuf with favours and set a whole staff to work in order to bring the much-sought-after creature safe and sound to its destination. There the freak was widely exhibited, high society came to gape at it, and the scribes set down the event in the annals.

This event took place about 2300 BC. The employer was called Phiopts II, Pharaoh of Egypt, and Harchuf, the governor and tax-collector in the southern part of the kingdom, also occupied himself in the upper reaches of the Nile as supplier of human wares to the royal court. The object which he had, after a great deal of trouble, finally succeeded in capturing measured just four and a half feet, looked rather like a bashful child and was a Bambuti, an Akka pygmy from the region of what is now Lake Albert in the north-east corner of the Congo.

This was the first time that an Egyptian had by-passed the Nubian-Cushitic intermediaries and reached the swamps, lakes and primeval forests of the upper Nile, those regions from which were brought the black-skinned human goods needed for the erection of pyramids, temples, obelisks and canals, women for aristocratic harems and houses of joy and impish pygmies for the amusement of the court.

These Akka pygmies did not allow themselves to be transported of their own free will from their primeval jungle to these dance entertainments in the great cities of the Nile delta. Until now they had been captured, whenever possible, by Nubians, who

trained them and sold them to Egypt at a good price. But after Harchuf's expedition it seemed as if Nubian intermediaries would no longer be required.

It seemed so. Harchuf lived in a fortunate period in which the Egyptians had good relations with the southern kingdom of Cush, which included present-day Nubia, the northern Sudan and later the southern reaches of the Sudan, Abyssinia and the regions round the East African lakes. It was only in Nubia that any kind of central government had been introduced, the rest of East Africa was a savage hinterland to the Nubians. But they undertook occasional expeditions into the hinterland—the land of the Ethiopians.

Because of these good relations, Egyptian explorers and traders could travel up the Nile to the interior of Africa, could import gold and slaves, ivory, leopard skins and ostrich feathers in whatever quantities they pleased and ran no danger of attack and murder by the proud Sudanese. Cush was to all intents and purposes a vassal of Egypt, a protectorate kept in subjection by numerous Egyptian fortresses and military bases—just as in the years between 1899 and 1951 the Sudan was an Anglo-Egyptian protectorate. Theoretically the kingdom of Egypt stretched from the Mediterranean to the sources of the Nile.

This had not always been the case, and was not to remain so. Egyptian-Sudanese relations have had a very changeable history during their five thousand years. They began in approximately 2900 BC with a raid on Nubia by the Pharaoh Snefru, in which seventy thousand Sudanese and Negroes, two hundred thousand head of cattle and uncountable masses of precious objects were taken as booty. This was followed by various periods of war and peace, punitive raids and treaties of friendship. Although the Egyptians were culturally far superior to the inhabitants of Cush, an almost sentimental love-hate relationship existed between these two closely-connected nations. This is explained by Greek authors who claim 'that they have common customs and manners, and that Egypt was originally nothing more than an Ethiopian colony'.

About 1720 BC, when the Indo-Asiatic shepherd tribe of the Hyksos attacked Egypt, Cush seceded from the kingdom of the Nile. The new kingdom's Pharaohs conquered it again, up to the sixth cataract, bringing the Egyptians once more into contact with the Negro tribes of the southern Sudan. So Rameses the Great,

about 1250 BC, could once more direct his attention to the swamps of the Upper Nile. A century and a half later Egypt was broken up into several provinces. Cush once more declared its independence and built up a great Ethiopian kingdom with the capital city at Napata. Lieutenants, who had deserted from the Egyptian armies, played a substantial political role. And in the eighth century BC, when Libyan kings were on the throne of the Pharaohs, this kingdom of Napata turned the tables on its former allies by gaining mastery over Egypt through its priest-kings Piankhi, Shabaka and Tirhaka, who turned Egypt into an Ethiopian protectorate.

The Nubian golden age lasted about a century. Then once again the Egyptians took the lead, under the Saitic Pharaohs, and the Cushites had to withdraw to their own land. After the period under Amasis, the Saitic Pharaohs were followed, in 525, by the Persian conquerors. And the Sudan, separated from then on from Egypt, sank into an untroubled obscurity, from which it was roused only infrequently—in the fourth century AD by Coptic Christians, in the Middle Ages by Arabs and Turks and in modern times by Mahdists, the British and the Egyptians.

Thanks to this close connection between the Middle and the Upper Nile, the Egyptians possessed wonderful material for the study of ethnology. There were their nearest relatives, the East Hamitic Cushites, the present-day Nubians, Bedja, Galla, Danakil and Somali. There were races in which ran the blood of both Hamitic and Negro tribes, the Nilotic races, as they are called by ethnologists to-day—Dinka, Shilluk, Nuer and Masai. There were East African Negro tribes, black-skinned hunters and trophy-collectors. Finally there were the pygmies of the primeval forest. Carthaginians and Libyans had come across Sudanese almost exclusively in West Africa. In the Sudan itself however there was a mixture of peoples and cultures that must have been the joy of all ethnologists.

Egyptian scholars must have been fascinated, too. For it is from ancient Egypt that we have the first clear division of mankind into four racial groups—an extremely modern classification. While the Greeks, as we know, distinguished only between Hellenes and Barbarians, and while the other peoples of antiquity, with the exception of the Hebrews, have left behind them nothing worthy of note on this subject, the Egyptians divided mankind thus:

<i>Egyptian Denotation</i>	<i>Races</i>	<i>Modern Denotation</i>
Ludu	Egyptians, Cushites	East Hamitic
Aamu	Assyrians, Babylonians, Jews, Arabs	Semitic
Nahasu	Dark-skinned Africans	Nilotic and Negro
Tamahu	Europeans, Libyans, Persians	Indo-European and Berber

Until the beginning of the twentieth century no ethnologist had made any better attempt at division.

The Egyptians were interested in the African peoples from a practical as well as a theoretical point of view—and here our modern morality judges them severely. In all the hundreds of years when Egypt was in relationship with the Sudan, dark-skinned slaves were taken down the Nile, some of them caught and later sold by Nubians, some stolen as booty by the troops of Egyptian rulers. They were members of Nilotic races who resembled the Shilluk, the Nuer and the Dinka, Galla and Somali from Ethiopia, Azande and Mangbettu from the region of the lakes, Waganda and Kikuyu from East Africa. The region of the Upper Nile was the greatest slave-distributing centre ever known. And there was presumably another route—an overland route to the African interior called the route of the oases, which led from Upper Egypt through the Sudan to Lake Chad, and along which people of the type of the present-day Tibbu and Hausa could also be captured for the kingdom of the Nile.

Nilotic and Negro peoples dragged great cubes of stone, some weighing hundreds of tons, which went into the making of the Pyramids. They rowed in Egyptian galleys and worked in Egyptian gold-mines. They died for Egypt's canals, Nubia's priest-kings, Abyssinia's princes, Arabia's trade interests and Islam's plans for world domination. In the second half of the last century they were still put up for sale in Arab markets, to-day they still lead a slave-like existence in some oriental lands.

It was through the Egyptians that the Cretans and then the Greeks came to know the Negroes. In the first half of the seventh century BC, Greek colonists from Miletus had founded, with Egyptian permission, the port of Naucratis in the Nile delta. Naucratis was for a long time the sole harbour on the Nile in which foreign ships might berth. For the Greeks it became the

chief market for slaves, for Negroes who presumably came from the district of the White Nile.

Naucratis must have become a slave-centre in the second half of the sixth century BC, when the soldier-king Amasis ruled in Egypt, because from this period vases have been discovered on which Negroes are depicted as servants, shoe-cleaners, dancers and singers. The Hellenes called these luxury-slaves 'Amaseos'. Whether this word is to be identified with Amazigh, the general North African term for all Berbers, or with Amasis is not known for certain. Obviously the latter interpretation is the more likely, for the Greeks could not bear Amasis and so perhaps out of mockery called their black slaves 'Amasis-folk'. Even in Rome every other slave was called Amasix, Maxyx, Maxitanus or simply Max.

Greek scholarship took no interest in the Negroes until six hundred years after the founding of Naucratis. About the time of the birth of Christ the historians Diodorus and Strabo began to classify the Ethiopian races and to put down in writing whatever they knew of their customs. In the second century AD, the celebrated medical scholar Galen, the personal doctor to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, gave us the first anthropological description of the Negro race.

According to Galen the Negro is characterized by his crinkly hair, meagre growth of beard, large nostrils, thick lips, evil body-smell and black complexion. He is splay-fingered, splay-footed, has a long penis and is passionately fond of all kinds of games and pleasures. In the main, these observations are true; there is only a very noticeable disdain in the way Galen puts them together and later writes of 'this race which is completely lacking in any kind of culture'. As Galen was the leading medical and anthropological authority in Roman times, in the Middle Ages and up to the beginning of the modern era, his followers too did not think much of Negroes. The Africans, both black and brown, were in this way marked for ever and in the eyes of the majority of people have remained just as Galen described them.

The Greeks make only one mention, outside Homer and Herodotus, of the pygmies. It comes from Aristotle and reads, 'The cranes fly as far as the lakes in Upper Egypt, where the Nile rises; in this region live the pygmies. This is no fable, but the truth.' It is interesting that Aristotle mentions the cranes which already in Homer had been associated with the pygmies. Presumably both

authors—though they are separated by hundreds of years—used the same Egyptian source, perhaps Harchuf's original account.

It is impossible to estimate how many pygmies were brought across the Sudan to Egypt in ancient times, but it is fairly certain that they all perished miserably in a climate to which they were not accustomed. They were the predecessors of European court dwarfs and royal jesters, and though they danced and sang for the entertainment of their masters, the Bambuti can never have understood what the bronze-skinned lords in their palaces really wanted. In a land like Egypt there was no sentimentality, no pity. When Herodotus was travelling in Egypt, he still saw everywhere hordes of naked black slaves, 'eaters of roots and locusts', as he called them, chewing garlic, sweating, groaning, driven to work by the whips of cruel overseers.

In conclusion, the Grecian ethnographers—as if in anticipation of Darwin's theories—stated that 'the Ethiopians were the earliest men, for it is quite clear that this land, the closest to the sun, brought forth the first living creatures'.

Not until five hundred years after Herodotus could Europeans estimate the correctness of Greek sources and assumptions with their own eyes. The Emperor Nero sent two centurions to discover the source of the Nile. They did not find it, but they reached the swamps of Bahr-el-Ghazal, the land of the Shilluk in the southern Sudan. And from this people they learnt that 'there is a race of pygmies living between the lakes where the Nile rises'.

This linked the centurions with Harchuf, who had made his journey twenty-three centuries earlier. Eighteen more centuries were to pass before the Akka pygmies were discovered and definitely recorded, along with the many black- and brown-skinned peoples dwelling in the forests and savannahs and round the rivers in the regions of the upper Nile.

Secrets of a corpulent lady

... a great swarm of people clothed in silk and velvet, great states governed with the most detailed precision, mighty rulers, rich industries, harmoniously-developed cultures of great beauty.

Leo Frobenius on Ancient Africa

THE PORTUGUESE POET Luis de Camões made his Spirit of the Cape of Good Hope say: 'No human eye did ever see my promontory, yet ye venture to sail there!' Camões lived in the sixteenth century. The phrase quoted is to be found in his epic about the great Portuguese voyages of discovery, and the men he addresses are Captain Bartolomëu Diaz and Vasco da Gama.

He could not know that, long before his time, many a human eye had dwelt upon the contours of the Cape. In fact, he might have found a reference to an undertaking astoundingly similar to that carried out by the Portuguese in the fourth volume of Herodotus' *Works*—excepting that the voyage of discovery was along the east, not the west coast of Africa. But this passage—it is paragraph forty-two—was criticized and mocked at in Herodotus' own day. The author himself had some doubts about the correctness of his details.

It concerns the report contained in the account of the Phoenician-Egyptian circumnavigation of Africa made at the command of Pharaoh Necho II, which says that at the Cape the midday sun was seen to stand in the north, or rather, as the original text says, 'to the right'. At that point the seafarers did indeed have the sun on their right when they turned round the Cape from east to west. But Herodotus would not have realized that; we ourselves know the truth of this phenomena only since the sixteenth century, when Copernicus advanced his revolutionary views of the world and the universe. The very passage in Herodotus that people had laughed at so heartily is to-day evidence that Necho's voyage to South Africa was no myth. Alexander von Humboldt was the first to suggest that the story was by no means improbable. Ever since then, men have been arguing about whether Necho's crew made an accidental discovery, or whether, as the archaeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld asserts, voyages from Egypt to South Africa were quite common in ancient times.

Let us begin with an event which took place in 1491 BC, that is,

nine hundred years before the voyage of Necho's crew. In that year an Egyptian expedition returned home from the land of Punt, bringing with them, besides gold, myrrh and other treasures, a few of the natives, who moreover were very well treated, not being destined to slavery, despite their extremely curious habits. We know at least what the ladies of Punt looked like, for we possess a faithful likeness of one of the female inhabitants, to be found on a frieze in the temple of Deir-el-Bahari, to the west of the ancient Egyptian royal city of Thebes.

This temple is one of the most magnificent structures of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty, the greatest dynasty of all. It was erected in honour of Pharaoh Thutmosis I, planned and conceived by Queen Hatshepsut, and built, over a period of many years, by the labour of tens of thousands of slaves of all colours. It was Thutmosis' daughter Hatshepsut, a brilliant ruler and a really emancipated woman who even, in certain portraits, wears an artificial beard, who had sent the expedition to look for gold and myrrh and later had the crew's exploits immortalized on the temple walls. The frieze which concerns us here shows, beside an imperious Egyptian, several servants carrying gifts, a rather indignant peacock and a very corpulent exotic female—the wife of the chieftain of Punt.

If we are to believe this picture, the land of Punt must have lain not somewhere on the Red Sea, nor in the region of the Somaliland coast, but in south-east Africa. The lady's rear shows all the signs of *steatopygia*—the storing of fat in the buttocks—which is one of the characteristics of Hottentot women. Moreover, her corpulence is not the artificially-induced fat common in other East African Negroes, but a true case of *steatopygia*. The chieftain of Punt, on the other hand, does not look like a Hottentot. He has a beard, is well-dressed, with a European cast of features, and could be one of the Hamitic or ancient Mediterranean races. Had a bearded prince of Hamitic or European type perhaps married a Hottentot woman? And what can we conclude from this possibility about the situation of the land of Punt?

As far as we know, fat-storing, along with other anthropological features like the Hottentot apron and peppercorn hair occurs only among the Khoi-San races, that is to say, among the South African Hottentots and Bushmen. The Khoi-San group once had a much wider distribution than it has now, reaching across the northern bank of the Zambesi, and only later came to be driven into the

desert regions of the south by the Bantu. It is certain that forefathers of the Hottentots dwelt in Mashonaland at the time of Hatshepsut. And there is another clue pointing to Mashonaland in present-day Southern Rhodesia: Zimbabwe.

We shall leave this clue for the moment and look into the very earliest journeys which the Egyptians made to the land of Punt, that is, before Hatshepsut's time. Obviously 'the land of Punt' was only a collective name for all the regions along the African east coast which the Egyptians discovered in the course of time and from which they imported incense, gold, antimony and precious stones, costly woods, ivory, leopard-skins, live apes and many kinds of slaves. Five thousand years ago, under the Pharaoh Sahure, present-day Eritrea was what was still understood by 'Punt', later the name included also Somaliland. Egyptian ships, voyaging ever further and further south, reached the East African coast, and finally, in the fifteenth century before Christ, they reached—if our investigations are correct—South Africa.

In proof that Egyptians reached South Africa—or, more exactly, Mashonaland—we have the Hottentot lady on the temple fresco, the gold mines which Rameses III opened up in the Dark Continent, and Necho's circumnavigation of Africa, referred to by Herodotus. This extraordinary achievement can only be explained if we accept that Egyptian bases were already long-established on the eastern and southern coasts of Africa. The Egyptians would scarcely have sailed off into the unknown regions of the far south. As did the Carthaginian Hanno, and the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, they must have sailed gradually from one base to another along the African coast. Is one of these bases, perhaps the most important of all, identical with Zimbabwe?

Zimbabwe is a collection of ruins on the Upper Sabi in Mashonaland, discovered in 1871 by the German explorer Karl Mauch. The site consists, as far as can be made out, of a kind of 'temple', an 'acropolis', and the remains of various structures. The first excavation showed that some of these ruins were from prehistoric, others from much later periods. The site is surrounded by a wall eleven metres high and three to five metres thick; two great conical towers guard the area of fortifications. Nearby are found traces of ancient gold-mines, in which, according to Carl Peters and other African travellers, men of short stature must have worked.

These could have been relatives of the Hottentots. Had the

corpulent lady of Punt lived in Zimbabwe? If not, who can have lived there?

The explorer Mauch and the English archaeologists Bent and Hall have tried to identify Zimbabwe with the Ophir of the Bible, with the wealthy land from which King Solomon and the Phoenician ruler Hiram of Tyre carried off, about 945 BC, hundredweights of gold and masses of precious stones, ivory, slaves and all kinds of costly works of art. Other scholars have held the ruins to be variously of Egyptian, Cretan, Etruscan, Sabaean, Phoenician, Persian, Sumerian, ancient Indian or modern Bantu origin. Still others, for example the ethnologist Paul Schebesta, were able to discover connections between the Zimbabwe culture and that of the Upper Nile territory, making Zimbabwe an ancient Hamitic colony. Hugo Bernatzik called Zimbabwe 'a pre-historic monument whose foundation is due to external impulses coming presumably from one of the coastal regions of the Indian Ocean'. Randall MacIver and Miss G. Caton-Thompson declared finally that the structures could only have been erected in the ninth century AD.

Later about five hundred ruins of a similar nature, though not so large and well-preserved, were discovered in Southern Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa, Bechuanaland, the Northern Transvaal and Angola, that is, practically speaking, the larger part of northern and middle South Africa. The ruins are roofless circular structures and oval to circular holes in the earth about two metres deep and three to five metres in diameter, whose walls are similar to those of Zimbabwe, covered with unmortared granite blocks. Moreover, there are remains of gold-mine workings and terraced lay-outs which obviously were used for agricultural purposes and still show traces of irrigation channels.

Not one of the races mentioned earlier could have established so many colonies over such a large area. Was Zimbabwe not a colony, but an African foundation—either the product of a Negro culture coming suddenly into blossom in the Early Middle Ages, or the fortified metropolis of an ancient, autochthonous culture-kingdom, that in antiquity had already had trade connections with the Egyptians? And was this ancient South African kingdom called 'Punt' by the Egyptians, 'Ophir' by the Phoenicians?

An answer was given to these questions in 1950, when the American Willard F. Libby evolved a test by which the age of organic remains from pre-historic and historic times could be

given exactly. This method is called the C-14 Test. It depends on the scientific fact, established by Libby, that every organism contains small quantities of radio-active carbon isotope C-14. If the organism dies, C-14 gradually diminishes. If a certain quantity of C-14 is discovered in pre-historic or historic objects of an organic nature—a piece of wood, textile or bone—then it can be ascertained how old the object is.

Organic remains from Zimbabwe were tested, and the result showed that they came, not from pre-historic times, but from around the fifth to seventh centuries AD! At that date the Egyptian kingdom no longer existed and there was no ancient oriental influence on Africa's culture, but there was a very lively traffic between Arabia, India and East Africa.

Arabian traders took lances, axes, daggers, glass objects and much else to East Africa, exchanging their ware for ivory, rhinoceros horn, tortoise-shell, palm oil and slaves. Were Arabian traders the founders of Zimbabwe? At least they played a part in its foundation. Pearls of Southern Indian and Malayan origin, found in Zimbabwe, seem to have been brought there by Arabs. And the Chinese porcelain? In early medieval Chinese geographical works the East African coast is called 'Ts'ong-Pa', as the land 'whose products are elephant teeth, native gold, amber and yellow sandalwood'.

So Zimbabwe appears to be either an Arabian colony or an early medieval Negro creation which received its impetus from the Arabs. But it was not as simple as all that. In the fifth to seventh centuries AD, were there really Negroes in Mashonaland? It appears not. From the oral traditions of the races themselves and according also to Arabian sources, the great Bantu migrations to South Africa did not begin until the tenth century AD and came to an end round the middle of the eighteenth century. If there were no Negroes in the Zimbabwe region, with whom did the early medieval Arabs establish their trade contacts? With primitive Bushmen? With Hottentots? Who created the five hundred or so sites which are scattered over the whole of South Africa? Are these much older than the C-14-tested buildings of Zimbabwe?

South Africa, too, it appears, was once, just as the Sahara region was, named 'White Africa', inhabited by a race which recalls astonishingly the Cro-Magnon men of the Late Ice Age in Europe, the creators of cave paintings and the first human culture. In South Africa we know of age-old skeletons which were dug out of

the soil of the Cape and the Transvaal, we know of tools, rock-paintings, other cultural indications. The South African Cro-Magnon type is called Boskop Man. He is distinguished by a particularly large skull, powerful jaw and robust build; the size of his cranium exceeds that of modern man by about two hundred cubic centimetres.

Anthropologists assume that this Boskop race did not originate in South Africa, but migrated from the north. The route from the Nile over the East African savannahs to the southern part of the continent must already in pre-historic times have been well-trodden. Boskop men were the first to leave their traces here, then steppe hunters from ancient Africa, then East Hamitic shepherds and nomads, and finally the present-day inhabitants, Negroes.

In the Mesolithic and Neolithic Ages he was still in existence; stone and bone implements reveal that he developed in South Africa early cultures similar to those of his relatives in Europe and Asia. But suddenly, towards the end of the Neolithic Age, we find in South Africa a new and different race of people—the dwarfish, primitive Bushmen. To-day, most anthropologists accept that the Boskop race, once so tall and strong and promising, degenerated to the level of Bushmen—either through climatic influences or by being driven into the desert by more powerful tribes.

But did Boskop man succumb to his Bushman fate everywhere in South Africa? There was really no need to in that region rich in minerals and well-endowed by Nature. It would have been possible for them there to have made the leap forward into the Bronze Age, to found settlements, open mines and enter into cultural and commercial competition with the peoples of the Mediterranean and the Orient. Were survivors of Boskop Man the carriers of the ancient Rhodesian culture, the people of Punt?

This is a cloudy hypothesis, for which no proof exists, and no counter-evidence, either. Whatever the answer, a second light-skinned race played its part in South African pre-history. These were the East Hamitic peoples, the relatives of the ancient Egyptians. East Hamitic shepherd tribes took the Nile-East Africa route to the south also. Several South African tribes like the Herero have undoubtedly a considerable Hamitic strain in their blood; the Hottentots are thought to be a mixture of Bushmen and Hamitic tribes.

Now comes the astonishing thing: even in more recent histori-

cal times there were still light-skinned races in South Africa, by no means primitive hunters, but bearers of a true civilization. We possess unequivocal documents about their existence—and dating from that very time in which Queen Hatshepsut sent out her expeditions to Punt. These documents are the South African rock-paintings.

As early as the end of the First World War, Reinhard Maack discovered in the Tsissab Ravine in the Brandberg Mountains of South Africa the painting of a light-skinned figure, running fully-clothed with a bow and arrow, which is known now as 'the white lady of Tsissab'. The 'lady'—which later examination revealed to be a person of the masculine gender—has light skin, European-Hither Asian or at least Hamitic features and red hair. She is adorned with pearls and bangles and carries a drinking vessel made from half an ostrich-egg. Without any doubt we are in the presence here of the representative of a civilized nation.

The discovery was forgotten until the painting was re-discovered by South African explorers in 1937. Since then many other similar figures have been found in South African rock-frescoes. Celebrated scholars have devoted themselves to the solving of the mystery. The expert on pre-history, Raymond Dart, then the Italian Grassi, the Africa scholar, Leo Frobenius, and finally in the years 1942 to 1952 the French Abbé Henri Breuil, that great chronicler of European Ice Age art, have given us their opinions.

These men came to the conclusion that the pictures must be at least three to four thousand years old—the C-14 test gives them an age of about three and a half thousand years. That would be around the time when the most important Egyptian expeditions to Punt took place. The frescoes are definitely not by Bushmen or Hottentots or Negroes, for the personages depicted in them belonged to a race which was closely related to the peoples of the Mediterranean, or else showed astonishing physical and intellectual parallels to them.

We see light-skinned men hunting the antelope. We see processions of whites, wearing clothes and shoes, encountering pygmy-like Bushmen. Between the two races stands, with intercessionary gestures, the interpreter. Masked magicians, magic hands, scenes of exorcism, age-old subjects of Mediterranean myths, such as the man-eating animal are also shown. The 'whites' in these pictures are definitely not Indo-Europeans, but are in general of South

European-Oriental-North African type—the type known to the layman to-day as 'Orientals'.

Widely-differing opinions were put forward about the significance of the rock paintings. In this respect the Abbé Breuil was very careful and reserved; he simply pointed out that there were highly interesting resemblances between these pictures and works of art from the Egyptian-Cretan-Mycenaean civilization. Other interpreters put forward the Malayan-Polynesian settlers of Madagascar and even ancestors of the ancient Sumerians as originators of South African rock-painting. The most common hypothesis suggests that people from the Mediterranean area, taking advantage of favourable monsoon winds, sailed along the East African coast and then made their way over Mashonaland, using a southern equatorial route, until they reached South West Africa. A few scholars even identify the Egyptian voyagers to the land of Punt with the mysterious rock-painters.

This would not be impossible, it would explain the amazing parallels between ancient Egyptian and ancient South African art, the voyages to Punt and Ophir, Necho's circumnavigation of Africa, and the discoveries at Zimbabwe. But it could have been quite otherwise. Can one really admit that ancient Mediterranean peoples undertook the long sea-voyage to South Africa, crossed the continent, settled in the rocky mountain region in the south-west, and left countless pictures behind them, if South Africa was then only wild, uncultivated Bushmen's territory? That would presume an achievement in colonization unique in the history of civilization.

The whole thing would be more credible if the people in question, sailing from the Mediterranean, had come across an ancient civilization, with settlements, towns, roads, and with natives with whom they could trade. Did the painters *have* to be Egyptians, Cretans or Mycenaeans? Could they not have been civilized East Hamitic people, who here created a southerly equivalent to the land of Cush? Or—and this would be the most daring hypothesis—were the creators of the rock-paintings descendants of the Boskop Man, who developed here a civilization similar to that of their relatives in Europe and North Africa?

If Hamitic people or other unknown white Africans painted the picture in the Tsissab Ravine, then they could also be the people of Punt and Ophir, the trade associates of the ancient Egyptians and

Phoenicians, the bearers of Eritrean culture suggested by Frobenius and the founders of a hypothetical pre-historic Zimbabwe. The bearded prince on the frieze at Deir-el-Bahari would then be a white African. But what about the corpulent lady, the 'Hottentot'?

To-day it is difficult to think of a Hottentot as the queen of an African gold-producing country. But why should the king of Punt not have married a native woman? Even in modern times Boer settlers have taken Hottentot women as their brides. That Hamitic-White-African culture elements live on in the Hottentot race is certain. To-day they still breed the ancient Egyptian long-horned cattle, and they still—those who are not Christians—carry on a cult of the stars as the ancient Egyptians did. According to philologists their speech is related not only to certain isolated Hamitic languages in East Africa, but also to ancient Egyptian.

We shall satisfy ourselves with these questions, hypotheses and statements and look at the later course of South African civilization. At once we find a great historical gap. But in the first century AD, Sabaeen Arabs, and perhaps Persians and Indians too, sailed to East Africa, founded Rhodesia, reconstructed the old mine-workings and shafts and built—so it is assumed to-day—that very city of Zimbabwe whose ruins are preserved to this day. Then came black-skinned conquerors, Bantu Negroes of the Shona tribe who gave their name to Mashonaland and founded the greatest Negro kingdom of all times in the region of Zimbabwe—the kingdom of the mines.

The Shona encountered quite obviously an ancient civilization in Zimbabwe, which they developed to fit their own requirements. The dynasty of the 'Rulers of the Mines' was a Negro one, but its culture, customs and civilization clearly show foreign influences—particularly Egyptian. Worship of the sun and moon, marriage between royal brothers and sisters, the princesses' complete freedom in love, the sacrifice of first-fruits—these are only a few of the parallels between Egypt and the Shona kingdom. Interesting, too, is an old Portuguese report which says that many of the subjects of the 'Emperor of the Mines' were light-skinned, slim-bodied men of almost European appearance.

The connections between the Nile and the Zambesi are so striking, between the land of Punt and the mining area of the later Zimbabwe so numerous, that it is difficult to discount the former

existence of Egyptian contacts with South Africa. The last visitors from the Nile who made a stop in the land of Punt may have been Necho's seafarers. Unfortunately Herodotus says nothing about that, otherwise perhaps we should know much more about the civilization and the golden culture of ancient South Africa.

CHAPTER III

STORM OVER ASIA

The Tower of Babel: From Assyria to Ararat: The Chosen People: The Queen of Sheba: The tribes of the steppes

The Tower of Babel

If you really think about it, people on the whole are very stupid.

Inscription on a Babylonian clay tablet.

NITOKRIS MUST HAVE been a real genius, the shining example of a clever, energetic queen, highly gifted in the art of strategy. She dammed the Euphrates, constructed a bewildering maze of canals to prevent foreign fleets from reaching Babylon, and had a brick bridge built over the river, whose planks were withdrawn every night, 'so that the townspeople should not cross over in the hours of darkness in order to rob one another'.

All her enterprises were a success. So she was able to die in peace, but before her death she had thought of a trick whose effect was seen only long after she had died. On her grave-stone stood, written in cuneiform characters, the following sentence, 'If one of my descendants should be in need of money, let him open my grave and take as much as he pleases; but he must do this only if he is really in desperate need, otherwise things will go badly with him.' Her descendants, superstitious like all Babylonians, cast many a covetous glance at the grave, but refrained from opening it. The Persian conqueror Darius finally broke in—not because he was in need, but because he thought it was economically unsound to let Nitokris' wealth moulder away in a gloomy catacomb. He had the grave searched but found nothing except a clay tablet with the signature of the deceased, saying, 'If you weren't the greediest and most avaricious of all men, you would never have managed to desecrate a tomb!'

We do not know how Darius reacted to that. Apart from this anecdote we know little about Nitokris. We know the author of

the story—Herodotus. Apparently Herodotus repeated Babylonian gossip in order to make his history a little more amusing. And for Grecian readers, a better introduction to his description of the wonder city of Babylon could not have been found.

Later researchers into the history of ancient Bab-ilu, the 'Gateway of the Lords', have often confessed in letters and diaries how much they envied Herodotus. In 1900, Robert Koldewey, looking for the site of historic Babylon, had to scramble around a barren, dusty, jackal-infested wilderness in the company of thievish Arabs, but in the Greek historian's time there was a mighty double wall with a hundred gates, guarded by six hundred towers, encircling splendid temples full of golden statues and strange animal reliefs, good-looking houses with three to four roofs, shady gardens and palm groves. Above all, the 'Navel of the World' could be admired there—the High Temple of Etemenanki, the ziggurat of Babylon, the 'House that is the foundation of earth and heaven'.

The tower of Babel, that Herodotus saw and that Koldewey dug up, was no longer the structure whose pinnacle, as the Bible says, reached to heaven. It belonged to the times of Nabupolassar and Nebuchadnezzar; was therefore at the time of Herodotus' visit at least a hundred and fifty years old and moreover had been despoiled by the Persians to such an extent that a hundred years later even Alexander the Great and all his armies could not succeed in removing all the rubble. But it stood on the foundations of earlier ziggurats, of which the first—in the times of the Sumerians—was perhaps identical with the biblical tower.

Perhaps. Because more than five thousand years ago, before Babylon existed, the Sumerians were building their High Temples everywhere in the southern region between the Tigris and the Euphrates. So the legend of the many tongues of Babylon may be based on the much older ziggurat of Ur or on some other structure in remote antiquity. At the beginning of the early history of the Jews—still of a mythical nature—when the great ancestor Abraham migrated from Mesopotamia to Palestine and took the traditions of his old home with him to the Promised Land, Babylon was still just a very insignificant little town.

Now the Etemenanki of Babylon and its predecessors were colossal and unique monuments, real 'towers of pride' by which the fantasy and imaginative power of all the peoples of the orient must have been captured. They represented a high standard of technical achievement and human endeavour. How many peoples

there were there, none of which understood the languages of the others! In the south there were Sumerians and Elamites, in the north Akkadians and Assyrians, semitic Babylonians and Aramacans, Indo-Iranian Hurrians and Mitanni, Indo-European Medes and Hittites, nomadic Ammonites, Edomites and Moabites—people with white, yellow and brown skins, speaking all kinds of different languages, who built and destroyed great empires for four thousand years over a region that spread from the Jordan to the mouth of the Euphrates and from the Caucasus to the Arabian wildernesses.

Here the Sumerians invented their cuneiform script, studied astronomy and evolved the art of building with bricks. Here Assyria grew to be a political power of world importance. Here the Cassites, a mountain tribe of unknown origin, led the first great slave-insurrection in the history of the world, and ruled for almost six hundred years over Babylon. Here Nebuchadnezzar built a palatial city and Belshazzar in that very city saw the letters of fire written on the wall. From Chaldea came the legendary tribal ancestors of the Jews.

And here Herodotus stood before the wonder of the world, the symbol of human power and powerlessness, the Tower of Babel. He describes it as a structure consisting of seven towers rising out of one another on a concentric base that was ninety metres in diameter. 'A stairway,' he writes, 'winds in a spiral round all the towers; midway there is a resting-place with seats, where those who are ascending the tower may repose their limbs.' On this pyramid of towers stood the Temple of Marduk, the King of the Gods; gleaming blue and gold in the southern sun. It had lost much of its splendour after the soldiers of Xerxes had despoiled it, but the Chaldean priests and astronomers who tended the altars could still tell the Greek traveller some interesting details.

'In the middle of the temple,' so Herodotus discovered, 'stands a large, beautifully-canopied bed . . . Every night in this bed sleeps a woman chosen by the god.' This woman had always to be in readiness in the Temple's holy of holies. For, as Herodotus says, 'the priests assure me, though I find it hard to believe, that the god comes in person to the Temple, lies on the bed and embraces the woman during the night'.

The actions of the god Marduk were relatively moderate. But the women of Babylon had to perform a much more unpleasant service in the temple of the fertility goddess Mylitta; according to

Herodotus it was 'the most hateful custom in this land'. They had to go to the sacred grove outside the temple and offer their charms to casual visitors. A stranger 'would walk through the grove,' writes Herodotus, 'and choose a woman. He would throw a coin in her lap and take her into the temple, where she had to surrender herself completely to him. Plain girls often had to wait a long time in the sacred grove, sometimes three or four years because they were not able to satisfy the law. But those who were well built pretty soon came back home and were not required to go there again for that purpose; it was as if they had been married.'

Herodotus could not possibly know that this macabre fertility-cult was practised by other Hither Asiatic tribes, and also as far away as India, on the Malabar coast, in Calicut and Tenasserim, among certain Negro and ancient Malayan tribes. He knew very little about the oriental goddesses Ashtoreth, Anath, Ashera and Ishtar, in whose temples the same sort of thing happened, and nothing at all about the 'hospitable prostitution' of the Bergdama and Polynesians. What he had observed in the sacred grove was the final afterglow of an age-old and often misunderstood human custom, according to which the godhead, represented by any anonymous stranger, had the right to claim the *jus primae noctis* from all nubile females. As the story of Lot and his daughters tells us, 'hospitable prostitution' was also practised in Sodom, though in a rather different form.

Otherwise, the girls in ancient Babylon did not have an easy time. They were not introduced to their husbands in the normal manner by their parents, but were offered on the market-place to the highest bidder, and the proceeds went into a communal chest. There was a reason for this; young men desirous of marriage but without enough money to buy themselves a beautiful bride received a large subsidy from the communal chest if they would marry instead a less attractive one. 'A very wise custom,' was Herodotus' comment, 'because the pretty girls were able to obtain husbands for their ugly and crippled companions.' Whether the Babylonian girls shared his opinion is another matter. On a small clay tablet found among the ruins, a Babylonian girl had written three thousand years ago the eternal complaint of those unlucky in love, 'Ah, how sad I am!'

But a modern scholar takes a completely different view of Babylon. 'Was not the Tower of Babel supposed to reach to heaven?' asks the archaeologist Edward Chiera in one of his letters. 'Seen

from below, it does not look as high as one expects the tower of Babylon to be. The explanation for this comes when we reach the top. Although it is fairly low—hardly more than a hundred and fifty metres high—from the top the eye embraces an enormous desert plain. . . . Even the Euphrates is no longer to be seen. . . . Not a single pillar, not a single gateway. Everything has fallen into dust. The tower itself has lost all its former shape. Where are the seven terraces? Where is the wide stairway which led to the top? Where is the altar that crowned the summit? There is now no more to be seen but a mound of earth—all that remains of the millions of stones with which it was built. . . .’

Everything is dust, and to dust everything returns. The culture of Babylon was built out of dust—or rather, out of baked or sun-dried clay bricks; now they lie scattered in dust over the desert. Unlike Egypt, Mesopotamia had almost no stone, no durable material for the construction of towns, temples, statues and memorials.

One of the first cultural activities of every race that finds itself in a land without stone is the invention of bricks. The brick-makers belonged to those tribes which about seven thousand years ago migrated from the mountain valleys of the Indus and the highlands of Iran to what was later Babylon. They cut the clay of the river-bed into brick-like shapes, dried them in the sun till they were hard as stone, and in the course of thousands of years built with them houses, palaces, fortresses, temples and ziggurats. Their followers scratched letters, laws and great epics on clay, they used clay tablets for doctors’ prescriptions, business documents and wills.

But clay does not last for ever. Only certain kinds of bricks and tiles, baked in a special way, remain indestructible. Such bricks are dear, their production is so lengthy and costly that the ancient builders could use them only for the outer walls and roofs of their structures, employing the cheaper, softer bricks for the interior. These served their purpose, so long as the roofs and outer walls remained intact, but if these were breached, then building after building collapsed. Whole cities were turned into heaps of rubble. The clay structures, the clay libraries melted away into dust.

So the documents of ancient Babylon are found buried in heaps of dust. They show us how the nomadic Palaeolithic Age man gradually became stationary, how the cultivation of land began, how civilizations developed. It is now accepted that the civilizations lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates were built by

races from the Asiatic interior. There, after the Ice Age, were to be found forests rich in game, grass steppes and lakes. There grew those wild grasses from which our corn and wheat were developed. There lived the aurochs, the wild sheep and the wild goats, fore-runners of our domestic animals.

When the region was still inaccessible because of the flooding of both the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the Persian Gulf stretched almost to Baghdad, highly-developed civilizations were already in existence in Iran, cultures that were familiar with house-building, metalwork and the blacksmith's craft. There were clans whose members presumably practised group-marriage and in which women—as in most archaic civilizations—enjoyed high consideration. The races multiplied. The highlands became drier, the great river-valleys with their tons of alluvial mud gradually drove the sea back, and the plains to the south-west, now fertile, attracted settlers. From Iran came the Elamites who remain to this day a complete mystery to anthropologists. They brought their matriarchal form of society with them and settled to the east of the Tigris. And perhaps from the region of the Indus journeyed the Sumerians, and founded in the valley of the Euphrates their great cities, the fore-runners of Babel—Eridu and Lagash, Nippur, Kish and Ur.

Elamites and Sumerians were arch-foes. Throughout the history of Mesopotamia there were ceaseless wars between the Elamites on one side and the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians on the other. These ended only in the middle of the first century BC when the Elamites were merged with the Indo-European Persians.

What kind of culture was the Sumerian? And to what family of the nations did they belong? Neither question can be definitely answered. We know of an ancient Indus civilization, it flourished about five thousand years ago, and its creators were ancient Indians of unknown origin. Skeletons of ancient Indian-Dravidian and Vedda types have been found in Ur and Kish. Ancient Sumerian statuettes resemble the statuettes of the Indus civilization. Above all, stone seals were dug up in Sumerian excavations at Kish, Eshnunna and Khafaji that were obviously ancient Indian in characters they displayed—for example, the picture of a woman with an Indian turban on her head. Apart from this evidence, however, there must have been—to judge by human remains and sculptures—Hither Asiatic, Mongol and other races in the Indus area as well as in Sumeria. Finally, the Sumerian language is

related by some scholars to ancient Indian, by others to Elamitic-Iranian and by still others to Turkish dialects.

It is possible that the Sumerians were a mixed race with ancient Indian upper classes which spread out from the Indus to Sumeria. And it is just as possible that their eternal enemies the Elamites were a mixed race with an Iranian upper class that migrated from Persia to Elam. From both races was formed the Babylonian civilization, whose descendants, however, after the rise of the Akkadians and the invasion of Ur by the Amorites about the turn of the third to second millennium BC, were no longer Sumerians or Elamites, but Semites.

It was a civilization which must have affected the native inhabitants in much the same way as that of the white colonists in North America affected the prairie Indians. Excavations in Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and Chanhudaro in present-day Pakistan show that at the time of the supposed Sumerian migration from the Indus to the Euphrates there were already, in the eastern mother-country, great cities, buildings of indestructible bricks, swimming-pools, water-systems, hot-air systems and houses with every comfort. Seals were cut, using a script that has still not been deciphered, bronze statues were created, cotton was manufactured, and an alloy of gold and silver was used to make ornaments. And if our hypothesis is correct, all these arts were translated in the fourth millennium BC to the vast, empty plains between the Tigris and the Euphrates, inhabited until then only by small tribes and nomadic hordes.

About 340 BC, the Seleucidæan historian Berossus, a priest of the Babylonian god Marduk, searched the ancient historical sources of his country and was the first to relate the epic story of the Sumerians' arrival in Mesopotamia. Berossus is counted still as the most important and best-informed chronicler of ancient Babylon. As a contemporary of the Seleucids he was familiar with Greek culture. He was highly cultivated and as a priest he had access to Mesopotamia's temple archives. Various fragments from his great work on Babylon (written in Greek) have come down to us in the writings of Roman authors and above all of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus.

A ruler named Oannes, so Berossus wrote about the Sumerians, once came across the ocean accompanied by monstrous creatures, half fish, half men, and taught the Mesopotamian nomads the arts of agriculture, reading and writing, metalwork, in short, 'all things

that make life better'. Everything in the Mesopotamian civilization came from Oannes and his seafaring companions, 'the black-headed foreigners', the Sumerians.

Berosus was not exaggerating, though he turned the strangers, familiar with the sea and ships, into fish-men. Sumerian civilization disappeared under waves of Semitic Akkadians and Amorites, Assyrians and Babylonians, Hittites, Aramaeans, Cassites, Medes, Persians and Alexandrian Greeks along with a host of other cultures. But the Sumerians did not disappear. Even to-day their descendants live on, a dark-skinned group in the populations of Hither Asia. And their arts and inventions remain also, their building technique, their script, their cylindrical seals, their laws and religious works. Later invaders, right up to Herodotus' time, took over the culture that the mythical Oannes introduced. Assyria and Nineveh, Mitanni, the Hittite kingdom, Phoenicia, Israel and the 'navel of the world', great Babylon, all rose into being on the foundations laid by Sumerians.

Herodotus knew nothing of this when—a century before Berosus—he came to study Babylon. Two thousand years of dust buried the evidence of Sumerian supremacy. Everything in Babel was attributed to the Akkadians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians. Herodotus cannot be blamed for such ignorance. When conquerors occupy highly-cultured countries, they like to claim that they were the founders of those cultures. Every law, every work of art, every bit of script in Babylon betrayed its Sumerian origin, but information about the Sumerians was so completely lacking that up to the end of the last century most lexicons and works of history do not mention the name. Only in the Old Testament do the ancient Sumerians make an appearance, as the Shi'nar, the mythical ancestors of the Akkadians, the Babylonians and the Assyrians.

Babylon, the inheritor of Sumerian culture, fell into ruins, like all chimerical kingdoms and powers of human making. A feeling that the whole world was disintegrating hung over the great metropolis of the orient; at every step Herodotus met with horror and fear for the world's end. Prosperous market speculators still drove their four-in-hand chariots round the broad city walls, idled the days away in shady terrace gardens, had borings made for oil, raked in mortgage interests and did business with the Persian occupation troops. But the mass of the people were hungry and rebellious.

So they had always been, even at the height of Sumerian pros-

perity. An order of society like that in Mesopotamia, based so openly on serfdom and slave labour had of necessity to create slave conditions.

We know of an even earlier slave-uprising about 2400 BC. A man named Urukagina seized power with the help of the masses, saying that he would put an end to the irresponsibilities of the ruling class, the oppression of the poor, the overseer system in works, the high taxes paid to the priests and the abuses of power in the armed forces and bring back 'the old order and justice to the country'. His laws, he announced, were 'to deliver the citizens from the dangers of deceit, theft of corn and personal possessions, murder and house-breaking', and to ensure 'that the more powerful did not take advantage of weaker members of society, like widows and orphans'. This early Socialist Urukagina reigned for six years in the Sumerian state of Lagash, did indeed carry out social reforms, built many temples, palaces and canals, and finally was overthrown by neighbouring slave-owning states. 'Urukagina did no wrong,' his biographer wrote after his death, 'but the men who destroyed his state of Lagash sinned against the gods. The power they so cunningly obtained shall be taken away from them again.' This did not happen, the aristocrat Lugal-zaggisi, who took over from Urukagina, soon afterwards built up the greatest Sumerian kingdom in history, and there was no more talk about the rights of the poor, the slaves, widows and orphans.

In Herodotus' time a similar situation existed in Babylon. The inhabitants had split up into numberless groups, sects, communities and parties. There were more slaves, serfs, debtors, exiles and returned colonials than supporters of the previous ruling race. There were orthodox Jews who collected round their scribes; black-bearded Assyrians, boiling over with hatred and national pride, who dreamt of victories long ago; Aramaeans and Cosaeans; defiant Bedouins; dark, melancholy Indians, wary members of northern mountain tribes. And below them, railing against the heavy taxes, against the doings of the upper classes, were the descendants of the Sumerians. The pillars of Babel were tottering, the luxurious dwelling-place of Nebuchadnezzar, supported by a culture more than three thousand years old, was disintegrating in sectarian quarrels, in anarchy and mass delusion.

Especially delusion; superstition, Babylon's age-old weakness, created by a misuse of Sumerian wisdom and proverbial sayings, was more widespread than ever. Chaldean magicians, the fore-

runners of our present-day charlatans, drew up the craziest horoscopes for the frightened masses. If anyone was ill, he no longer went to a doctor, but to witch-doctors and drivers-out of devils. People were afraid of the spittle of harmless old women, of black cats, of the evil eye. The Book of Daniel speaks of such star-gazers, soothsayers, enchanters, sorcerers and Chaldeans in the days of Nebuchadnezzar; even then it was customary to confuse those seeking advice, including the king, with 'lies and corrupt words'.

The pariahs, too, were no longer willing to be held in check, and were sold as refractory elements, were killed or transported to build canals. There was no longer any central authority; the Babylonians were simply the dependants of the Persian occupation forces. Herodotus must have heard many a complaint against the ruling powers. We read the following in a document from those times which sounds like a Communist manifesto issued by the Babylonian pariah-caste:

'Beware, comrade! Our land honours those superiors who have learnt to murder, and despises the lower classes, who have never done any wrong. Sinners are defended and the innocent accused; the pockets of robbers are filled and the pockets of the poor are emptied . . . The rich give in to criminals and scorn the common people. . . We growl with hunger, but the heart of God is far away.'

Babylon had to decline. The city did in fact remain standing a few hundred years longer, but it was only a shadow of its former self, serving as Persian base, Seleucid provincial outpost, Parthian frontier-town. Corn was sown in the rubble. The temples and the great Tower were allowed to fall into ruins. About AD 400 only the double wall round the city remained standing, serving a strange purpose: it was used to enclose the wild beasts belonging to the Parthian kings. The most magnificent city of the orient was brought down to the level of a zoological garden.

Babel handed down to the western world not only the culture of the Sumerians—their script, their knowledge of the stars, mathematics, building techniques, sexagesimal calculation and the basis of many laws, but also the inferior culture of an empire in decline, superstition, astrology, deluded minds, the burning of witches and the fear of black cats.

From Assyria to Ararat

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.
Genesis 11, 7

THE ASSYRIANS WERE at least as great destroyers as they were creators of culture. They founded several important empires, ruled over Babylon and in 671 BC under Asarhaddon temporarily conquered Egypt. But their cultural achievements pale into insignificance when we compare them with those of the Sumerians and Babylonians. That the name of this people should have come down to the present day as the nomenclature of an entire scholarly discipline is due to the fact that the first excavations which revealed to us the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia took place in Assyria.

These excavations had been preceded, since the end of the sixteenth century, by numerous journeys, discoveries and reports which did not deal specifically with Assyria, but rather in general with 'Babel and Bible'—the term used by the Leipzig orientalist Friedrich Delitzsch. All kinds of adventurers and scholars journeyed to the orient, sought out the biblical sites, and told on their return of broken walls, fallen towers, strange signs on clay tablets.

Already in 1680 the university scholar Athanasius Kircher knew about the Tower of Babel. The French jeweller and diplomat Jean Chardin, who between 1666 and 1681 undertook several voyages to India, knew of ancient reliefs and monuments in Mesopotamia and Persia. The German doctor Engelbert Kämpfer, the celebrated explorer of Japan, had also, in 1684, stayed in Persia and there had seen 'archways with especially finely-chiselled reliefs'. It was Persian symbols, the so-called 'nail-script', which led to the decipherment of cuneiform characters. One of the first great explorers in the modern sense of the word was the Danish engineer and geographer Karsten Niebuhr, who, commissioned by his government, undertook from 1761 to 1767 a journey through the Near East and thereafter devoted his whole life to the ancient cultures of the orient. English officers and travellers to India, chief among them the director of the East India Company, James Rich, could already at the beginning of the nineteenth century put forward first-class material about Babylon.

Yet it was Assyria, the Nimrod-Empire on the Tigris, that sud-

denly drew the interest of the whole world towards the ancient civilizations of the east. Niebuhr had already identified the places where Nineveh and Assur had stood. Then the French doctor Paul Emile Botta, consul in Mosul, began in 1842 to dig up the strange mounds which were to be seen everywhere in the region of the Tigris. There Austen Henry Layard two years later discovered the 'Palace of Nimrod'—the residence of the Assyrian King Assurnasirpal II. Magnificent buildings, temples and fortifications rose out of the dust; terracotta reliefs and astoundingly realistic pictures were brought to light. The wonders of Assyria seemed to exceed everything the orient might still have in store.

But then the Tower of Babel was discovered. Sumeria and Elam appeared out of the mists of time. The world learnt of further civilized peoples who were once great powers in the making of oriental history—of Akkadians and Amorites, Hurrians and Mitanni, Hittites and Urartaeans. It appeared that Assyria was not the cradle of Mesopotamian cultures, but simply a conquering power. Even more so than Babylon, Nineveh depended for its strength on a handful of the ruling class and an immense throng of slaves who had no rights at all.

The Assyrian oppressors' craze for building, the god-like devotion with which they desired to be honoured, the boastful images they had made of themselves, their constant wars of conquest—all this places them in the same rank as our modern despots. Assyrian art and architecture, which in later epochs was of monumental grandeur, were not native growths, but imports from Sumeria and Babylon, inflated to gigantic proportions and extravagantly distorted.

The Assyrians were a mixed race with a mixed culture, just like their neighbours and arch-enemies, the Babylonians. But they did not have the benefit of starting, as the Babylonians did, with a highly-developed culture like that of the Sumerians. The ancient inhabitants of the upper and middle regions of the Tigris were called Subaraeans, of early Semitic stock and unknown origin who had much in common with the wild mountain tribes in the area of the East Tigris and in the Southern Caucasus—Japhetites they should be called, according to the Russian philologist Marr. They worshipped Nature goddesses, buried their dead in a sitting position, employed all kinds of bone and stone tools and on account of their great physical strength were much sought-after as slaves in ancient Babylon.

About 2400 BC the Subaraeans began to mix with incoming Semitic tribes—with those very Semitic Akkadians who also played a part in Sumerian-Babylonian history. The Assyrian nation, composed in this manner, made itself independent of Babylon, seized for itself the trade between Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, and subjected to the rule of priestly kings, of whom we know nothing definite, various mountain races in northern Hither Asia. Assyrian trade colonies have been discovered, belonging to a very early period, in Northern Syria, Anatolia and Armenia. In all likelihood, most of the priestly kings were descended from Subaraean stock, though they quickly absorbed the Semitic-Akkadian language. According to Avdijev, 'Sons whose parents still had non-Semitic names acquired purely Semitic names'.

The small mountain state was overthrown when the Babylonian ruler and law-giver Hammurabi finally united the whole of Mesopotamia, including the northern part of the Tigris region. The Subaraean-Akkadian Assyrians became Babylonian subjects. But Babylonian supremacy did not last for long. Hittite hordes devastated Hammurabi's kingdom, and soon after the Cassites seized power in Babylon and reigned for more than five hundred years in Mesopotamia. So the Assyrians were able to recover their footing and gradually formed a new race—this time under Indian leadership.

Churri, Churrians or Hurrians was the name of these Indians who now suddenly extended a new civilization over northern Mesopotamia. Military power, the arts of war, the reliefs covering the exterior of Assyrian palaces and certain peculiarities of the Assyrian national character—all these things, which allowed Assyria to become a world power and civilization, derive from Hurrian character and technical ability.

The Hurrians were as little Indian in origin as the Hittites were Indo-European or the Assyrians Semitic. An Indo-Iranian wave of conquest swept from the twenty-second to the sixteenth century BC over the whole of northern Mesopotamia and Syria, carrying away with it tribes and races and mingling their blood with its own. Descendants of these Indo-Iranians formed a small aristocratic class in the Hurrian nation; they brought with them their crude sitting images, their still undecipherable language, their faith in a father God and—most important—their two-wheeled, horse-drawn war-chariots. In ancient Sumerian epics the land of Churruum is mentioned, south of the Caucasus, and in the Old

Testament the Hurrians appear as the 'Chori'; in 1720 BC or thereabouts they conquered, under the name of Hyksos, the kingdom of Egypt where they reigned as 'Shepherd Kings' for a hundred and forty years. On the Syrian coast they also got a foothold. The great port and trading-centre of Ugarit in north-west Syria, for centuries the seat of small independent monarchs, was inhabited by a Hurrian-Canaanite mixed population.

Assyria lived in the shadow of the Hurrians, took over Hurrian culture and was from the sixteenth to the fourteenth century BC dependent on a realm that had been founded by Indo-Iranian migrants to Syria. This realm was called Mitanni. It carried on bitter warfare against the Hittites in Anatolia, finally collapsed and was obliged to watch the Assyrians become independent and grow into a nation—a nation that only a century later was a match for the great powers of the Babylonians, Egyptians and Hittites. The first Assyrian state arose from a mingling of Subaraean, Akkadian, Babylonian and Hurrian elements: it was the kingdom of Shalmaneser I and Tiglathpileser I, a state which successfully fought against Mitanni, Babylonians, Syrian Bedouin and northern mountain tribes, which twice conquered Babel and whose arts of war were developed to a degree until then unknown in the orient.

The Assyrians also developed the Hurrian war-chariot, invented siege-machines, knew all about frontal and flank attacks and practised a burnt-earth strategy. They took slaves wherever they could. For example, an inscription in honour of the first Shalmaneser reads, 'I besieged the city, occupied it, killed many of its warriors, carried off much booty, built a mountain of heads outside the city and set fire to fourteen settlements in the area.'

Assyria was no kinder to her own subjects, for her laws were harsh and dictatorial. If a servant stole anything, his nose and ears were cut off. Married women had no rights. 'If any man shave his wife's head,' so runs one of the laws, 'if he disfigure or mutilate her, then he is not held to be at fault . . . If he abandon her, he is not obliged to give her anything.' The daughters had no rights either, the father could sell them into slavery. The greater part of the Assyrians were bound hand and foot by debts. Usurers took up to a hundred and sixty per cent and compelled their debtors, if they could not pay their dues, to spend their whole lives working for them, or to pledge their children in slavery.

This military despotism with its severe laws and rigidly patri-

archal form of society did not last long. About 1000 BC Assyria, weakened by ceaseless wars, was attacked by nomadic Bedouin from the Syrian desert. The new lords of the land were called Aramaeans; they were West Semites who had founded a few small principalities in northern Syria and, taking advantage of the political confusion, had slowly infiltrated into Mesopotamia. Their language became the most widely spoken in the Near East and not until the seventh century AD did it yield to Arabic. The Assyrians learnt Aramaic; the Bedouin added another layer to the many layers of culture by the Tigris.

But after a hundred years Assyria rose again. The last and greatest of the Assyrian empires came into being. Rulers with resounding names followed after one another: Shalmaneser III, Semiramis, Sargon II, Senaccherib, Assurbanipal. The Assyrians conquered Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, overthrew Babylon several times and even Egypt herself, once, in the seventh century BC. Nineveh became the capital of the oriental world.

In 612 BC, however, Assyria disappeared from history for ever. The new Babylon was coming to life, she threw off the Assyrian yoke and with the help of the Medes laid waste the great city of Nineveh. When Nebuchadnezzar was still building his magnificent palaces and temples in ancient Babylon, the Medes, the forerunners of the Persians, were already settled on the Tigris, and a century later, as Persian satellites, helped to conquer half the world.

Shortly before its end, Assyria had vanquished the shadowy remnants of a third Near Eastern power—the remains of the Hittite empire in northern Syria. The Hittites too were a mixed race, but they founded many powerful states, overran the greater part of Hither Asia and waged war against Babylon and Egypt. Their origins were in Cappadocia in the east of present-day Turkey; and the first race that developed a civilization here in the third millennium BC, the Hatti or pre-Hittites, seems to be clearly related to the original inhabitants of Assyria, the Subaraeans and to other very old Hither Asian races.

A Semitic language was used in Assyria, but in the Hittite kingdom an Indo-European language was spoken. But this does not mean that the Hittites were European colonists in Hither Asia. Here, too, very varied influences worked together to produce from Anatolian mountain tribes a nation that for three hundred years was to be a first-class political power. Migrants from the north,

the Luvians and the Nesians, introduced the Indo-European language to the pre-Hittites. Ancient Aegaeon races, Hurrian and Assyrian traders, influenced their culture; from the Hurrians they took most of the elements in their art works, from the Babylonians the cuneiform script, from Assyria the severe laws and no less severe patriarchal society.

We know of two Hittite kingdoms. The first, which lasted from the nineteenth to the sixteenth century BC and embraced a large part of Asia Minor and northern Syria, has entered into history because in one brief predatory expedition it destroyed the Babylonian state of Hammurabi. The second, from the fourteenth to the twelfth century, rose from the ruins of the Indo-Syrian Mitanni kingdom and because of its advances into Palestine is several times mentioned in the Bible. It was indeed a great power, it seized large areas of Asia from Egypt and at the beginning of the thirteenth century BC exerted such pressure on Babylon that a Babylonian minister sent a message to the Hittite king Hattuschili III, 'You do not write to us Babylonians as if we were your brothers, but give us orders, as if we were your slaves'. The same Hattuschili finally concluded a peace treaty with Rameses II of Egypt, which divided Hither Asia equally between the two powers.

As early as 1200 BC, when Assyria and Babylon still had their greatest periods before them, the Hittites disappeared. Aegaeon sea-going tribes and others from the mountains of Asia Minor, brought into movement by the last waves of the Indo-European migrations, put an end to the Hittite kingdom. Until the seventh century BC small Hittite states still held out in northern Syria, then were gradually extinguished by the Assyrians. A new race arrived in Syria, the Phoenicians.

The Greeks understood by Phoenicia, 'land of the purple dye', the narrow stretch of Syrian-Lebanese coast on the Mediterranean. The Phoenicians called themselves Kinahni, 'people of Canaan'. And the power these Canaanites developed was not of a political, but of an economic nature. They were crafty enough to submit to whatever nation was in power—whether Egyptian, Assyrian or Hittite—and under their protection to construct huge centres of trade. Phoenician ships sailed over the whole of the Mediterranean, reaching Ophir and, on Egyptian orders, sailing round Africa. Phoenician colonists founded in modern Tunis the great, wealthy city of Carthage. Even in the time of the Persians they still played the same part in history, they provided the main part of

the Persian fleet, enjoyed in their city republics almost complete freedom in trade and administration, and still sent to sea ships which—so Herodotus says—‘are the best vessels afloat’.

A Phoenician-Canaanite state existed only in the tenth and ninth centuries BC. Its most important ruler, Hiram I of Tyre, is the same Hiram who undertook the celebrated expedition to Ophir, at the command of King Solomon. Hiram delivered to his master Lebanese cedars to build the temple in Jerusalem. It was a fortunate period for the Jewish as well as for the Phoenician people. Besides, they were closely related; the Phoenician language differs only in small details from Hebrew.

The Phoenicians, however, were not just born businessmen, excellent sailors and clever diplomats, they were also the greatest colonizers of the Ancient World. Carthage was just one among their many colonies. While the Babylonians, Assyrians, Hittites, Egyptians and Medes exhausted themselves in endless wars all over the rest of Hither Asia, the people of the land of Canaan settled peacefully by the Black Sea, in the Aegæan, in North Africa, Sicily and Spain. They colonized Rhodes and Cyprus, founded in Spain the city now known as Cadiz and in Sardinia Cagliari, they were to be found by the Euphrates, and at Tangier they entered upon the inheritance of Tartessos. Finally they reached the Canary Isles.

The Greeks called their great port and trade metropolis Byblos, the Phoenicians themselves called it Gebal. This was for centuries the chief trans-shipment port for Egyptian papyrus. Therefore in Greece writing paper and books were known as ‘Byblos’. Our word bibliography still commemorates the ancient Phoenician paper market of Byblos. And Phoenicia is immortalized in yet another, more significant way. The Phoenician alphabet, simple and comfortable to write, and admirably suited to business needs, was the one from which our own alphabet was developed.

‘... because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of the earth ...’ These words in the eleventh chapter of the Book of Genesis express clearly and concisely what came to pass during the seven thousand years of human history that have come down to us from the Near East.

Out of the east wandered first the Sumerians and Elamites, then the Hurrians. The Semitic tribes came from the Syrian-Arabic deserts—the Akkadians, Aramaeans and Canaanites. Indo-

Europeans came and founded the Hittite realm; other Indo-Europeans, Medes and Persians, came from Iran and created the Persian empire. Sea-going tribes with Cretan-Myceæan cultural heritages took root on the Syrian-Canaanite coast. And later came the Greeks, the Romans, the Parthians, the Arabs and the Turks.

In this way layer after layer, language after language, culture after culture were superimposed upon the original inhabitants, changing them and absorbing them. But some of these original inhabitants remained, and remain to this day, living on Mount Ararat, where once, according to legend, Noah's Ark was stranded after the Flood. The Assyrians called these age-long inhabitants of Hither Asia Urartaeans, the People of Ararat. They called themselves Biani, and to-day they are known as Armenians. In the last few decades only has it been discovered that there was an Urartu kingdom, as great as the other oriental states, with highly developed civilization, enormous stone structures, artistic metalwork, strong rulers and its own religion. The study of this land is one of the newest branches of oriental scholarship.

To-day the Armenians speak an Indo-European language, and have been infiltrated by Phrygians, Iranians and Turks, but they are considered to be the true descendants of that original kingdom of Urartu and the people of Ararat. As early as the fifth century AD the Armenian historian Moses of Khoren stated that on Lake Van, south-west of Mount Ararat, there had been a great civilization similar to that of Assyria and Babylon; he wrote of 'high places, girdled with walls', of a 'mysterious and awe-inspiring king's palace', and of a romantic love-affair between King Ara of Armenia and the Assyrian queen Semiramis. Yet it was not until 1828 to 1829 that the first scholar, the young French archaeologist Schulz, saw the cyclopean walls on Lake Van, described them and copied down numerous inscriptions. But he was murdered by grave-robbers, and another hundred years were to go by before the secrets of Urartu were finally revealed.

Russian scholars, the German historian Carl Friedrich Lehmann-Haupt, and most recently, a whole general staff of Soviet archaeologists and philologists have discovered, between the sources of the Tigris and the Caucasus, fortresses and temples and works of art, have collected cuneiform texts and with painstaking spade-work have shown that as early as the middle of the second millenium BC there was a state of Ararat. It was a land of mountain farmers, depending on the raising of cattle and criss-crossed by

canals that irrigated the soil and drove innumerable watermills. It was also a state with a highly developed metal culture, which very early learnt the use of iron. The Urartaeans protected themselves against invaders by erecting walls and buildings of mighty stone blocks which are astonishingly like the megalithic structures of south-west Europe and North Africa.

But this protection was of little avail as Assyria grew in strength and—as a clay tablet tells us—‘dyed Mount Ararat with the blood of the Urartaeans, till it was like red wool’ and it is astounding that this small mountain folk, unlike other races who succumbed to greater powers, was always able to get on its feet again. From the tenth to the eighth century BC, when Assyria was busy elsewhere, the Urartaeans even built up a great kingdom, that stretched from Transcaucasia to northern Syria.

Then we are shocked to read that the Assyrian king Sargon II in the year 714 BC once again fell upon the Armenian farmers and cattle-raisers: ‘Their settlements were ruined . . . I had their walls broken down and made level with the earth. Their fields did I devastate, as they had been devastated by a second flood, and their harvests did I burn with fire . . . Their canals did I fill with earth, and turned their waters into mud . . . In their proud gardens did my mighty army descend like a great storm, tore up their many fruit trees and covered the land with shame.’ Sargon’s account is painted in very flattering colours, for the Assyrians had still not succeeded in exterminating the dwellers on Ararat. That was achieved in the sixth century BC by the mounted Scythian hordes from the Asian interior.

But Urartu lived on in Armenia. And yet another race from the region of many languages lives on to the present day, a race that in the course of its history had to endure countless persecutions of an Assyrian severity and was driven pitilessly from land to land. This race survived, not because like the Urartaeans it withdrew to the remote fastnesses of the mountains, but because it was able to find a spiritual refuge in its religion—a religion that became the mother of the two great world religions. These people are the children of Israel, the Jews.

The Chosen People

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee . . .
And I will bless them that bless thee,
and curse him that curseth thee . . .
Genesis 12, 2-3

IN THE YEAR AD 67 the Emperor Nero sent his general Titus Flavius Vespasianus to Palestine, in order to put down an insurrection that had been smouldering there for years among the Jewish population. Vespasian triumphed over the Jews in Galilee and on the capture of the town of Jotapata captured a highly intelligent young man named Joseph ben Matthias, a scribe in the Pharisees' patriotic-orthodox school, who as commander and spiritual head had directed the revolt in Galilee.

This Joseph ben Matthias was neither crucified nor sent into the arena, as fitting for a man who had rebelled against Roman authority; on the contrary he gained special favour with Vespasian. He was his constant companion during the general's victorious Palestine campaign. According to tradition, Joseph ben Matthias had prophesied that Vespasian would soon be Emperor of Rome. This was in any case a prophecy that required no very great prophetic gifts. For anyone who knew how things stood in Rome at that time could easily see that after Nero's downfall his successor would be the man with the strongest legions. That was Vespasian.

When, two years later, Vespasian became Emperor of Rome, he took Joseph with him, granted him Roman citizenship and made him his official historian. The erstwhile Pharisee lived after that in Rome and wrote, among many other works, a history of the Jewish people, from which some portions of the book of the Maccabees in the Bible are taken. He now called himself Flavius Josephus. And his book, in which he intended to acquaint the world with the hitherto unknown history of his own race, counts to-day, next to the Old Testament, as the most important source for the early history of Palestine.

How little was known about the Jewish people and their history can be seen from the phrases which Strabo devotes to the land of Judaea in his seventeen-volume *Geographica*. Nearly all the source-material was available to him, but Strabo knew nothing about the Jews' Holy Scriptures, nothing of their origins, their

ancestors, their genealogy, he only knew of Moses and a few prophets. In addition he vaguely refers to some Jewish kings, 'tyrants' as he terms them, 'who seized by force some of the surrounding countries'. Yet his account is highly interesting, for it reveals how a cultivated Greek about the time of the birth of Christ and having no knowledge of the Bible saw the history of the Jews.

According to Strabo the land of Judaea 'was inhabited by mixed races', by people of Egyptian, Arabic and Phoenician origins. Modern ethnologists would add that Early Asiatic tribes similar to the pre-Assyrian Subaraeans also lived there, as well as Hittites, Hurrians and Aegaeon Philistines. Strabo hinted that the Jews' ancestors were Egyptians, a theory put forward by modern scholars also, including the father of psycho-analysis, Sigmund Freud.

The exodus from Egypt took place in this manner, according to Strabo: 'Moses, an Egyptian priest, who also ruled over an Egyptian province, departed from thence, because he was not satisfied with the state of things there; and with him departed many others, for the same religious reasons. Moses taught that it was not right for the Egyptians to elevate oxen and wild animals to the rank of deities, just as it was not right for the Greeks to give their gods human form. For there existed only one God, whose power embraces all things. What sensible man, said Moses, would venture to make an image of such a God, an image in human form? Therefore the making of graven images must cease, and a worthy temple, without images, must be set up to His glory.'

This Moses persuaded 'not a few men of good will' to be converted to his monotheistic views and went with them to Palestine. Strabo described the Promised Land as 'rocky, unfertile and dry', but adds that the followers of Moses were pleased with the land because above all 'it did not burden them with unnecessary expense nor did it require them to observe ridiculous ceremonies'. The Egyptian immigrants into Palestine then became allied with all neighbouring nations, 'partly in order to promote trade, and partly on account of religious vows. And thus arose the not inconsiderable kingdom of the Jews'.

At first, says Strabo, the Jews were 'upright and truly God-fearing'. But then their monotheism degenerated, superstitious prophets became priests, priests became tyrants 'who stirred up discontent in the land and in the neighbouring lands, undertook

marauding expeditions in foreign parts and conquered much of Syria and Phoenicia'. The Greek historian here is referring to the times which are depicted in the Bible in the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings; in his eyes, men like David and Solomon were tyrannical conquerors. Among the 'superstitions' of this period Strabo understood 'the refraining from certain foods', which is still customary among the Jews, 'circumcision and similar practices'; moreover, the fact that 'the Jews did not abhor their capital as the abode of a tyrant, but honoured it and kept it holy as the temple of God', makes us wonder whether Strabo ever paused to think of abhorring Rome as the abode of a tyrant . . .

Strabo mentions here 'the magicians and spiritualists of the Persians, the soothsayers, the Chaldean sorcerers in Assyria', and goes on to generalize, 'such were Moses and his followers; they started well, but ended badly'.

One can imagine how horrified the very nationalistic Flavius Josephus must have been when he heard these things in Rome. He was infuriated by such misrepresentation, and composed a bitter polemic attacking the anti-Semitic philosopher Apion, who cast doubts upon the great antiquity of the Jewish race. He did in fact succeed in making Apion the laughing-stock of Rome's most influential circles. But above all he succeeded in awakening the interest of the Romans in his own people.

A few decades later a Roman governor in Asia Minor wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan asking what measures to take against 'a decadent and fanatical sect' in his province of Bythynia, whose 'superstitious beliefs are very contagious'. The writer was Gaius Plinius Cecilius Secundus and was the nephew and adoptive son of the great Pliny, and his letter shows us that the Christian 'sect' which in the days of Josephus was only a small offshoot of the Jewish faith had, in the course of three centuries, become a political problem for the Roman rulers.

Through the influence of Flavius Josephus and the rapid spread of early Christendom the Jewish Holy Scripture became known even to the non-Jewish Ancient World. In it is depicted how a small nomadic shepherd tribe acquired its territory, its conflicts with economically superior farmers and townspeople, the struggle for essential water-supplies, the growth of herds and the division of the tribes caused by this. It shows how these nomads finally became settled farmers, how in the valley of the Jordan great families and clans joined together in tribal communities, how

they fell into bondage under great powers, freed themselves again, absorbed the most varied cultural elements and under a religious-political leadership, that of the 'Judges', gradually emerged as an independent nation.

The Israelites' acquisition of territory, described in the Book of Genesis, was no isolated event. When the ancestors of the Jews were taking possession of the Promised Land there were nomads wandering all over the east between the Caucasus and the Arabian desert, looking for land, nomads from Arabia, Mesopotamia, Iran, Syria and Asia Minor. For the most part they settled down and founded, according to the disposition of their chosen land, more or less permanent communities.

One of these race-migrations about the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age is referred to by ethnologists as the 'Aramaic Migration'. By this is understood the departure of various Semitic tribes from the Syrian-Arabian deserts for the fertile lands of the Euphrates, Tigris and Jordan. In Babylon the Aramaic Migration superseded the Sumerian domination; in Assyria, as we have already heard, the incoming Aramaic peoples gave the impetus to the foundation of the last and greatest of the Assyrian kingdoms. The Aramaeans' migrations led to the building of Semitic states in Syria and on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. They brought with them also the Chabiri of the Babylonian cuneiform texts to Palestine: the Chabiri were known as Aperu to the Egyptians and as Ibrim—the Hebrews—to the Arabs.

Now these Hebrews were not the same as the later Jewish people. One can speak of Jews in the true sense only after the departure from Egypt; we find the name Israel for the first time on a triumphal pillar to Pharaoh Menephta, who reigned about 1225 BC and is supposed to be the Egyptian monarch from whose wrath Moses and his followers fled. For the modern ethnologist the Hebrews are Semitic tribes who appear in the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries BC in Palestine and Syria and who a few centuries later are merged in the kingdom of Israel. Originally, however, the word Hebrew was probably not the name of a race, but the appellation of a definite social group.

The theologist and historian Martin Noth writes, 'Such "Hebrews" were groups of people with few rights and small means who performed services of every kind when and where they were needed. They did not belong to the already established popula-

tions, but formed unstable elements that above all had no portion of ground for themselves.'

If this interpretation is correct, then the term 'Hebrew' suffered several changes of meaning before coming to stand for the Israelites and their closest relatives, the Ammonites, Edomites and Moabites. And it is in the last-named sense that the word is used by the scholarly world to-day.

The Hebrews encountered in Palestine various long-established races with whom they had strenuous battles. There were the original inhabitants, the Refaites and the Anakites, 'the children of Enoch', creators of megalithic cultures whom we are introduced to in the Bible as giants and cave-dwellers. There were also ancient Semitic groups, the Canaanites, who were closely related to the Phoenicians and constructed great commercial cities and fortifications. Then there was another Semitic tribe which had occupied Jordan in the nineteenth century, related to the new Babylonians, and like them possessing a high level of culture—the Amorites. There, led by Indo-Iranian masters, were the Hurrians, the Horites of the Bible, that in the eighteenth century BC had swept in from Syria with their horses and chariots and who in many cities comprised a kind of knightly aristocracy. So the Hebrews did not settle in an empty wilderness, but in an area full of towns and villages, rich in material culture and spiritual life.

Excavations have taught us that Jericho, Gaza and many other places mentioned in the Bible were then flourishing cities. There was a Jerusalem, inhabited by Canaanites, long before the Israelites arrived. There were ceramic products, porcelains, luxury textiles and ornaments of gold. The Egyptian Sinuhe describes Canaanite Palestine as 'a land rich in figs and vines, and in which there is more wine than water, a land flowing with honey and oil and with every kind of fruit upon her trees'. It really must have appeared to the nomads from Egypt as the Promised Land.

But suddenly we find Hebrews in Egypt, and even in the 'Land of Goshen,' which lay to the east of the Nile delta. The Old Testament reads, 'They said moreover unto Pharaoh: For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan. And Pharaoh spake . . . The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.' It appears

from the Joseph legend that in Egypt the Hebrews enjoyed a certain esteem. And this has led to two astounding ethnological hypotheses.

The first comes from Flavius Josephus and was defended right up to the present day by various Egyptologists. These claim that the Jews of the Joseph legend are to be identified with the Hyksos, an Asiatic race of conquerors that in the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries BC ruled over the Egypt of the 'Shepherd Kings'. The exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt would therefore be contemporary with the driving-out of the Hyksos by the Pharaohs of the new Egypt.

Fascinating as this theory may sound, we know to-day that Josephus was mistaken. The Hyksos, who introduced horses and chariots into Egypt, were not Hebrews or Israelites, but Hurrians—the very same Indo-Iranian Hurrians whom we have already met in Assyria and in other parts of Hither Asia.

The second hypothesis is Sigmund Freud's and sounds even more fascinating. He repeats what Strabo said, that Moses and the religious leaders of the Jews were not Jews but high-ranking Egyptians, rebels against the Egyptian state religion. Freud refers to the fact that the name Moses is undoubtedly Egyptian and occurs in the names of many Pharaohs—Thutmosis, Ahmose and Rameses for example. But according to Freud not only the man Moses, not only the priestly caste named the Levites but also the monotheistic religion is of Egyptian origin. It arose, Freud claims, from the sun-cult of Akhnaton. Freud calls this cult which Akhnaton introduced into Egypt, 'the first and perhaps the purest example of a monotheistic religion in the history of the world'.

This religion, as Freud goes on to say, was done away with after Akhnaton's death by the infuriated priests of the orthodox religion, Akhnaton himself was branded as a criminal, his palace destroyed and his name erased from the ancient inscriptions. Among the persons who were close to Akhnaton there had in fact been a certain Moses, 'holding high office, a fervent supporter of the religion of Aton, but in contrast to the day-dreaming king he was energetic and passionate. To this man the abolition of Akhnaton's religion was the death of all his hopes. He could continue to live in Egypt only as a despised or disloyal person. Perhaps as governor of the frontier province he had come into contact with a Semitic tribe which had migrated there a few generations before. In his disillusion and loneliness he turned to these

foreigners and sought among them a compensation for his loss. He chose them as his people and tried to realize his ideals through them.'

After leaving Egypt, 'Moses blessed his followers by the rite of circumcision' (which was in any case, as Herodotus knew, an ancient Egyptian custom), 'gave them laws, introduced them to the teachings of the Aton religion, which the Egyptians had rejected'. And from the one and only god Aton of the Egyptian rebels and the ancient Semitic nature and weather god Yahweh there came into being in Palestine the God of the Jews, the God of the Old Testament.

This hypothesis too is now rejected by the majority of modern religious historians. But whether Moses was a Jew or an Egyptian, it is certain that after the end of the Hyksos reign countless Semites from the Syrian-Canaanite area remained behind in Egypt. Some were members of Bedouin tribes, like the Edomites, driven by famine to seek the protection of the great empire of the Nile; some were Aperu Hebrews, people of low rank who performed the tasks of bondsmen. Egyptian texts mention that these Hebrews worked as stone-cutters and beasts of burden and helped to build a temple in Memphis.

The Book of Exodus says, 'And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.' Moses' great achievement was that he was able to help a number of these pariahs to escape from Egypt, give them laws and a religion and gather them together into a single nation in the land of Canaan. Only from this time on does Hebrew history become Jewish history.

The emigrants from Egypt encountered in Palestine related tribes who had remained behind. The emigrants brought them Egyptian culture, Egyptian customs and, above all, the laws of Moses, and his concept of a single God. They gradually formed themselves into a union of the twelve tribes of Israel. They encountered other Hebraic-Aramaic tribes, the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites, with whom they did battle for grazing land, and later concluded a peace treaty.

The Israelites found the ancient, highly cultivated inhabitants of Jordan, the Canaanites, much harder to accept. They lived in strongly fortified towns, possessed 'chariots of iron', had taken over much of the civilization of Mesopotamia, worshipped Baal

and Astarte, were cattle-raisers and somehow appeared to the Israelite tribes as sinister, sinful and shameless heathens. The Noah legend says: 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.' But Canaan was not to be subjugated so easily, as many Bible passages show.

Sodom and Gomorrah, the city of Jericho, whose walls came tumbling down at the sound of Joshua's trumpets, proud Shechem, Hebron and Bethel which were finally overcome by the Israelites by force of arms—these were all Canaanite towns. But for the most part the relations between Canaan and Israel were of a peaceful nature. Compromises were made, several Israelite tribes became bondsmen to Canaanite towns and in return received the right to use Canaanite land and pasture. And later King Solomon entered upon friendly terms with the Phoenicians, the Canaanites of the Syrian-Lebanese coast.

The chief opponents of the Jews, however, who forced the Jewish state into unity under Saul and David, were the Pelishtim, the Philistines. We know from Egyptian and Jewish sources that about 1200 BC the eastern Mediterranean was suddenly overrun by races who attempted to occupy the coastal areas from the sea. They landed in Sardinia and Sicily, in the Balkans, in Asia Minor, North Africa and Phoenicia. They entered the valley of the Nile. They were conquered by both the Egyptians and the Hittites, but later helped to destroy the Hittite kingdom. Paintings and inscriptions in the palace of Rameses III describe the invasions of these 'sea-folk'. And the Bible mentions them again and again when it speaks of the five towns on the Palestinian coast in which the sea-folk formed an aristocratic warrior class above the Canaanite inhabitants. These five towns—Gaza, Askalon, Asdod, Akkaron and Gath—were the regions ruled over by the Philistines.

In the First Book of Samuel we encounter a representative of this sea-folk—the giant Philistine Goliath of Gath: 'And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.'

The invasion of the orient by the sea-folk was caused by the Aegaeon migration, which has been mentioned several times

already in this book. The Hellenic races moved to Greece, Crete collapsed, the Etruscans wandered to Italy, and races and tribes jostled each other in Asia Minor. But what part did the Philistines play in this chain-reaction of race migrations? Did they come from the Balkans or from the Black Sea? Were they related to the Etruscans, those vagrants of the deep? Or—and this is the most exciting hypothesis—were they refugees from the overthrow of Crete.

The Philistines who belonged to the bodyguard of King David were called Krethi and Plethi. The prophets Amos and Jeremiah declare that the Philistine race came from Kaphtor, by which the Israelites meant the island of Crete. Excavations at Gath have brought to light countless Philistine ceramics; and the ornaments on the vases and pots recall so strikingly the Cretan-Mycenaean motifs that the archaeologist August Thiersch calls Philistine art 'a sister of Late Mycenaean art'. Lilies, water-fowl and goats, spirals, chess-board patterns, concentric half-circles and a kind of Maltese Cross—all these subjects can be found also in Crete and in pre-Hellenic Greece.

Even more amazing are the pictures of Philistines discovered on clay fragments in the excavations at Gath. 'The bodies naked but for loin-cloth and sandals, the beardless faces, the thick heads of hair all denote that we are concerned here with people of the Cretan type,' writes the theologian Rudolf Kittel, one of the best authorities on Palestinian pre-history. 'The Grecian profiles of the persons represented here are unmistakable.'

This all leads towards the conclusion that the Philistines were either Cretan colonists or at least that they had passed through the Cretan-Mycenaean world before settling in Palestine. They brought a great deal of unrest to the land. Everywhere along the coast and in the Plain of Jezreel can be found traces of warlike events, devastated cities, burnt-out buildings, mounds of ashes. The number of Philistines who set foot on the coast of Palestine cannot have been very great. Their strength soon began to decline, and the fact that in their later period they began to worship the West Semitic corn-god Dagon shows that they gradually became culturally more and more akin to the Canaanites.

They had the same fate as the Jews, Assyria and Babylon destroyed their independence. Only their name lives on to-day to denote that part of the earth where they fought with the Israelites, for Palestine means 'the Land of the Pelishtim,' Philistine land.

We are being rather unjust to this remnant of an ancient civilization when we refer to-day to our bourgeois materialists as 'Philistines'. This abusive term was first used about the second century AD by the Grecian writer Origen. He was attempting to reform Christianity on Platonic lines and called the reigning theologians, who tortured him on account of his views, Philistines, who have understanding only for earthly things.

But the Jews were the only race in Canaan to survive the Assyrian campaigns, the Babylonian exile, the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome and their banishment from the homeland to every corner of the earth. Freud says in his essay on Moses: 'Their hopes, built upon a belief in God's grace, were not being fulfilled; it was not easy for them to go on believing in their most cherished illusion, that they were God's chosen people . . . But if one did not keep God's commandments, one deserved nothing better than to be punished; and out of a need to appease this sense of guilt their commandments had to be ever more severely enforced.' The Jews survived because—as Freud says—'they were inspired by a moral asceticism' and this allowed them 'in their teachings and in their commandments, to reach ethical heights which were inaccessible to the other peoples of the Ancient World'.

The sense of guilt, the mysterious uneasiness, the feeling of impending doom were not confined to the Jewish people. All Mediterranean peoples had the same feelings, for the ancient culture was changing. But the Jewish race succeeded in clarifying their benighted state. The Talmud, the Bible and the Koran were emerging, and their redemptive religions were ushering in a new age.

The Queen of Sheba

Then when it was daylight, there came to them out of the caves swarms of men that were naked and had black skins, like unto wild beasts, and that had no understanding of what was said to them. Yet they did have a king, who was as they were, and he alone of all his people could speak the Arabian language.

From The Thousand and One Nights

SHE IS A PUZZLING creature, that much-lauded queen, Bilkis of Sheba, who came with a great caravan to Jerusalem and put riddles to King Solomon. We do not know if such a queen ever existed; probably her life is just a picturesque legend. The First Book of Kings tells us this: 'And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.'

The visit of a southern Arabian ruler to Solomon's Jerusalem is nothing so very extraordinary. It was in Palestine that there came to an end the important caravan route along which the Bedouin and Arabian merchants brought incense and other treasures to the Mediterranean. And King Solomon was a very influential person, the son-in-law of Pharaoh Psusennes II and a friend of the Phoenician Hiram of Tyre. Presumably the Queen of Sheba did not just ask the Jewish monarch riddles but also talked politics with him. And the gifts of gold and 'spices of very great store' which she gave him were not so much a tribute to his 'acts and wisdom' as a payment for political and commercial concessions granted to her country by Israel.

But Abyssinian stories take quite a different view. They turn the meeting of Solomon and Sheba into a love-story. In Abyssinia in the fourteenth century AD a fabulous novel was written bearing the title *Kebra Nagast* ('The Splendour of the Kings') which is probably based on old folk-tales. It declares that Queen Bilkis took back to the land of Sheba proofs not only of Solomon's wisdom, but also of his virility, for she bore him a child called David who later, as Menelik I, became the founder of the 'Solomon' dynasty, which is still the ruling house in Abyssinia.

A very charming romantic tale, it seems, but the only proven

fact is that Sabaeans and Jews played a not unimportant part in the founding of the African kingdom of Abyssinia. Writers of history regard Solomon's love affair with Sheba as a fairytale. The Old Testament does indeed say that 'King Solomon loved many strange women', but Bilkis and Menelik are not historical personages.

Before we go into the founding of the Abyssinian kingdom, let us endeavour to find out where the Queen of Sheba really came from and how it was that the desert lands of Arabia were able to offer such priceless gifts. So far we have seen the Arabian deserts only as the region from which sprung nomadic Semites, but in antiquity Arabia must have consisted not just of sand and barren steppe as to-day. Numberless authors write of 'Arabia Felix'—a land of gold, incense and cinnamon. This happy land lay in the south of the Arabian peninsula, in the region of the present-day Yemen and Hadramaut, and its great cities were called Sirwah and Marjab.

Members of rich southern Arabian commercial states—Minaeans, Sabaeans, Katabanians and the Hadramaut—are always making an appearance in ancient writings. The southern Arabs traded with Mesopotamian realms, with Egypt, Ethiopia and India. Remains of canals and dams for enormous reservoirs indicate that they knew how to make the wilderness blossom. Just how fertile they made southern Arabia can be seen from the writings of Greek historians: 'fortunate Araby produces nearly all the fine things we enjoy in our own lands, and moreover possesses countless herds of animals of all descriptions. The interior of the land is richly wooded with incense and myrrh-bearing trees, green with palms, calamus, cinnamon and other plants.' The deforestation of these woods has contributed to the fact that what was once called 'the Incense Coast' is now a barren wilderness.

Arabia owed its wealth to a plant named *Boswellia carteri*, called balsam by the inhabitants. If the yellow resin of the *Boswellia* is mixed with other odiferous resins, with cinnamon bark, lavender flowers and similar aromatic herbs, a powder is obtained which, when ignited, gives off a pleasant-smelling and somewhat narcotic fragrance. This is the celebrated Arabian incense. From the earliest times incense was used for ritual purposes. The Babylonians burnt it to the honour of their god Marduk, the Egyptians used it in great quantities for fumigation, medicine and embalming, the Jews according to Mosaic law had to burn incense morn-

ing and evening, the Persians, Greeks and Romans filled their temples with clouds of incense, and later the Christians did likewise. All these races and religions were compelled to obtain the 'tears of resin' of the *Boswellia* from the Sabaean Arabs.

The balsam tree grows also in India and Somaliland. And because the great powers found it distasteful that the whole of the ancient civilized world should be dependent on Sabaean merchants for the delivery of incense, many attempts were made to contact these lands and cut out the Arabs, the Egyptians' expeditions to Punt, those of the Phoenicians to Ophir, of the Greeks to the Indian Ocean and of the Romans to the Gulf of Aden. But the Sabaean were a match for them all. They were not only excellent horsemen and camel-drivers, but also exceptionally fine seamen, who were much more familiar with the coasts of India and East Africa than were the Mediterranean nations.

From India they brought cinnamon and nard, from Ceylon magnificent textiles, from Malaya indigo and pepper. And in return the Indian vessels put into the Arab harbours, acquired products from the Mediterranean and paid with precious stones and woods. As early as the middle of the second millennium BC there must have been a lively seagoing trade between India and southern Arabia. It is possible that there was even, in 985 BC, a Chinese expedition to the land of Sheba.

More reliable than these rather legendary accounts are the business relationships between the Sabaean and the classical spice-lands of Further India and Indonesia. Grecian explorers in Alexander's days found numerous Arabian bases along the Coast of Spices, with names like Zabae, Sabana and Sabara which indicate that these harbours and industries were founded by Sabaean.

In the Mediterranean world nothing was known of these age-old sea-routes. The southern Asiatic spices and luxury articles which the Sabaean brought on the caravan routes to the northern lands were considered to be Arabian products. And as Saba was then a 'forbidden kingdom' Greek authors situated all kinds of marvels in 'fortunate Araby'. It was believed that Arabian birds and winged serpents guarded the cinnamon and the incense. Diodorus writes: 'The entire land of Saba is scented with natural sweet perfumes; it is quite impossible to single out any one balsam or spice-bearing tree from the great profusion and fullness of sweet fragrances that there abound.' Herodotus claims that even the crews of ships sailing by 'are refreshed by a rich stream of healthy

and pleasant fragrances, borne to them by the wind from the land'. And Dionysius writes about AD 90: 'In fortunate Araby one can smell everywhere the sweet fragrance of heavenly perfumes.'

No wonder that the city of Marjab, the Sabaeen capital (which no Greek ever set eyes on), was considered by the ancient authors to be a place of fabulous riches, a southern counterpart to legendary Tartessos. 'Here is great plenty of gold and silver. The Sabaeans employ silver and golden drinking-cups, lie upon couches with silver feet and use household objects of unbelievable preciousness. Their halls are gilded, the ceilings and doorways set with precious stones, and all other appointments are of astonishing richness. It is only because their land is so inaccessible that the Sabaeans experienced no despoilment of their wealth by greedy powers to whom all foreign property is rightful booty.'

One of these 'greedy powers' was the Roman Empire. About AD 25 the Roman Emperor Augustus conceived a plan to send an army into Arabia and conquer the country by force. The commander of this army, Aelius Gallus, was the first chronicler of the Arabian peoples. The writing of it cannot have given him much pleasure; his army was so weakened by hunger, hardship, illness, toil and bad roads that when only two days' march from Marjab the Sabaeans inflicted a crushing defeat.

Rome attempted to erase, several times, this great blot on her reputation, but in vain. Southern Arabia remained a shut-off, mysterious and fabled land. Only in the fifth century AD was the spell broken, Jewish immigrants founded an independent kingdom in the Yemen, Abyssinia compelled the Sabaeen coastal territories to become her tributary powers, and finally towards the end of the century the Persian Sassanid rulers overthrew the greater part of Arabia. But only a century elapsed before Islam's triumphal campaigns began and Arabia became a world power. The Arabian exploratory and commercial voyages of the Early Middle Ages are in the old Sabaeen tradition, as is the Arab trade monopoly between east and west. The old capital of Marjab had long since fallen into dust and ashes, and the former 'Incense Coast' was no longer rich and fertile, but the spirit of the Queen of Sheba, the spirit of the desert and the endless journeys over sand and sea had triumphed over all the other powers of the orient. Two thousand years after Solomon's meeting with Sheba, Arabic was spoken everywhere in the regions of those former great

civilizations—in Mesopotamia, on the Nile, in Jerusalem, in Carthage and in the land where legendary Tartessos had once stood.

It was not until 1765 that a Danish expedition under Karsten Niebuhr reached southern Arabia, though Niebuhr did not penetrate as far as the Sabaeen region. Finally, a hundred years later, the Frenchman Joseph Halévy and the Austrian Eduard Glaser succeeded in crossing the Bedouin area of the Yemen and smuggling out Sabaeen inscriptions from the ruins of Marjab. And in 1951 a team of American scholars under the leadership of Wendell Phillips uncovered the ruins of the ancient capital. Yet despite all this we know next to nothing about the old Sabaeen civilization, for every scholar, from Halévy to Wendell Phillips was forced to abandon the task, driven off by hostile Bedouins.

The kingdom of Abyssinia, isolated like the Yemen, stretches behind the African coast of the Gulf of Aden on a terraced plateau. The connections between Saba, Judaea and Abyssinia hinted at by the *Kebra Nagast* are still veiled in mystery. But it is certain that the population of Abyssinia in ancient times consisted of Cushites, of East Hamitic tribes which had been partly mixed with Negroes—as in the Sudan and in the rest of East Africa. These ancient Abyssinians, however, from an early date, presumably as early as the pre-Christian era, employed a southern Arabic dialect, the Geez, which to-day is still the clerical language of Abyssinian Christians. And in the heart of Abyssinia, round about Lake Tana, there still live, as in former times, some hundred thousand Jews—the Bieta Israel, as they call themselves, or the Falasha, as they are designated by ethnologists. According to Abyssinian sources, the Jewish religion remained the official religion of the country until its conversion to Christianity in AD 350.

But there were Jews living in large numbers in the Yemen even before this. Many Yemenite tribes had gone over to Judaism before Islam began its mission of conquest; a Jewish dynasty had ruled over the greater part of the Yemen for a long time. So we may assume that Sabaeen conquerors, led by Jews, overran the Gulf of Aden in several waves, occupied the highlands of Abyssinia, and there set up the first Abyssinian state—a state whose ruling class spoke Arabic and believed in Yahweh until about AD 350 Bishop Frumentius of Tyre came and founded the Christian-Ethiopian church. The myth of Menelik, the son of Solomon and

the Queen of Sheba, must have had its origins in some common Sabaeo-Jewish undertaking.

Jewish rites like circumcision, the sanctity of the Sabbath and the forbidding of pork in the diet, point to the influence of the Abyssinian church. The present official language in Abyssinia is an ancient dialect, Amharic. Despite the long tradition of Sabaeo-Solomonic ancestry, the ancient East Hamitic elements have made their re-appearance in the Abyssinian race. The Amharic national consciousness does not like to admit this, for to Abyssinians, proud of their ancient ancestry, the Africans are 'black men', Europeans 'red men', but they themselves are 'white men', the direct descendants of the two races from which Moses, Christ and Mohammed came forth.

The tribes of the steppe

The point where history and myth unite is full of excitement for the student of history. It is usually the best part of tradition.

Goethe

AGAIN AND AGAIN tribes and racial hordes advanced from the Asian deserts into the great civilizations, impregnating them with strength and new ideas. A similar and far greater racial reservoir was the East European and Inner Asian steppe, the vast area between the Black Sea and the borders of China. Here galloped the centaurs of Greek mythology, hordes of riders who grew into legendary figures, and whose appearance in the Ancient World called forth anxiety, terror and wonder. From the steppe also came the Huns and the Avars, the Hungarians and Bulgarians, the Turkish tribes and the Mongolians of Genghis Khan. The first tribe of conquering horsemen that we know about were the Scythians.

The steppe is a world on its own. Sparse pastures stretch as far as the eye can see, at the mercy of every kind of weather, scarred by river-beds where only a trickle of water runs, without any focal centre which might afford the possibility of founding a city and a state. The nomads of the steppe are utterly dependent on the seasons, wander with their womenfolk, children, household goods and cattle through pathless wastes from one thin pasturage to the next with their easily-transportable tents instead of a fixed

abode. They are people of the wide-open spaces. They invented the bow and arrow, and were the first to tame the horse.

On the steppe there is nothing lasting, nothing eternal. Everything is in movement, under the feet of the nomad flow the shifting sands, and over his head are the cold-glimmering stars. The religion of the steppe-dwellers is shamanism, the ecstatic transformation of a priest-magician into another person, into a god, into an animal. The soul of a dead nomad lives on as a wolf haunting the wilderness or as a hawk flying with the spectral clouds. Shamans induce their ecstasies in order to get into contact with the supernatural world, to bind with their spells the beasts of the chase, to call down spirits upon the earth and to find the way across the endless steppe. All peoples who have no concept of the limitations of space share this shaman faith, the nomads of the Ice Age, the Indians of the prairie, and above all the races and tribes of Inner Asia. As early as Herodotus we have an account of the Scythian shamans who came into contact with the Greek colonists on the Black Sea.

The Greeks must have had dealings with the people of the steppe at a very early date, probably in the eighth century before Christ. Not only do the many myths and tales of centaurs prove this; it is proved also by the story of the Argonauts. Jason, who journeyed on the 'Argo' to the land of Colchis in order to find the Golden Fleece, unmistakably symbolizes the first colonization of the Black Sea area by the Hellenes. The French geographer Louis Vivien de Saint-Martin in 1873 expressed the opinion in what is now a classic on the subject that the 'Golden Fleece' could be nothing more nor less than the rich goldfields round the Black Sea and in Inner Asia. Strabo notes that the inhabitants of the Black Sea area pan their gold from the rivers by using the skins of wethers. The treasure that Jason sought for can, therefore, be interpreted quite literally as a 'golden' sheepskin, or fleece.

The Hellenic colonists round the Black Sea had long ago forgotten that they themselves had once been inhabitants of the steppe. Their encounters with the Scythians, Issedonians, Cimmerians, Hyperboreans and Arimaspians, Sarmatians and Massagetians, that is, the inhabitants of Southern Russia and Inner Asia, occur again and again in Greek writings, which depict them as 'shaggy men with manes of hair and only one eye who are always fighting with one another, brave warriors, rich in horses, cattle and sheep', and as 'Cyclops, that are always fighting with griffins

for the possession of gold-mines'. Especially interesting is Herodotus' account of a Hyperborean named Abaris, 'who wandered round the earth with an arrow'.

What does he mean here by 'arrow'? In 1804 the celebrated English traveller in China, Sir John Barrow, put forward the theory that Abaris had been equipped not only with a bow and arrow but also with a compass, which had been known to the Chinese as early as the sixth century BC at least. Had Central Asiatic peoples adopted the use of the compass from China? Or had it been invented by the nomads and handed on to the Chinese? One thing we are sure about, and that is, about the time of the birth of Christ, the Chinese, like the Hellenes, were in constant contact with the people we now call Scythians. In Chinese texts they are called Yuechi; in Roman literature, based upon Indo-Chinese reports, they are Serei. Here they appear not only as riders of the steppe, but also as traders who carried costly stuffs and other valuable articles along the age-old Inner Asiatic 'Silk Route'. And it is most likely that these compass-carrying traders, the Yuechi or Serei, were Indo-Europeans.

Pliny had an opportunity to ask four Indian visitors to Rome about the peoples of Asia. These men must have come from northern India, for not only did they know the Himalayas, they also knew about China and the Serei. 'These Serei,' noted Pliny, 'are said to be tall, have blond hair and blue eyes and speak in a rough, not altogether comprehensible way'. The Romans also described their northern neighbours, the Germans, in this way, but it is hard to imagine that Germanic tribes at that period inhabited Inner Asia and the borders of China. Were the mysterious peoples of the steppe fore-runners of the Slavs? Were they Indo-Europeans who had stayed on in their original native land and were later absorbed by Turkish and Mongolian tribes? What is actually meant by the term 'Scythian'?

Herodotus undertook extensive journeys in the Black Sea lands and brought back with him a mass of myths and tales and all kinds of factual material whose correctness has been confirmed by the most recent excavations. He tells of Scythians' embalming rites, of their scalping of the enemies they killed, of their religion, in which they used hemp seeds and hashish, and of their matriarchal type of society. 'Among these peoples, the women take part in battles just as the men do, so that many great deeds of heroism have been performed by extraordinary women.'

The Greeks drew their stories of Amazons from the land of the Scythians. Pliny speaks of 'a race of women that fought victoriously against neighbouring tribes while compelling their menfolk to spin wool and perform household and menial tasks'. Now the Scythians did indeed carry out their raids in company with their women and children, they also seem to have worshipped a mother goddess named Api. To the Greeks all this seemed strange, and so they peopled the land of the Scythians—as they had Libyan North Africa—with warlike Amazons. The figure of Penthesilea, who aided the Trojans and was killed by Achilles, probably represents a female shaman of the Scythian race.

Scythians had destroyed the land of Ararat in the sixth century BC; they had entered Mesopotamia, fought against Assyrians and Egyptians and had created widespread terror just as the later Huns and Mongols did. 'At that time,' wrote Herodotus, 'the Scythians held the whole of Asia in the palms of their hands.' That is a little exaggerated, but it is a fact that the nomads tricked Darius, who attempted to rout them with an army of seven hundred thousand men, for they lured the Persians up on the steppe and put them to flight. In Herodotus' time many Scythians from the Black Sea area had given up their hard nomad lives in preference for the comforts of civilization. They became farmers, built towns and gradually succumbed to the assaults of another and perhaps more closely related steppe tribe—the Sarmatians.

Herodotus gives evidence in several parts of his work that the Scythians were by no means barbarians; he describes with loving detail their graves, weapons, ornaments, steam baths and daily life. There even seem to have been some scholars among the Scythians, as witnessed by an old Grecian story in which two of the nomad tribe, both of the highest birth, undertook a journey to Solon's Athens 'in order to satisfy their desire for knowledge', and even studied Pythagorean mathematics there. Their desire for knowledge however proved to be fatal; when, on their return home, 'they endeavoured to introduce their countrymen to the mysteries of the Greeks', their king had them put to death.

Scholars are still arguing about whether the Scythians were Slavs, Turks, Iranians or of other races. The theory that they were Iranians seems at any rate to fit those Scythians with whom the Greeks were in contact, and also those who dwelt on the Chinese border, the blond and blue-eyed Yuechi as well as the Sarmatians, who followed the Scythians in Southern Russia. Of these northern

Iranian races that drove across the steppe with the horses and chariots only a small branch remains—the Ossetes in the Caucasus. To all appearances they are the direct descendants of the Scythian-Sarmatians and call themselves 'Iron', Iranians.

But unlike the Scythian race, Scythian civilization and its astonishingly high artistic achievements has not disappeared. Typically Scythian forms and styles—animal pictures on horse harness, breast-plates and belt buckles for example—were taken over by the Persians and Chinese, by the Islamic Turks, the Mongolians and even the Goths. Through the Goths, Scythian animal decorations passed into early medieval European art. All the later wanderers across the steppe—Tartars, Huns, Mongols—retained many cultural elements based on the Scythian civilization. Scythian settlements and dwellings, burial services, wall-paintings, tools, wood sculpture, ornaments and articles of clothing are extraordinarily reminiscent also of ancient Slav culture.

Only of recent years has the latter fact been discovered, since Russian archaeologists in numerous excavations opened many Scythian burial mounds in southern Russia, Siberia and Mongolia. Scythian ornaments, the so-called 'Siberian gold', were found as early as the days of Peter the Great, Scythian *kurgans*, the graves of queens, have been known since 1821. But the really great discoveries were made in the last four decades. From 1924 to 1925 a team of scholars unearthed from several burial mounds at Noin Ula in the region of Lake Baikal many Scythian works of art as well as Greek fabrics—impressive testimonials to the role of middle-men played by the Scythians in cultural and commercial dealings with Hellas and China. From 1945 to 1950 the Soviet scholars P. N. Schulz and W. A. Golovkina excavated the ancient Scythian capital of Neapol on the Dnieper. And in 1954 one of Russia's leading archaeologists, Professor Rudenko, published a mass of findings from the remote valley of Pasyryk in the Altai mountains.

The valley of Pasyryk with its five great kurgans was revealed as an *El Dorado* for archaeological and ethnographical research equal to the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. The Russian researchers first had to thaw the ground with hot water in order to reach the contents of the kurgans, they had to construct paths and mule-tracks, remove stones of several tons in weight and transport all the necessary equipment, from drinking water to special tools, by

1 This Hermes by Praxiteles shows the facial characteristics which the Greeks attributed to the 'barbarians', their name for all those who were not Greek.





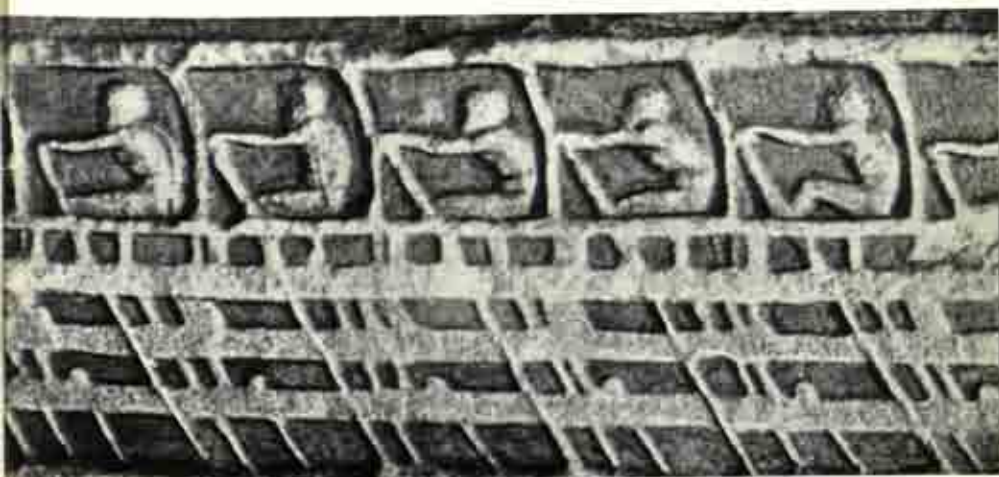
2 The Persians, arch-enemies of the Greeks, from the frieze at the Great Hall at Persepolis.



3 The bull dancers from the wall-paintings of the Minoan Palace at Knossos look exotic and un-European to our eyes.



4 The Etruscan dance of fate, from a wall-painting at Tarquinia.



5 Before Rome existed the Etruscans were creating sculpture of Roman clarity and force. They travelled as far as the Pillars of Hercules in triremes like this.



6 Native life in Portuguese Guinea is unchanged from Hanno's time. On their expedition the Carthaginians found the same dances and tom-toms as modern explorers of Africa have done.

7 The Berbers are the descendants of the ancient white Africans. A Berber of Cro-Magnon racial type from the Atlas Mountains region.





8 An Egyptian drawing of four racial types, from a royal tomb near Thebes: Negro, Asiatic, Nubian and Berber.



9 In Egypt, as elsewhere in the civilized ancient East, racial types were varied. A village magistrate from Sakkara, c. 2600 BC.



10 Greek explorers in Egypt met people from the interior of Africa. A Greek vase in the form of a Negro's head.

12 The King and Queen of Punt. Some anthropologists suggest South African origins for this corpulent woman.



13 The Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut, who sent her seafarers south to an African Eldorado.



11 Negro prisoners from the land of Cush being taken into slavery.





14 Mysterious paintings on the rock faces of South Africa show light-skinned, richly decorated figures such as this famous 'White Lady of Tsissab', with hunters and animals.



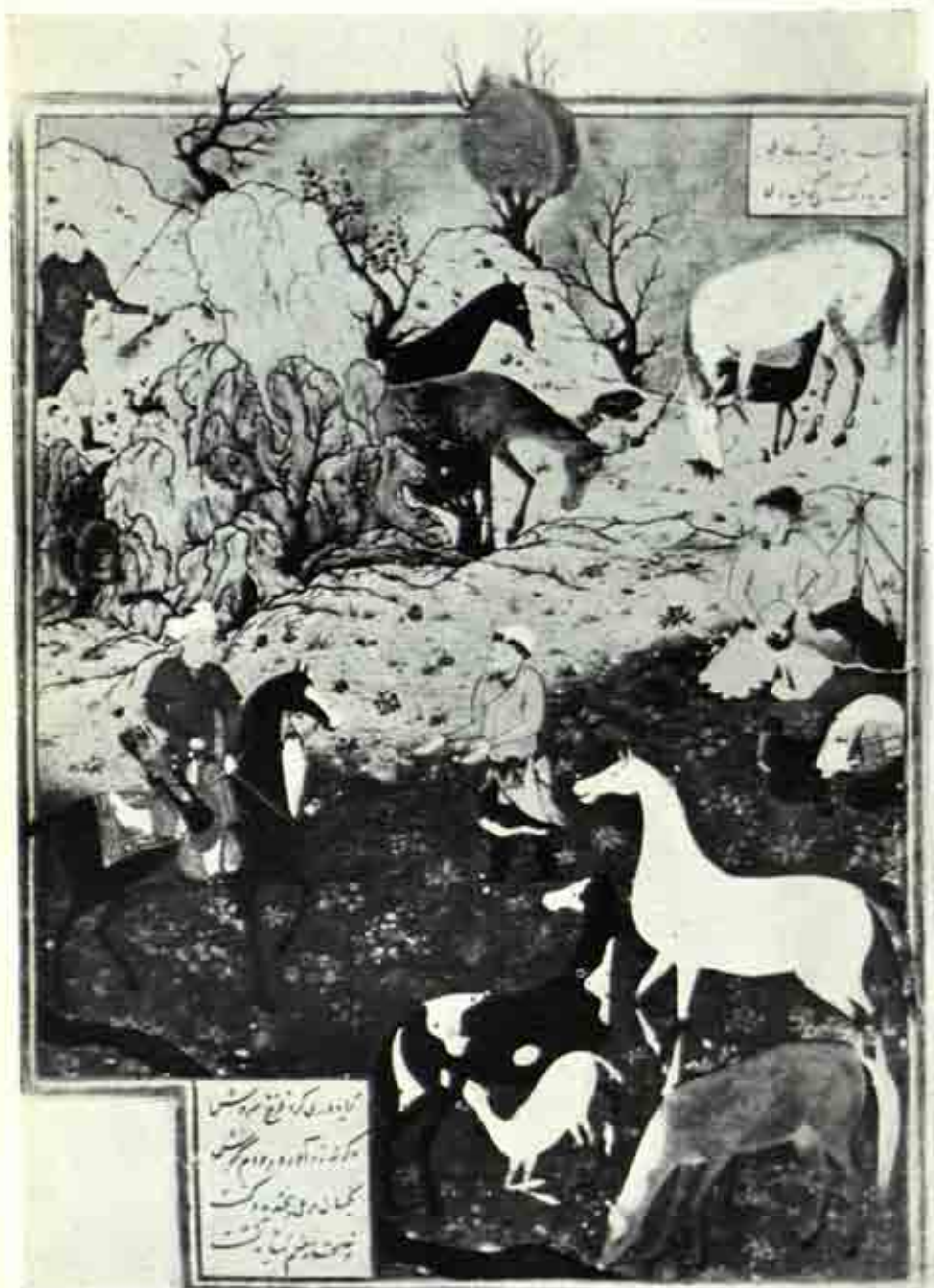
15 The Tower of Babel, a symbol of the confusion of peoples and tongues in the ancient East, painted by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

16 Head of an Akkadian ruler of the Near East, c. 2500 BC.



17 Akhnaton, a religious rebel on the throne of the Pharaohs. His cult of Aton was the first monotheistic state religion in history.





18 The Persian king, Darius, meets a north Iranian horseherd. This miniature was painted by Persia's greatest book illustrator, Bihzad, c. AD 1488.



19 Works of art found in Scythian royal tombs rival the finest works of the great civilizations. These gold belt clasps date from Herodotus' lifetime.

20 A sculpture of a primitive tribe of Vedda descent in India.



21 A female statue from the highly civilized kingdom of Chandragupta.



22 A Lao man of Mongolian descent, from the northern mountains of Laos.



23 A Karen man, descended from the ancient people of Further India, from the Shan states.



24 A Kachin woman of Indo-European type.

25 The Biets belong to the Mon-Khmer peoples of an ancient culture of India. A Biet woman.



pack-animals across the heights of the Altai into what was a deserted valley.

The Russian scholars established that the horse played in the life of the Scythians a part such as we might expect from those whom the Greeks turned into centaurs. When a prince or a leader died, his favourite horse was buried with him. The Scythians in the decoration of their saddles and bridles reached artistic heights unknown to any race on earth. Excavators found saddles upholstered with carpets and ornamented with gold leaf, and wooden shafts with breast harness for four horses. On the headgear were 'marvellously realistic pictures of elk, deer, ibex, mountain sheep, antelope, wolves, hares and panthers'. It is quite probable that northern Iranian steppe tribes were the first to tame the horse, and almost as probable that the Scythians invented the gelding, the castrated, easily-managed saddle and harness horse.

According to the finds in Pasyryk the Scythians also bred fat-tailed sheep, goats, large-horned cattle and black-haired yaks. They wore clothes made of sable and miniver, ermine, otter and panther-skins. They adorned themselves with ear-rings and necklaces of gold, crystal and glass beads. The men were usually tattooed; patterns of fabulous beasts, that were presumably totemic, decorated the breast, back and limbs. Particularly remarkable was their weaving of carpets and textiles, in which not only Near Eastern wool was used, but also Chinese silks. A few carpets that date from the fifth century BC—perhaps the oldest in human history—are equal to the most beautiful examples of later oriental carpet-weaving.

The ruined Scythian city of Neapol on the Dnieper shows that the western bases were well-built communities with fortifications, stone houses and mausoleums. Schulz and Golovkina discovered in Neapol a necropolis, a city of the dead similar to those of the Etruscans and Lydians, full of arresting, vivid wall-paintings, of weapons, gems, animal statues and portraits of human beings which 'resemble portraits of ancient Russian princes'.

The Eurasian steppe dwellers acted as a bridge between the nomads of the Neolithic Age and the Iranian-Indo-European civilizations of the ancient orient. Iranian relatives of the Scythians, the Medes, fought for centuries against Assyria and Babylon. Other Iranians, the Persians, established the greatest empire in human history, produced leaders like Cyrus, the three Dariuses, Xerxes and Artaxerxes and even had the Indian Ocean explored

by Greek navigators. Others, the Bactrians, presented mankind with the monotheistic religion of Zoroaster, whom Nietzsche calls Zarathustra. Iranian Parthians created a great kingdom which stretched from the Euphrates to the Indus, and were the chief enemies of Rome in Hither Asia; Iranian Sassanians restored the Persian Empire and threatened Indians, Arabs and Byzantines. The Indo-European ruling class, too, which in the second century before Christ under the name of Hurrians invaded Hither Asia and as Hindus attacked India, came from the Iranian region; they called their leaders Airan, Aryan or Arya. Men like Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Count Gobineau and the National-Socialist race-mystics seized upon this name and out of the very heterogeneous Indo-European tribes dreamed up a master-race called the Aryans. In reality, the Sanskrit word Arya means only a certain noble class and speech-group in India, who wished to insist upon their Iranian origins.

Part Two

HEATHENS AND SLAVES

CHAPTER IV ON THE FRINGE OF THE KNOWN WORLD

CHAPTER V TO STRANGE SHORES

CHAPTER VI CAPTAINS, CONQUERORS AND KINGS OF
COMMERCE

CHAPTER IV

ON THE FRINGE OF THE KNOWN WORLD

*The perfect class state: Furor Teutonicus: The mystery of
the great stones: The world on horseback: Behind the silken
curtain*

The perfect class state

To mix would be to destroy all
castes; all barriers would break
down, and men would all be in each
other's way.

From Ancient Indian Manu Laws

THE INDIAN CITY OF Patna on the right bank of the Ganges with its ancient oriental structures and libraries, its mixture of races and its religious traditions is certainly still to-day an attractive sphere of activity for a clever, urbane diplomat. Here the Ganges was once the cradle of Buddhism, where the Jain priests proclaimed the teachings of Ahimsa, whose first law is that no animal should be harmed or even killed. Here can be seen the sacred Zebu cattle wandering peacefully in the streets and sacred Hamuman apes crouching on temple and garden walls. Here Hindu pilgrims bathe in the waters of the Ganges. And in the valley plain stretch fields and fields of poppies—a memory of the times when Patna provided the orient with opium.

As early as the fourth century BC, Patna was a flourishing metropolis, then it was still called Pataliputra. And the Greek Megasthenes, who lived here as ambassador at the court of King Chandragupta, must have received much the same impressions of the mighty Hindu kingdom on the Ganges as the present-day traveller. He was a good diplomat, a keen observer and a writer of imagination. When after many years of ambassadorial duties he was recalled from India, he left Pataliputra with the manuscript of a work in four volumes, from which, right up to the sixteenth

century, geographers and ethnologists have drawn the greater part of their knowledge about India.

Of course, Megasthenes had wonderful luck. His diplomatic mission covered a period that could hardly have been better for ethnologists and scholars. The greater part of India was united politically under the Maurya dynasty and spiritually under the mantle of Buddhism. And this Indian empire of Magadha bordered, on the west, a state in which the ruling classes spoke Greek. This state was the powerful domain, stretching from Asia Minor across Babylon and Persia right to the Indus, of Seleucus Nicator, the chief heir of Alexander the Great. Between this state and the Indian empire there were the most cordial relationships. So cordial, that Seleucus handed over to King Chandragupta the region now known as Pakistan, and in return King Chandragupta presented Seleucus with five hundred elephants. Moreover, both rulers were related by marriage. All this produced an extremely pleasant atmosphere for Megasthenes, both as a diplomat and as an ethnologist.

India has ever been destined to arouse the dreams and desires of European man. Long before Megasthenes' time, men had dreamt of its fabled riches.

About 518 BC the Persian King Darius had sent out a navy to explore the coasts of the Indian Ocean and the valley of the Indus. The leader of this expedition was a countryman of Herodotus, the Greek-speaking Carian, Skylax of Karyanda. Little is known about his voyage, probably he gave his Persian master much valuable information, for shortly afterwards Darius crossed the Indus and occupied part of north-west India. The few chapters that Herodotus devoted to India are based on the Skylax expedition.

A hundred years later yet another Carian Greek came into contact with the Indian world; this was a doctor from Cnidos named Ctesias. He had been taken prisoner by the Persians; while still a prisoner of war he had healed the Emperor Artaxerxes of wounds, and thereby enjoyed the special favour of the Persian court. Ctesias lived for seventeen years in Persia; he travelled around the country a good deal, visiting among other places Babylon, and was a keen student of Persian historical writings. He found in them several references to India, he also got to know two or three Indians—auxiliary troops in the pay of the Persian king.

A century later Alexander the Great, in a campaign that completely destroyed the Persian empire, marched on India. He

reached the Indus, overthrew two Indian kings and was prevented only by the mutiny of his troops from driving on to the Ganges. On this expedition, Alexander was the first conqueror to take scholars and specialists of all kinds with him. Following this, a sea-campaign was conducted by Admiral Nearchos from the mouth of the Indus to the Euphrates, and here, too, the leader was accompanied by several learned men.

But shortly after Nearchos' return, on June 13th, 323 bc, Alexander died of malaria in Babylon, and the gate to the western world was closed once more. Alexander's campaign had been too hurried and too brief, and so in the reports written by his intelligence staff there are many errors and misconceptions. They thought that the conquered provinces on the Indus were half the land of India. They indicated the Indus as being the upper course of the Nile, they populated India with one-eyed, dog-headed and long-tailed men, and even reported that once Alexander had tried to fight against an army of apes, but was dissuaded from attacking these sacred animals by one of his scholars, Taxilos.

Though the scholarly companions of Alexander and Nearchos brought back many good and reliable reports, later historians did not treat them very kindly. But among the Grecian people they left an unforgettable echo. Alexander's campaign had thrown new light on the world, the earth had expanded, and human beings were more varied and picturesque than had ever been imagined. A wave of enthusiasm for India flowed over the west. Mathematicians, astronomers and geographers made new calculations about the size of the earth, ethnologists and natural historians wrote books about India and politicians dreamed of realizing Alexander's plans for a world-wide empire. It was on the crest of this wave of enthusiasm and ideas that Megasthenes, twenty years after Alexander's death, took up his post in the Indian capital on the Ganges.

But Alexander's empire had fallen apart, for about half a dozen *diadochi* had shared the possessions of the Macedonian conqueror among them. The most powerful of these, Seleucus Nicator, ruled over almost the same territory that Alexander had once possessed in Asia, that is, the greater part of Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Persia and vast areas in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkistan. Seleucus considered his Greco-Persian Union to be the mightiest kingdom on earth. No one could guess then that this

great kingdom would fall within a few decades, and after a brief renaissance continue only as a shadow of its former self.

Seleucus' political partner, Chandragupta of Magadha, thought himself the most powerful man in the world, and with as much right as the Greek, for his empire was about the same size. He had obtained it by a cunning move, carried out probably with the help of his Machiavellian political adviser Kautilya, who now served him as Chancellor. Megasthenes had much to do with Kautilya and studied eagerly the political-economic treatise *Arthashastra* which the Chancellor had written, a true fore-runner of Machiavelli's *Il Principe*. It was a book which treated statecraft as a scholarly discipline, and practically the first text-book on politics in human history. Yet even this work could not prevent the Indian empire of Magadha from declining after a short period of prosperity.

As Seleucid ambassador to the Emperor, Megasthenes was in a way the doyen of the diplomatic corps in those days. He was quite aware of this and when he went to Pataliputra he had read all he could about India. To-day scholars deplore this fact; they would have preferred Megasthenes to be quite unprepared for what he was to see on the Ganges, for everything that Ctesias and the Alexandrian scholars wrote about the horrors and monstrosities of India are found again in the works of the otherwise clever and sharp-witted diplomat.

These fabulous creatures are still being brought up in the chronicles of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, men with gigantic ears, who when they go to sleep wrap themselves in their monstrous organs of hearing, savage natives whose feet 'have the heels in front and the toes behind', dwellers by the sources of the Ganges with air-holes for mouths and 'who feed only on the smell of food', and fast walkers whom no horse can overtake. One-eyed monsters appear, 'with the eye in the middle of the forehead, with dog's ears, upstanding hair and furry breast, noseless monsters with extremely prominent lips that eat up everything; but these do not live long'. Reports on encounters with apes may be based on vague rumours about the primitive Vedda and Munda tribes in the Indian mountains, or perhaps on the many representations of the ape-god Hanuman and other strange religious images which were discovered in Indian temples. Megasthenes copied all this quite uncritically, and these tales were re-written and added to for

eighteen centuries until in 1544 we read the following in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmography*:

'... in the mountains of the land of India there be men that have dogs' heads and jaws, therefore can they not give utterance, but bark and whine as dogs. Item an other folk is found in India that when they are born they are grey, and only with age does their hair become black. . . Women there are also, that conceive and bring forth babes at the age of five years; but they live no more than eight. Other men there are, born with one eye. Some do have no head, having their countenance in their breast. Others there are that have but one foot, but upon this they can hop so fast that no two-footed man can overtake them; and when the sun doth burn very hot, then lie they upon their backs and use their great foot as a sunshade.'

With these creatures Münster includes also 'the little dwarf mannikins, that men do call Pygmies, no more than three spans in height'. This Indian version of the pygmy myth is based on both Ctesias and Megasthenes.

Two kinds of dwarf men appear in ancient reports on India. Ctesias says: 'Some are small indeed, with black skin, long-haired, bearded and having dogs' heads'; they trade with the Indians, understand the Indian language, but cannot answer in it, because 'they speak not in the manner of men, but only after the fashion of dogs, that do bark'. Megasthenes adds a few details to this: these savage men eat only raw meat and when captured 'only with difficulty can they be kept alive. A few were caught, but they were not taken to King Chandragupta, for they pined to death.'

The same stories appear in Diodorus, Strabo, Pliny, Arrian and other Greco-Roman historians, and sceptical Strabo is the only one who does not altogether believe in them. But after two thousand years modern ethnology has shown that Ctesias and Megasthenes with their tales of black-skinned pygmies were perhaps not far from the mark. The 'dark-skinned dwarfs' could have been Negritos, and the bearded dogs' heads Veddas—primitive remnants of India's original population, that even to-day live on in remote districts of south east Asia, and were certainly, in ancient times, spread over a wide area of tropical India.

In the last few decades ethnologists have distinguished two separate races in India, light-skinned Hindus and dark-skinned Dravidians. This, however, was not a racial, but a linguistic distinction. About two hundred and fifty million Indians speak Indo-

European dialects, that is, languages which are related to ancient Sanskrit, Persian and the languages of Europe. But among these we find not only light-skinned, but also dark-skinned races. And about eighty million Indians speak the Dravidian tongue; this is a completely isolated language-group. Among these are many races of pure Hindu types. Another four million speak the Munda languages, which it has been discovered are related to the languages of ancient Further India, and among these Mundas there are people with mongoloid characteristics, a broad lower class of primitive Vedda-types as well as very dark-skinned races. In the Indian region of the Himalayas Tibetan dialects are used, in the Pamir, Iranian. In Ceylon, finally, the dark-skinned Sinhalese as well as the primitive Veddas speak an Indo-European language closely related to Sanskrit; the almost black Tamils, however, speak Dravidian.

So equation of race and language is not possible in India. And the old theory that India was originally inhabited by dark-skinned Dravidians who were later overrun by light-skinned Hindus is now no longer tenable, for it has been proved that the Dravidian dialects also were brought from the north into the southern part of the Indian peninsula.

Here again we find the dwarfish and savage monsters of Megasthenes. India was inhabited towards the end of the Ice Age by black-skinned peoples. They left behind them mallet axes, ash-heaps and gnawed animal-bones in ancient earth-layers; how far they are related to the African negro and to the Papuans and Melanesians of the western South Seas is still unknown. Dwarf remnants of these black Asiatics still live on the Malayan peninsula; they are called Semang. In the Philippines they are known as Aëta, and as Minkopi on the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean. In general they are referred to as Negritos or 'little Negroes'. But in India, too, Negroid-types can be found, especially among the races that speak Munda and Dravidian dialects. Information about these may have reached the Persians and been taken up by Ctesias. Perhaps Megasthenes really saw the black dwarfs with his own eyes, for in the present state of Bihar, the original heart of the ancient Magadha kingdom, there still exist, as then, very dark tribes known as the Ho and the Mundari.

Nevertheless the main mass of black Indians was mixed with the later immigrants. And the first race to overrun India after the Ice Age was a long-haired, bearded and still very primitive tribe

whose speech, according to Megasthenes, sounded like the barking of dogs and whose remnants in the days of Chandragupta were attributed with dogs' heads, ape-like behaviour and an animal-like way of living, these were the Veddas. The members of the Vedda group are to-day counted as among the most primitive human beings on earth, they seem to be very closely related to the European Ice Age people. About two thousand Veddas remain in Ceylon. They are even called 'savages' by the Ceylonese, though they belong (perhaps because of age-old traditions) to the highest caste. Moreover, various Vedda tribes live in Further India and Malaya, and the majority of the primitive peoples who live in the mountain forests of Central India—about twenty million people altogether—are more or less pure Vedda in their descent.

Bone implements, all kinds of small articles and especially a large number of cave-paintings point to the former supremacy of the Veddas in India. The cave-paintings are astoundingly like their counterparts in South Africa and Spain; they are painted with red ochre and depict masked hunters, buffaloes, elephants and many sorts of totemistic ceremonies. Particularly celebrated are the caves of Sirgudsha, Ghatsila and Edakal, students of pre-history have compared the drawings there not only with European Ice Age art, but also with aboriginal Australian rock-paintings. And indeed the civilization of the Australian aborigines is very closely related to the ancient Vedda culture.

Anthropologists refer to the Veddas as 'delicately-built savage types of human being', as direct descendants of Ice Age men. Judging by the skulls and skeletons that have been unearthed, the Veddas must have lived also in pre-historic eras in Mesopotamia, Persia and East Asia; they form a pre-historical bridge between Europe and Southern Asia, just as the Negritos, being driven back into gradual extinction, seem to form a bridge between Africa and the western South Seas. And from the two races of age-old antiquity, the long-established Negritos and the immigrant Veddas there gradually arose in India a dark-skinned, wavy-haired and slightly-built mixed race such as we can still encounter in many forest and mountain tribes of the interior.

In the Neolithic Age the picture changed. Peoples from Further India with Mongoloid infusions overran the country. They brought their own civilization with them, erected megalithic monuments and underground stone burial chambers and worshipped all the nature deities which were later taken over by the Hindu religion.

These immigrants, the Mundas, mingled with and were absorbed by the dark-skinned native populations. But the Munda dialect which they brought with them—a member of the Indo-Chinese family of languages—is still used to-day by most of the primitive tribes of the Indian peninsula.

A third immigrant wave then radically altered the country's destiny. Whether it came from the Near East, from the Inner Asiatic highlands or from Further India is still a matter of dispute among scholars. They brought with them the craft of metal-working, the art of house-building and the Dravidian language, their bearers are possibly related to the ancient civilizations that lay between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. They were the creators of a civilization—as the Sumerians in Babylon and the Elamites in southern Iran, to whom perhaps they stand in fairly close relationship. Two thousand years before the arrival of the Hindus there was the sudden blossoming of a very high civilization in the regions of the present-day Punjab, Sind and Hyderabad, a civilization that can be compared with the great civilizations of the Euphrates and Tigris, and one may assume that it was founded by the ancient Dravidians, about whom we know nothing yet.

Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in the Indus basin are archaeological sites which are admired to-day as much as those of Ur, Babylon and Nineveh. The ruins of great cities were laid bare here, containing houses of several storeys, baths, canal installations, remains of temples and extensive warehouses. Seals, ceramics, terra-cotta figures were found in the rubble, as well as razors, scissors and weaving equipment. Statuettes show that these ancient Indians were richly dressed and adorned with a mass of ornaments, with pearl belts, golden breastplates, necklaces, rings, ear-rings, nose-rings, anklets, bracelets, with ropes of precious stones, mussel-shells and porcelain beads. Upon the seals appears the sacred bull, which played an important cultural role also in Babel, Crete and Egypt. On signet rings it was possible to make out a kind of picture-writing which archaeologists related to the scripts of Sumeria, Crete, ancient China and even to the inscriptions on Easter Island.

With this our knowledge of the first great Indian civilization is practically exhausted. The one thing we can be sure of in a mass of hypotheses is that India was already, thousands of years before the arrival of the Hindus, a great civilization that was in constant contact, by ship and caravan, with the other Near Eastern civiliza-

tions. And in the second millennium BC the race that has given its name to India—the Hindus, or the Sindhu, as they are called in Sanskrit—arrived in the land.

We are very well informed about the Hindu invasion, for the immigrants set down the events, thoughts and wise sayings of their early history in the *Vedas*, the collection of ancient Hindu hymns, prose pieces, proverbs, essays and secret lore. Moreover, comparisons of language and culture have proved that the Hindus were Aryans, aristocratic Iranians, close relatives of the Hurrians and Mitanni in Hither Asia, less closely related to the Persians, Afghans and Scythians and distant relatives of the Europeans. The oldest hymns in the *Vedas* relate the advance of aristocratic Indo-Iranians and all kinds of auxiliary tribes into Afghanistan and north-west India; later hymns show how this first Hindu colony was extended gradually eastwards to the valley of the Ganges, how the priestly caste won more power and how the Hindus distinguished themselves from the *Dasyu*, the age-long inhabitants, through the barriers of *Varna* or skin colouring. From the concept of *Varna* evolved the later division of the people into castes.

With the increase of Hindu influence—and even to-day its progress has still not come to a stop—the intruders took over the civilization of the native inhabitants and replaced the *Gotra*, which until then had meant a rather loose arrangement of the clans, by a severe caste system which originally was only devised to preserve race, colour and national barriers. The earlier rulers of the country, the Dravidians and the Mundas, the black and the Vedda-type Indians, lost caste and became pariahs, 'who are created by the All-Highest for the service of the Brahmins'.

'These lowest of all men', as they are called in the *Laws of Manu*, the great Hindu law-book which about the time of the birth of Christ was gathered together from countless ancient texts of the migration period, 'must live outside the community, must use special implements, must wear dead people's clothes, must eat from broken vessels and must be on the move constantly from place to place. He who performs his religious duties may have no contact with them; they shall do business only among themselves and marry only with their own kind. . . .' The Indian pariah is to-day the symbol of all downtrodden, outcast members of human society.

It is understandable that Megasthenes should have devoted

many pages to this caste system. The ambassador was indeed a citizen of a slave-owning state, but he had never experienced anywhere such a philosophically well-based and smoothly-functioning slave system. He marvelled particularly at the double-dealing of Hindu philosophy: the law did indeed 'forbid the keeping of slaves; all Indians should be free and honour equality in all things. . . . Yet the whole population of India is divided into seven castes'. Megasthenes lists them—the Brahmins, the farmers, the shepherds, the manual workers, the fighting men, the overseers and councillors. He mentions a host of lower castes, portrays the functions of each group in the life of the community and the country and then declares that 'it is not allowed for a person of one caste to marry one of another caste, to change from one occupation to another, nor to belong to more than one class'. Curiously enough, Megasthenes does not discuss the situation of the pariahs. We do not know whether they did not interest him or whether in such an excellently-governed state as Chandragupta's there were no pariahs.

As Seleucus was bound to Chandragupta by ties of friendship and marriage, Megasthenes could not, for political and diplomatic reasons, say a word against the country. Moreover, Megasthenes worked in close association with the Chancellor Kautilya, a statesman who indeed had done much for his people and practised an unbelievably modern system of economy. And a chancellor who took so much thought and trouble for the welfare of his people naturally awakened great sympathy in a European intellectual whose head of state was much less human and philanthropic.

The ambassador felt the same sympathy for the whole of India. Megasthenes was the first of a long series of Indophile Europeans who compared Indian character and culture with western authoritarianism and materialism and drew their own conclusions. Megasthenes says that 'all Indians live in a simple way and conduct themselves well', that they do not steal, do not get drunk, are not quarrelsome and 'in doing business require no witnesses and no seals, for they believe in and trust one another'. They care for their bodies, love truth and virtue, and 'if a Brahmin makes a mistake in his prophecies then he is not scolded or punished, but is simply required to keep his mouth shut for the rest of his days'.

Even the strange, exotic customs of India which arrogant Europeans in later times found so laughable—fakirs, commercial marriages, the passive attitude towards life, the belief in Nirvana,

the worship of animals—were handled by Megasthenes with honeyed good-nature.

Megasthenes compares the statements of the fakirs with ancient Greek sayings: 'They too say that the world is round like a ball, and transitory; the god who made and ordered it permeates everything. . . . They consider earthly life to be a conceiving, and death to be birth into the true life; therefore they constrain themselves to think of death calmly. . . . They talk also—like Plato—of all kinds of myths about the immortality of the soul and about judgement in the underworld. . . .' The parallels between Buddha and Plato must have fascinated many Greeks. For from now on the treasures of Indian thought streamed ceaselessly towards the lands of the west.

The bonds between India and the west were tied firmly by Megasthenes and did not loosen for another five hundred years. Chandragupta's follower Ashoka sent embassies to the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt, the Greek helmsman Hippalos about 100 BC successfully took advantage of the monsoon winds to facilitate the voyage to India, and in Roman times about twenty to a hundred ships sailed every year across the Indian Ocean—the passengers being mainly businessmen, 'unlearned people who can give us no geographical information', as Strabo cuttingly declares. The emperors Augustus, Claudius, Nero and Trajan received Indian ambassadors. News was even received of another, far-off world—Taprobane, the island of Ceylon.

Taprobane is mentioned by Megasthenes and the Alexandrian helmsman Onesikritos—'a very large island, south of India, five thousand stages from Ethiopia and whose inhabitants export ivory, tortoise-shell and other wares to Indian ports'. Of course, all kinds of monsters were said to live on Taprobane also, this time 'amphibian horrors, which seem to be half bull and half horse or some other kind of land animal'. Quite obviously Ceylon was confused with the Sunda Isles and the East African coast. Only in the year 50 BC were more accurate reports received. A Roman freedman, a castaway, landed in a Ceylonese harbour, told about the city of Rome and caused the Sinhalese ruler of that district to send an embassy to Rome.

In fact soon afterwards a Sinhalese Rajah with three companions arrived on a visit to Claudius. Pliny has told us what the men from Taprobane told the Roman Emperor about their homeland: 'there are five hundred towns on the island,' writes Pliny,

'and in the capital there are two hundred thousand inhabitants'. The Ceylonese seem to have come a long way round: they tell the Romans about the south coast of India, about forests of seaweed in the Indian Ocean, even about the Himalayas and about an encounter with red-haired and blue-eyed Scythian silk merchants beyond the Inner Asian highlands. If their story is correct they must have gone across Inner Asia and the Near East in order to get to Rome—a rather incredible achievement, for which there seems to have been no motive. Possibly the 'Rajah from Taprobane' was really a widely-travelled Indian or Bactrian merchant, who knew Ceylon as well as the Inner Asian 'Silk Route' and who now wanted to see the Roman capital.

All these envoys, merchants and monsoon-sailors contributed less than Megasthenes to the information on India. Never again, at least not until the days of Jawaharlal Nehru, would a European travel through a great independent Hindu state. The Indian kingdoms fell apart in the early Middle Ages, succumbing to the onslaught of Arabs, Afghans and Mongols, and it was quite a different India with which, eighteen centuries after Megasthenes, Europe again came in contact—an Islamic kingdom under the Turkish-Mongolian dynasty of the Great Moguls.

Furor Teutonicus

We know only a small portion of the earth, round which we have settled like frogs round a pond.

Plato

IN THE FIFTH AND third centuries BC, and in the second century AD three significant maps of the earth were drawn; to-day they decorate almost every other work on the history of exploration. The first was made by Herodotus, the second by the librarian Eratosthenes and the third by the geographer Ptolemy. They show clearly how the horizon of western man expanded in these seven centuries, but also how, with the accumulation of knowledge, errors slipped into attempts at historical and geographical research.

For Herodotus, the Mediterranean lands were still at the centre of the universe. On the fringes lived, to the north, the Hyperboreans, to the north-east the Scythians, to the east the Indians, to the south-west the Arabs and to the south the Ethiopians. But

to the west stretched the ocean. Herodotus knew that this great sea flowed round Northern Europe, Asia and Africa also, he saw the continents of antiquity much as we see them now.

When the scholar Eratosthenes of Cyrene took over the direction of the library at Alexandria in the year 235, and there attempted to reform the study of geography, explorers had long since gone beyond the bounds of Herodotus' world. The Greek merchant Pytheas from Massilia had reached Thule, 'the remotest land known to man'. The Romans had encountered Gauls, northern Celts 'without laws, rights or public spirit'. Alexander the Great had marched to the Indus, Greeks dominated the western regions of modern Pakistan and Afghanistan. Quite new names of peoples began to appear: Germans, Britons, Indians, Ceylonese.

Eratosthenes was just the man for a re-statement of geographical and ethnographical ideas; all the library treasures of Alexandria were at his disposal. Moreover, we now know that he was the only scholar in antiquity who gave a fairly correct reckoning of the earth's size, much more accurate at any rate than that of Columbus and his contemporaries. He included all the new lands and peoples, from Taprobane to Thule, in his picture of the earth, but he ignored other information from the times of Herodotus. Because the Scythians had meanwhile disappeared from sight in the west, Eratosthenes no longer knew of southern Russia and Central Asia, he thought the Caspian Sea was a large bay on the northern ocean. And as the old journeys of the Egyptians into Africa had been forgotten, the continent looked considerably shrunken on Eratosthenes' map. The attention of geographers had been drawn towards India, it was chiefly the inclusion of the Indian regions that extended the range of the ancient maps.

Four hundred years later, again in Alexandria, the Greco-Egyptian Ptolemy created his famous astronomical system, evolved his theories about optics and drew up his chart of geographical information which was to dominate the studies of wise men until well into the Middle Ages. Again many new things had been found out; Roman garrisons occupied Britain and Germania, Roman generals had voyaged to the African interior and southern Arabia, and historians, artists and philosophers knew about the Parthians, Bactrians and Chinese. It was no longer possible to regard the Mediterranean as the hub of the universe. Therefore Ptolemy indicated on his map two large inland seas round which were grouped the civilizations of the earth—the

Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. The southern tip of Africa turned eastwards and was joined to China and the land masses of the Ancient World lost their former look.

When Ptolemy began his work, the great geographers Strabo and Diodorus had been in their graves for a century and a half. They had contributed much to the knowledge of different races in all three continents. Yet Greco-Roman scholars still regarded the inhabited earth as comprising an area between Spain and the Indus, and between the Danube and the Nile. Whatever lay to the north and east of these regions was Scythia, whose inhabitants included Germans, Finns, Turks, Northern Iranians, Indians or Chinese.

In 334 BC when Alexander was just beginning his triumphal conquests, a Greek for the first time crossed the boundaries of the *Oikumene* or 'the inhabited world' of the Hellenes and travelled northwards to Thule 'at the uttermost end of the earth'. He was called Pytheas and came from Massilia, the Marseilles from which Eurythemenes had set sail for Tartessos and the unknown. And like his countryman Pytheas also travelled on a Carthaginian ship, perhaps as a guest and business acquaintance, perhaps also as a bit of a trade spy. For in Pytheas' time the Carthaginian blockade was still in existence, and the lords of the western Mediterranean would never have allowed a Greek ship to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar.

Although Pytheas describes the Spanish and Breton coasts, many scholars doubt whether he travelled to the north by sea; some maintain that he took the Rhône-Loire route across Gaul, while others claim that he went by the Rhône and the Rhine. These purely academic doubts however are nothing compared to the distrust with which he was greeted by Greek scholars on his return. For hundreds of years not a soul believed his accounts, people called him the greatest liar of all times—all except Eratosthenes.

Why did people not believe the man from Massilia? Because he told of things which did not fit into the contemporary world-picture, of geographical facts that the people of the Mediterranean could make neither head nor tail of. Because he described the 'lungs of the sea', a perpetually ebbing and flowing mixture of water, land and air, 'neither traversible by foot nor navigable by boat'. Because he gave an account of 'the curdled sea' on which the land of Thule lay. And because, according to him, 'in summer

there is no night, and in winter little daylight in Thule'. We know to-day that these details testify to Pytheas' love of the truth. The 'lungs of the sea' are the sandbanks along the North Sea coast, the 'curdled sea' could be a frozen area of the North Sea or the Baltic, and the midsummer and midwinter nights clearly indicate that Pytheas must have travelled as far north as central Norway at least.

But the geographers of Greek and Roman times, always so ready to believe in all kinds of monsters, could not and would not accept that the sea and the climate and the seasons could be any different from those they knew. Pytheas therefore remained 'the great liar' until later investigations showed that he was the greatest explorer among the pre-Alexandrian Greeks. It must be realized that Pytheas was as much a scholar as a merchant, like many of the respected citizens of Massilia. He gives the names of the lands he visited: his 'Britannia' is Brittany, whose inhabitants 'are unusually hospitable, courteous and skilful in their dealings with foreign merchants'. He names the British Isles: 'Albion', which is England; 'Hierne', Ireland; 'Berrice', the Shetlands. The 'Amber Land' was the north German coast; Pytheas was the first to discover the Germans, but he was much more interested in amber than in studying the German race.

If—as the majority of modern experts agree—Thule was situated in central Norway, then Pytheas must have encountered Germans there. Even then there must have been considerable cultural differences between the various Germanic tribes. For Pytheas—or rather his interpreter and commentator Pliny—mentions that here there were to be found, as well as plain farm folk, 'savage, wretched people existing in cold and hardship. They feed on oats, vegetables, fruit and roots, prepare a drink made of honey and corn, and thresh their grain not out of doors but in great houses to which they carry their harvests'.

Not until two hundred years after Pytheas' voyage of discovery did the Mediterranean peoples learn more about the Germanic tribes. But this time it was the Germans who travelled south. They conquered Bohemia and Carinthia, occupied southern France, where they several times routed the Roman armies, and finally advanced into northern Italy, where they inflicted a disastrous defeat on the Roman Consul Quintus Lutatius Catullus. These invaders were called Cimbrians and Teutons; they were presumably the same tribes as Pytheas had met on the North Sea coast—

industrious amber-collectors. Although Marius completely overwhelmed the northern armies between Turin and Milan and took a number of the survivors prisoner, the Romans remained for a long while in fear of the *terror cimbricus* and the *furor teutonicus*. A hundred years later the Cimbrians remaining in Germania sent an embassy to the Emperor Augustus in order to beg forgiveness for the misdeeds of the ancestors.

Later Rome had much trouble with the Germanic tribes. Caesar was able to advance only a few kilometres over the Rhine and into the Hercynian Woods—as he called the German *Waldgebirge*. Varus was beaten by the Cherusci, and the commanders of the Druses, Tiberius and Germanicus, were able to hold on to the land between the Rhine, Weser and Elbe for only a short time. That Nero Claudius Drusus, the brother of the Emperor Tiberius, should have been given the honorary appellation of Germanicus shows clearly what importance was attached to the German campaigns in the capital of the world. It was Germanicus who finally triumphed over the rebellious Cheruscan Arminius and advanced close to where the modern city of Hanover is situated. It was he also who gave the Romans the first accounts of Germania, 'a land of marshes and dense forests overhung by gloomy skies and whose air is full of mist and rain'.

But despite these constant skirmishes the Romans had no very clear conception of what the inhabitants of this savage land were like. Caesar reports that there were twenty Germanic tribes, Strabo and Pliny say there were more than thirty, Tacitus brings the number up to sixty and Ptolemy makes it about a hundred. At first they were thought to be related to the Scythians, then they were held to be 'blood relations of the Gauls', and also Celts. Strabo writes: 'All these tribes have one thing in common, the ease with which they move from one place to another, they cultivate no fields and collect no personal treasures, but live in huts which they set up anew every day, and exist chiefly on game and cattle'. Strabo even calls the Germans 'nomads who take their possessions with them on wagons, and wander wherever they like with their herds'.

In Strabo's day the Germans, like other European races who were still stuck in the Neolithic Age, did not have a good press in Rome. They were accused of 'always laying their hands to their weapons, breaking their word, abandoning their hostages'. The historians advised their governments not to trust these peoples

under any circumstances, 'for those Germans in whom trust has been shown have done much harm and lured Roman troops into ambushes by the breaking of treaties'. The Rhodian philosopher Poseidonius who really only knew about Cimbrians and Teutons, called the Germans of the first century BC 'a thievish, vagabond lot'.

Interesting to the ethnologist especially are the Cimbrian female shamans who had been known to Rome even before the days of the Caesars: 'Among the women who go into battle with the men are to be found also grey-haired old ladies wearing white robes of the finest flax and secured by a buckle. They wear an iron girdle and go bare-footed. When prisoners are taken, these women go round the camp wearing wreaths on their heads and carrying naked swords; they lead the prisoners to an iron cauldron whose capacity is about twenty amphora. There the women stand on a raised platform, hold each prisoner over the cauldron and slit his throat. With the blood that flows into the cauldron they foretell the future; others tear out the prisoner's entrails which they use to predict victory for their tribe. These priestesses also take a direct part in the actual fighting, during which they beat on hides that are stretched over the wicker-work of the chariots, and thereby occasion a terrifying din.'

The ethnologist to-day knows that these savage cults do not detract from the moral qualities of the Germans, for they were characteristic of many tribes on the threshold between the Neolithic Age and the Iron Age. Perhaps the Romans felt also that the northerners' rough habits comprised an extremely important study-material for the clever researchers, for in the first century AD there came a radical change of opinion about the Germans, who became symbols of free-living, natural man.

The originator of this concept was a man who had been filled with disgust for civilization by the life of Imperial Rome, the great natural historian Pliny. All this man's writings breathe a Rousseau-like 'Back to Nature' spirit. His *History of the Animals* is less a factual work of zoology than a bitter attack on the vices and weaknesses of mankind and in particular of his contemporaries. And as in Rousseau's time enthusiastic explorers and authors lauded the South Sea Islanders as representatives of the natural man and the inhabitants of an earthly paradise, so a young acquaintance of Pliny, the best friend of his adoptive son, praised the German tribes as upholders of all the honourable virtues. This

defender of the Germans was Publius Cornelius Tacitus, and his book, *De origine, situ, moribus ac populis Germanorum*, known for short as *Germania*, has remained until to-day the bible of all Germanophiles.

Tacitus was without doubt one of the most important of Roman historians. But he was also—like Rousseau—a tragic, split personality. He hated the Roman Empire and considered his countrymen, because of their loose morals, to be incapable of carrying out the ideals of a democratic republic. He fought against his times, longed to return to a more healthy way of life, and found what he was looking for among the warlike inhabitants beyond the Rhine and the Danube.

But the same thing happened to him as to Rousseau; because of his extraordinary sensibility he was able to show the falsity of many prejudices against the Germans. But he went too far in the other direction. We may compare him here with the South Sea explorers Bougainville, Forster and Chamisso. These humane and enthusiastic advocates of the natural life brought together priceless information about ethnological matters, but at the same time they portrayed the Polynesians (a race with the normal virtues and vices of the rest of the world) as noble savages, the finest people on earth. This was just how Tacitus portrayed his Germans, though at the same time his book was an attempt to hold the mirror of the virtues up to decadent Rome and its vicious, half-crazy Emperor Domitian.

According to Tacitus the Germans were excellent fighters and huntsmen who allowed their youths to enter the company of warriors only after several trials of their physical courage. The German woman had an important place in her tribe; the mistress of the house was highly respected, the sacredness of the hearth was strongly upheld and loose living was severely condemned. The priestesses, he says, 'are soothsayers who interpret the will of the gods and so influence the destinies of whole races'. Unlike Poseidonius, Germanicus and Strabo, Tacitus depicts the German people as cultivators of the land, knowing the use of the plough, living partly in village communities and partly on solitary farms. He says they are hospitable, honourable and frank, modest and truthful, but above all great lovers of freedom. He especially praised the Germans' devotion to clan and family, for this is the feeling he had felt was so bitterly lacking among his Roman contemporaries.

What Tacitus wrote about the dress and ornaments of the Germans, about their racial organization, their princes and nobility, their almost communistic ownership of woods and pastures, about their battle array, their runes and religious rites has been found by later scholars to be quite correct. In north German and Scandinavian bogs there have been discovered, preserved in peat, the two-thousand-year-old and still completely intact bodies of early Germans—mostly the remains of murdered or sacrificed men—some of whom were very well dressed and quite unlike the conventional concept of half-naked, blue-painted barbarians. The contents of the stomach of one of these corpses indicates that these Germans—in Jutland—must have lived on corn products. Tacitus has told us a little about the reasons for these sacrifices drowned in bogs. It was the race's method of doing away with cowards, traitors and homosexuals, but also a few female slaves or even members of the tribe were sacrificed every year at the Spring festival to the fertility goddess Nerthus. For slavery and bondage was common among the Germans, as among all the other races of antiquity. At any rate, Tacitus claims that these slaves were 'not cruelly treated'! their drowning in a bog to the honour of an archaic fertility goddess was not considered by the Germanophile Roman to be a particularly horrible death.

There had been villages and farms in Germania long before Roman times. Central Europe had had its first contacts with a more advanced culture four to five thousand years earlier, when a foreign nation originating perhaps in the orient advanced up the valley of the Danube and settled in the fertile loess regions of northern Germany and Poland. These ring-ceramists—as they are called after the curvilinear patterns on their clay pots—brought with them the most important domestic animals and grains, the most varied farm implements and the craft of house-building to what was later to be Germania. They cleared the primeval forests, laid the foundations of civilization in Palaeolithic Central Europe and moved on when the richness of the loess soil was exhausted.

They united with tribes in the west who erected mighty megalithic and domed graves and left behind them traces of their work in western European dolmens and menhirs and in north German barrows, in stone monuments that presumably were used for religious cults. Perhaps the megalithic tribes originated in the Mediterranean area; it is quite certain that they were the cultural forerunners of the Celts. And the Indo-European northern races

received from the ring-ceramists and megalithic tribes the chief impulses which went to the building of the civilization that Tacitus so highly praised.

But this does not hold true of all the German tribes. While stately farmhouses and flourishing village communities were growing up in the fertile regions of Central Europe, while a remarkable rock-painting art was being developed along the Scandinavian coast, where the inhabitants launched their sledge-shaped ships into the northern seas, other Germanic tribes were still leading a wretched existence, living on what the sea cast up or leading the hard lives of nomad hunters. We see the same picture when we look at the eastern neighbours of the Germans, the Slavs. Ancient chronicles depict them as half-naked savages, and this probably is true of a few Slav tribes. But in 1934 Joseph Kostrzewski dug up on a peninsula in Lake Biskupin in northern Poland a great ancient Slav city, nearly three thousand years old, with wooden houses and streets, with living rooms, stalls for cattle and many kinds of bone, stone, copper, bronze and iron implements. In the Germanic as well as the Slav regions the most varied cultural levels existed at the same periods in the same places. And so both sceptic Strabo and the Germanophile Tacitus were right.

In the third century AD the races and tribes migrated and mixed again. The Germans overran the Roman empire from Spain to the Black Sea. The Slavs advanced from the eastern steppes to the Elbe and the Balkans. Rome fell to pieces under the invasions of northern races; after the Cimbrian-Teutonic terror came the fear of the Vandals. The apparently well-established world of Mediterranean civilization looked disaster in the face.

But just as once before the immigrating Hellenes had not destroyed the Cretan-Mycenaean civilization, but had taken it over and developed it, so now the northern warrior tribes also took over Greco-Roman civilization and developed it further. They learnt Roman customs, mastered the Latin language, became Christians, intermarried with Latins and Celts and formed a bridge between the ancient world and the Middle Ages. But one civilization was almost completely wiped out by the German invasions of the third to the eighth centuries AD, that of the greatest European people of antiquity—the Celts.

The mystery of the great stones

The Druids were held to be the most upright of all the Celts; they smoothed out quarrels, brought wars to an end and gave judgement in cases of murder. They considered the soul and the world to be eternal, but believed that our earth will be destroyed by fire and water.

Strabo

IN LONDON IN the year 1781 a secret society with free-thinking principles was founded; it carried out liberal and charitable activities, not openly, but under the seal of certain magical formulas and ceremonies. This masonic sect had a fairly widespread influence in England and Anglo-Saxon lands, lodges were formed, which were referred to as 'groves', and the higher ranks of the order called themselves Druids. Now the Druids were the ancient priests, bards and soothsayers of the Celts. The 'Order of Druids' seized upon this word because at that time there was a kind of Druid craze in certain esoteric circles. The Celtic sorcerers were held to be the receptacles of all wisdom.

These fantastic claims were not brought forward for the first time in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Druid cult filled the Romans themselves with a mixture of wonder and awe. They constantly appear in the writings of Greco-Roman historians. They form a monastic sect, a class apart, use a secret script, observe the heavens through crystal magnifying-glasses, keep strictly certain court-days when they slay or burn sinners, who have offended against custom or religion, before the eyes of the whole tribe on enormous altar-stones.

Julius Caesar writes about them; Diodorus, Strabo and Pliny add further information, for example that the Druids 'slay their sacrifices from behind with a sword, but also shoot them with arrows or in their secret temples nail them to a cross'. That the Romans, who themselves had already encountered in their enormous empire the strangest sacred rituals, should have labelled the Celtic sorcerers as sinister, omniscient alchemists can be explained on historical grounds. Since the fourth century BC the Romans time and time again had grappled with Celtic tribes, in Italy, in Gaul, in Britain, in the Alps, and their religion was the mainspring of the downtrodden Celts' active or passive revolt. The Emperor Claudius finally forbade all Druidic human sacrifices and religious

ceremonies. But the Druid cult lived on in secret until far into the Christian era. Superstitions from the Druid world still linger on to-day in remote Breton, Irish and Welsh valleys.

In 1649 the Druids suddenly became once more the centre of scientific comment. Everywhere in the ancient Druid domains of the Celts, 'Giant's Graves' and colossal hewn stones had been discovered—in England, on the Channel Islands, in Brittany, in Spain. The imagination of contemporaries was excited; especially fascinating to them were the gigantic monolithic structures of Stonehenge and Avebury. Here hundreds of hand-worked stones, all above the height of a man, were arranged in quite a definite order. An English scholar of ancient history, who on the command of the king gave expert evidence about these stones, contradicted the common belief that they were the remains of Roman temples, and explained that they were the remnants of Druid ceremonial altars. This Englishman's name was John Aubrey. And as he was known to be a well-informed and rational scholar, his opinion was accepted by the king and by the scholarly world.

We cannot say much against Aubrey; at that time nothing was known about Stone Age culture, and so he spoke out to the best of his knowledge. In the next century another scholar, William Stukeley, appeared on the scene; he was a doctor and a natural historian who after examining the English megalithic structures had become obsessed by a passion for the Druids. As preacher and prophet of a new Christian-Druid religion he gathered together in a forest temple built by himself enthusiasts of like mind and there imitated ancient Celtic ceremonies. And from then on, it was only a short step to the founding of 'The Venerable Order of Druids'.

The Druid religion refused to be resuscitated at the hands of Stukeley and the lodge-brothers. But right into the twentieth century the 'Giant's Graves' and megalithic memorials were pointed out as evidence of Celtic civilization. As one discovery after another was made, however, the archaeologists became more and more sceptical, for they found such stone monuments also in regions where Celts had never been. There were the barrows in northern Germany which the natives thought were altar-stones or treasure-chambers of mythical giants. There were the Danish dolmens, there were megalithic structures in North Africa, Palestine, India, and on the South Sea Islands. And it was inconceivable that the Druids should be responsible for them all.

In 1839 one of the greatest scholars of pre-history in the nineteenth century, the Dane Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae, put forward the theory that the megalithic monuments were not Celtic, but derived from the Stone Age, and that the enormous flat stones which had until then been regarded as altar stones for Druid sacrifices were really Stone Age grave-stones. The concept of the *Stone Age* had first been enunciated by Worsaae's compatriot Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, a collector and student of pre-history. To-day we call this period the Late Stone Age, the most significant period between pre-historical and historical times, in which the races and civilizations of man gradually came into being.

Many megalithic remains do indeed come from the Stone Age. But in others there have been found bronze and even iron implements. The most impressive stone monument, Stonehenge in southern England, is according to C-14 tests about four thousand years old, and was used, we now know, as a sun-temple. Celtic objects were in fact found in earlier stone graves, but in others cultural relics were discovered of races that had lived in Europe long before the Celts.

Research into Celtic civilization has thrown some light on the era in which the Late Ice Age nomads formed settled, civilized communities. A thorough analysis of pre-historic graves and skeletons between the Atlantic and the Urals revealed that in Europe, a Babylonian race and culture group must have ruled as they did in the Near East. Fresh hordes streamed again and again into the European region, from the south and the east, mingled with the original inhabitants and brought foreign cultural elements with them, and those whom we call to-day 'Celts', 'Germans', 'Slavs', are peoples who linguistically have a certain unity but who originally were products of thousands of years of mingling of blood and culture.

We have already heard how the ring-ceramists came up the Danube valley. There came also, from the western Mediterranean, the first carriers of megalithic cultures, who set up great pillars and groups of stones in order to worship the sun, and who buried their dead in 'Giant's Graves'. Perhaps the megalithic folk were no self-contained race, but only a small upper class of culture-carriers, pre-historic 'missionaries'. For the skeletons, weapons and pots in the ancient stone graves differ considerably from one region to another. The only thing all these megalithic cultures

have in common is sun-worship and the special way in which they buried their dead under big flat stones.

But then there appeared from Spain a round-headed and certainly highly civilized race which flowed over to England and Scandinavia, leaving behind in its graves characteristic clay beakers with geometrical patterns. These 'beaker-folk' already knew the use of bronze. About 2000 BC they began to mingle with the long-headed inhabitants. They took over the megalithic culture, refined it and carried trade and crafts to Scotland and Denmark.

The beaker civilization met a steppe culture to the east. We already know about it from the Scythian-North Iranians. It was a nomad culture from the vast territories between the Baltic and the Altai. As stone battle-axes were found again and again in the graves of these wandering tribes, they are called 'Battle-axe tribes'. It is possible that they were the first Indo-Europeans on European soil. Their migration to north and central Europe took place in the same time as the Hittite occupation of Anatolia; it was then, too, that the Hurrians drove through the orient with horse and chariot, and the Hellenes overran the Balkans. Perhaps all these peoples are children of the Battle-axe civilization from the steppes.

It was from the beaker and battle-axe folk that the closely related racial groups of the Germans and the Celts were formed about 1400 BC. The Germans took over something of the ancient megalithic culture, particularly the manner of burial, the Celts however took over the entire cultural pattern and brought it to a fresh flowering.

The Celts began their great migration much earlier than the Germans. As early as the eighth century BC they started to wander towards the west and the south. In the seventh century they spread, as Gauls, through the whole of France, in the fifth century they appeared in northern Italy, in England, in west and south Germany. In 387 BC, under their leader Brennus they beat the Romans and destroyed what was later to be the capital of the world. In Spain they mixed with the original inhabitants to form the Celtic Iberians. They settled themselves in Bohemia and Hungary, plundered the Greek holy city of Delphi, even crossed the Bosphorus and became the Galatians of Asia Minor.

The original homeland of both the Germans and the Celts has been fairly definitely determined by testing, dating and analysing their remains. About 1800 BC a mixed beaker and battle-axe

folk evolved in southern Scandinavia and northern Germany. From these emerged, four hundred years later, the Germans, who slowly pushed on to the Rhine and the Vistula. And a race, formed from the same combination of elements, developed in the Danubian Alps (a region which had already taken the first steps forward into the Iron Age) a refined copper and bronze technique; this race at a very early stage in its history entered into relationship with the Mediterranean peoples and became the Celtic race.

The heights reached by the ancient Celtic civilization in the Alps are shown by two very famous discoveries from the early Iron Age at Hallstatt and La Tène. Hallstatt lies in the Austrian Salzkammergut. From 1846 to 1864 a mines inspector, Johann Georg Ramsauer dug up nearly a thousand graves dating from about three thousand years ago, in which refined ornaments of gold, bronze and iron were found, besides countless articles of obviously foreign origin—Etruscan and Greek bronzes, Scandinavian swords, southern European daggers, north German amber, Cretan alabaster and African wood-carvings. Hallstatt was a Bronze Age salt centre. Here as early as 1000 BC iron was brought from the south at the same time as its use began to spread in the Mediterranean area. And the inhabitants were probably Celts or at least came under Celtic influence.

In the same decades the Swiss archaeologist Friedrich Schwab excavated numerous lake-dwellings, erected on piles, in western Switzerland. Until then only lake-dwellings from the Late Stone Age and early Bronze Ages had been discovered, remnants of the period of the very first attempts at farming. In the Lake of Neuchâtel, however, Schwab found a hill-shaped structure, known in dialect as La Tène, in whose vicinity he fished up hundreds of iron weapons from the bed of the lake. Whether La Tène was a lake village, a fortified base or a mole-like structure has not yet been determined. It is certain, however, that the La Tène civilization dates from about 500 BC and that the Iron Age came to an early flowering there. A whole stylistic period was named after La Tène, its products are to be found in every region the Celts wandered to in their migration. Celtic culture reached its highest point at La Tène.

The Celts were outstanding artists in pottery and metalwork, masters of iron-forging and carriers of an age-old religion, whom the Romans encountered in Gaul, northern Italy, Spain and Britain. Caesar's chief opponent Vercingetorix was by no means

the chieftain of a half-savage native tribe. The Romans always spoke highly of their great qualities of character. Though they emphasized their Gallic 'readiness of speech and love of finery', they also stressed that the Celts are 'plucky, honourable and in no way ill-natured,' and that they 'like to devote themselves to useful occupations and to learning'. In this respect Gallic cities could compete with Italian cities, Gallic orators and writers later played a large part in the intellectual life of Rome.

Though the Celtic language almost completely vanished from Europe through Roman conquests and Germanic migrations, Celtic culture persisted until well into the Christian era. Celtic folklore entered into the Tristan, Arthur and Grail sagas and still lives on in our literature. And the Celtic race also lives on, beneath a thin veneer of Germanic or Roman culture, in a large part of the populations of England and France, in the inhabitants of the Alps, in many Germans, Italians and Spaniards.

The world on horseback

Hunting and horse-racing make
men's minds run wild.

Laotse

THE EMPEROR WU-LING was seriously worried. His Chinese subjects with their cumbersome war-chariots, their bronze armour, lances and halberds could do nothing against the swift, nimble Hsiung-nu. So he hit upon an idea: the people of China must learn from the example of their enemies, must adapt their clumsy weapons and chariots.

Such violent reforms could not appeal to the character of the Chinese rice and millet-farmers. Shortly before the reign of the Emperor Wu-ling the philosopher Laotse had formulated the teachings of Taoism, which spoke of the eternally, calmly changing world, with which men should not attempt to interfere, but act only through contemplation on non-activity.

That is age-old East Asiatic wisdom to which the Chinese could not always adhere. Already the Yuechi, the north Iranian Scythians, had compelled China to forswear her non-violence and introduce weapons made of metal, horses and chariots in order to protect the western frontiers. And the Scythians were not the only steppe race that had tried to capture the fertile loess lands of East Asia. Mongol, Turkish and Tibetan tribes had invaded

Chinese territory as early as about 1000 BC. And now in the third century before Christ the Hsiung-nu were attacking China; Wu-ling was forced to train fast riders and bowmen, to devise a mobile steppe strategy and replace the long robes and soft footwear of his troops by jackets, trousers and riding boots.

To the disciples of Laotse all this was terrible. The Taoist does



1 The philosopher Laotse riding a water buffalo, a symbol of a peaceful and isolated China.

not care about swift horses; he likes the easy-going water-buffalo that works for him in the rice-fields. Indeed riding and hunting were to Laotse symbols of human folly and superficiality, 'the flexible triumphs over the inflexible,' the great philosopher taught, 'and the pliant triumphs over the strong'. But the Hsiung-nu were at the gates, and the Emperor Wu-ling had to transform his peace-loving subjects into stern warriors.

The Hsiung-nu invasions of China had world-wide significance. They shattered the Eurasiatic continent from the Pacific to the Atlantic and they provoked one of the greatest race-migrations

known to history. They compelled the Chinese tribes and races to form an alliance, China developed, thanks to the military achievements which she had learnt from the Hsiung-nu, into an absolute power-state, adopted imperialistic political aims, conquered the south of China which had been inhabited by Siamese Tai-tribes, and drove on to Central Asia and Korea. A world power, an empire, arose in East Asia, that despite many setbacks in later antiquity has lasted to the present day and that now counts among the most powerful countries in the world. In the Near East also, kingdoms were falling, and the Ancient World in Europe was crumbling into dust.

A successor of Wu-ling, the Emperor Shi-huang-ti, tried to defend himself against the steppe tribes by building along the northern frontiers of his kingdom the most colossal structure on earth, stretching for fourteen hundred miles—the Great Wall of China. This bulwark was extended and renewed time and again. Later it served as a protective barrier against the Mongols; it received its present form in the fifteenth century AD. But it was not much use—neither against the Hsiung-nu of the third century BC, nor against the Mongols of the thirteenth century AD, nor against the Manchu of the seventeenth century AD. About 200 BC, the Hsiung-nu under their ruler Mao-tun won several decisive battles against the troops of the Han dynasty in China, founded in Mongolian-Northern Chinese territory a military power-state and concluded a treaty with China which was more than humiliating, making China practically dependent upon the good will of the riders of the steppes.

Chinese sources depict the Hsiung-nu as 'eagle-eyed sharpshooters', as masters of horsemanship and superb bowmen, as nomads 'without fields, walled cities and solidly built houses, who in times of peace lead a wandering life with their herds of cattle', but who in times of war practise the arts of war; even the children shoot from the saddle at all kinds of animals. They had heavy and light cavalry, used, besides their mighty long-bows, great, powerful lances and were counted as the best-disciplined, best-organized troops that East Asia had ever known.

Many of these customs and characteristics remind us strikingly of the ancient Scythians. But the two races are not identical. In the Chinese annals and chronicles there is a sharp distinction made between the Hsiung-nu and the Scythian Yuechi. Were the Hsiung-nu Monguls, ancient forerunners of Ghenghis-Khan's armies of

horsemen? Until only a few decades ago this was considered by most ethnologists to be the likeliest explanation. But to-day we know that the Hsiung-nu spoke a language which belongs to the so-called 'agglutinative languages'. This would not be evidence against the Mongolian origin of the Hsiung-nu, for the Mongolian



2 A Mongol bowman, from a drawing by the Japanese artist Moko Shurai, c. 1293.

dialects belong to this language-group. But the languages of the Turkish races belong to it also. And countless Chinese chronicles testify to the origin of the Hsiung-nu being in the Turkish language area, because these chronicles repeat all the names, expressions and other speech-relics of the people of the steppes. Ancient inscriptions in Europe from the time of Attila tell the same story. They also tell us that the Hsiung-nu are the very people who started the Germanic race-migration—the Huns.

Even in the times of the Scythians, Turkish tribes lived all over Inner Asia, together with Northern Iranians, Finno-Ugrian races and the fore-runners of the Mongols and the Tunguses. A Turkish tribe of the Hsiung-nu seems to have existed two and a half thousand years ago in the western Chinese frontier provinces and in Manchuria. For unknown reasons this tribe suddenly grew

stronger towards the end of the third century before Christ and became the equal of the Scythians.

The Hsiung-nu, later the Huns, spoke Turkish, but were typical carriers of the Scythian-North Iranian steppe culture; their mounted troops, their way of fighting, their restless wanderings about the steppes, their animal ornaments and their shamanism—they had learnt and developed all this from the Scythians. They turned against their Northern Iranian rulers just as they turned against China. They subjugated the East Asiatic Scythians and drove away to the west those tribes that would not proclaim their obedience. It is to the Huns that we owe the attacks by Northern Iranian tribes on Persia and Northern India in the second century before Christ, where they overthrew Greek-influenced kingdoms and even set foot in Mesopotamia and the Indus valley. The entire political structure between the Altai and the Caspian was threatened. It is to the Huns we owe the disappearance of the Scythians into Asia. They inherited—as the first historical Turks—the culture of the North Iranian steppe tribes.

Their conflict with China extended over half a millennium. There were periods when they became vassals of the Chinese, there were other times when they overthrew the Chinese rulers and founded their own states in Northern China. At the beginning of the fourth century AD they stood at the peak of their strength. A ruler of the Huns, Liu-yüan, had himself proclaimed Emperor of China in 308 and founded a Hunnish-Chinese dynasty. That the Chinese were finally able to triumph over the Turkish races was the result of their ability to assimilate all things foreign to their country, and also perhaps of a new weapon which they had invented and perfected in the wars against the Huns—the cross-bow.

Until then the appearance of the Huns had affected only the history of Asia. Not all the Huns however had remained in northern China. A strong wave of 'Western Huns' advanced on Hither Asia, and it may be that this offshoot is connected with the growing strength of yet another East Asiatic steppe tribe which in the first two centuries AD emerged from Hunnish and Scythian elements and created a new power state north-west of China. These people, according to Chinese tradition, were called the Sien-pi, and the Sein-pi were presumably the forefathers of the world-conquering Mongols. Whether borne there by a migratory wave, whether driven away by the Sien-pi, whether exhausted by the wars with China, a large part of the Huns suddenly emerged in

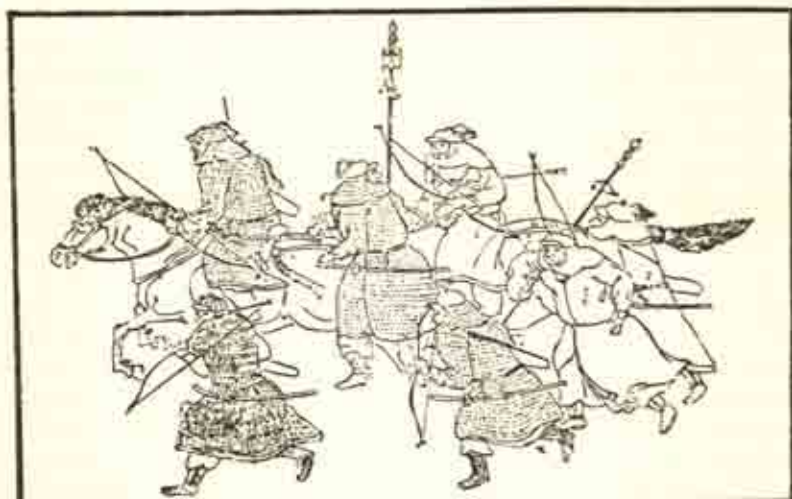
western Siberia, on Lake Aral, then on the Black Sea steppe between the Don and the Volga. Ptolemy and other historians of antiquity speak of them and for the first time use the word 'Huns'. They are mentioned in the letters of Persian emperors. As bowmen, under the name of Kushan, they dominated a part of north-west India. And once more on the Asiatic-European border they encountered a Scythian race whose name was to go down in the history of racial migrations—the Alans or Alani.

The Alans called themselves Aryanam, Aryans, Iranians. They were the only race in the great Scythian-North Iranian group which in the first century AD had still not been overwhelmed and absorbed by other peoples. They still led a nomadic existence on the steppes between the Don and Lake Aral. The Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus who had made their acquaintance on various campaigns, describes them as follows in his *Roman History*, which appeared in AD 390: 'They possess no dwellings, do not know the use of the plough, but wander about in their wagons, which they cover with an arched roof made of hides, across the endless steppe. When they reach a pasturage, they form a circle with their wagons and feed after the manner of wild beasts; when the grass has been cropped, they travel on, Husband and wife mate on their wagon; the children are born and brought up on the wagon.' Ammianus adds that the Alans were excellent horsemen, cattle-raisers and bowmen. So it is the same picture as Herodotus gives us of the Scythians.

In Russia the Alans encountered a Germanic agricultural tribe from the Baltic area, the Goths. The Gothic colonists and the nomad Alans must have been in close contact for a long time, for the Alans took over Gothic word structures and Germanic customs; the Goths took over from the Alans their tilt-wagon, the art of horse-riding, their lances and two-handed swords, their animal ornaments, their shamanistic religion and the swift, mobile warfare of the Inner Asiatics. That the Goths were later able, during the migration, 'to descend like lightning upon the foe and ride down everything before them' was due to the tactics which they had learnt from the Alans.

About AD 350 the Goths under their king Ermanarich had created a very important realm in southern and central Russia, a state with a Gothic upper-class and Slav, Finno-Ugrian and Iranian subjects. At the same time they found that their eastern neighbours were in wild movement; thousands of Alans were fleeing into

the Gothic kingdom, reporting that an unknown race from the east had surprised them and overthrown the greater part of the Alanic tribes. In 375 came the hour of doom. The unknown race from the east broke into the Gothic kingdom also and overwhelmed it. In despair, King Ermanarich took his life. Half the Goths, later to become the Ostrogoths or East Goths, capitulated



3 Mongol hordes streamed westwards across the steppes, terrorizing Eastern Europe for hundreds of years.

to the invading Huns, the other half, the later West Goths, streamed off into the Roman Empire. The great migration had begun.

There are many accounts, mostly by Romans, of that fateful year of 375, reports dictated by hatred and terror and from which later historians have drawn a very distorted picture of the Huns. According to Ammianus, the Huns were wild beasts, savage two-legged creatures with scarred faces and crooked bodies, dressed in rags; they placed raw meat under their saddles to ride it tender; they were insidious and cunning, strange, disgusting. The chronicler of the Goths, the Germanized Alan, who lived a century and a half after this time, called the Huns 'the height of uncouthness' and stated that they had originated from a coupling of half-animal demons with Scythian female shamans, that they were 'small, horrible and skinny people, whose voices produce queer sounds that are only a shadow of human speech'. The great

historian of the Byzantine empire, Priscus of Panion, the best-informed writer from the time of Attila, has hardly a good word to say about the 'Scythians' (as he terms the Huns). 'Their frightful appearance fills their opponents with ungovernable fear and their terrible faces drive them to flight; for they have a dreadful swarthy countenance such as no other human has; their face is just like a clod of earth with two points in it that serve them as eyes.'

The king of the Huns, Attila, ruled over an empire that stretched from the Caucasus to the Rhine. Attila appears in the histories of Priscus and other writers as anything but a clod-faced beast, but as the ideal type of the worthy, imposing Asiatic prince. 'He walked proudly in and allowed his eyes to roam here and there; in his strapping body could be seen the physical expression of his great power. He loved war, yet he knew when to sheath his sword; he was all-powerful in his plans and in his councils, accorded a hearing to all who requested it, and was a good master to his subjects.' He looked indeed as an inhabitant of Inner Asia would look. 'He was of short stature, with a broad chest and a massive head, had slanting eyes, a flat nose and a thin grey beard; he gave the impression of being dark, because of his brown skin.'

It turned out that the Huns knew not only how to fight and destroy, but that they were skilful diplomats, efficient administrators and very tolerant protectors of the satellite races. In German legends and heroic sagas 'Etzel' as Attila is called in them, makes a distinctly favourable impression. That he was able to unite nearly all the Germanic tribes, with the exception of the West Goths, into a great racial alliance, speaks for his supreme political intelligence. And if the Huns were at war for decades with West Goths, Romans and Byzantines, it was not because of their lust for fighting and conquest, but because their opponents consistently deceived Attila's trust, broke treaties and hatched plots to murder the Asiatic emperor.

Of great interest is an account given by Priscus of Panion of an encounter at the Hunnish court; it shows that there were many educated Europeans who recognized the fascination of the Huns. 'As I stopped outside the palisade round the houses,' writes Priscus, 'a man came up to me whom on account of his Scythian garments I took to be a barbarian . . . I returned his greeting, which to my astonishment was in Greek, and asked who he might be, how he had come to this barbarian land and taken up Scythian ways. Then he laughed and explained that he was Grecian born

and bred, had dwelt by the Danube, and, when his home town fell into the hands of the barbarians, he had been given as one of the spoils of war, because he was very rich, to a prince of the Huns . . . Then he had distinguished himself in battle against the Romans, handed over all his booty to his barbarian lord, as is the Scythian custom, and in this way had been freed from bondage. Now he had a Scythian wife and children; and he liked his present way of life better than the Greek.'

This encounter gave the historian a great shock. In reply to the question why the barbarian world of the Huns pleased him more than the cultivated worlds of the Greeks and Romans, the Greek answered that 'among the Scythians, when war is over, one can live in peace, that everyone owns his own property and only very seldom is a man a burden to his countrymen. On the other hand, among the Romans there is no equality in law; if a man is rich, he need not suffer any punishment for his misdeeds, but if a man is poor, then he must offer up all he has to the court.' Priscus attempted to persuade the man of the superiority of Roman culture, Roman wisdom, humanity and justice. But 'the Greek answered, weeping, that the Roman law and the Roman constitution might be all very fine, but that the ruling classes in Rome perverted everything and turned it to no good.'

An extraordinary conversation—typical of a period in which an ageing culture was fast declining. It casts a sidelight on the circumstances of the migration period and we begin to understand a little better why the over-civilized Mediterranean world, already shaken by social tensions, should have so swiftly gone under before the invading 'natural men'.

The steppe races brought fresh blood to the west, but the west was also their downfall. The West Huns suffered the same fate in Europe as the East Huns, the Hsiung-nu, in China. When Attila was beaten on the Catalaunian plains, when his Germanic allies deserted him, when in AD 453 during celebrations for his wedding with the Germanic Ildico (the Kriemhild of the Nibelungen saga), he died of a haemorrhage under mysterious circumstances, the empire of the Huns was split up into many small kingdoms.

The Bulgars came from Hunnish-Turkish stock; from the fifth to the seventh century AD they had advanced through southern Russia to the Balkans and there, in present-day Bulgaria, adopted Christianity and the Slav language. Turkish relatives of the Huns—the Avars, Khazars, Pechenegs and Cumans—poured into the

Danube-Tisza plain; a race speaking a Finno-Ugrian language, but with a Scythian-Hunnish way of life, the Magyars, finally settled there and were only in AD 955 prevented by the battle of the River Lech from founding in Central Europe an empire on the lines of Attila's. Two hundred years later the Mongols, children of the same steppe civilization, created the greatest government which had been known on earth until then; another century later there were Mongol troops in China as well as in Persia, India, Java, Asia Minor, Poland, Hungary and Silesia.

Finally in the fourteenth century Ottoman Turks broke into Europe; in 1529 they were at the gates of Vienna, occupied ancient Islamic-Arabian settlements in Hither Asia and North Africa, and remained for centuries in those lands so rich in history and tradition in which once the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians, Hittites, Egyptians and Phoenicians, the Hellenes, Sabaeans and Byzantines had built up their realms and civilizations.

Behind the silken curtain

We should not rest until our realm
comprises the whole world, until
there is not a single man in the whole
wide world who does not obey our
laws.

From the annals of the Chu dynasty
c. 500 BC

THERE IS TO BE found in East Asia a very undistinguished-looking butterfly whose scientific name is *Bombyx mori*; it has off-white wings with yellow-brown striped markings and its caterpillar before changing into a chrysalis wraps itself in tight thread. When this thread is unrolled it can be as long as four kilometres. As early as the second millennium BC the Chinese knew that it was possible to weave clothes and all kinds of textiles from this thread. The neighbouring races also learnt about it, and were very desirous of dressing themselves in such 'silk'.

But China held on firmly to the silk monopoly and guarded the mysteries of the *Bombyx mori*. The Chinese rulers prescribed which professions should be allowed to wear silk, what the patterns and colours must be, how long and how wide each piece of cloth must be, and what persons should be allowed to produce and export silk. Silk was the currency in ancient China; the Chinese

paid their taxes with balls of silk. And on the Silk Route, an age-old caravan trail which led from China straight across Central Asia to the Near East, Iranian, Turkish and Mongolian dealers transported the costly material to the west.

The Silk Route was for centuries the umbilical cord that bound China to the civilizations of the rest of the world. Along this trade route grew up the Inner Asiatic city states of the Ancient World, Turfan, Khotan, Yarkand, Choresm.

As early as the days of Alexander the Great the Greeks knew about a land called 'Sin, Cin, Sinai or Cina,' a silk land in the Far East. Of course they were just vague rumours brought by the Scythians, by Indians and also by Malayan sailors, who played the same role in the South-east Asian seas as the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean and the Sabaeans in the Indian Ocean. The terms 'Sinai' and 'China' probably date from the Ts'in dynasty which then ruled over the silk land. The Chinese themselves never used this name, though in the course of time they had all kinds of appellations for their country: Chung-kwa, Chung-hwa or Tai-tsing-kwa, Han-jin, Tang-jin or Ching-jin. And to-day the Chinese People's Republic is known officially as Chung-hua-jen-min-kung-ho-kuo.

The first European who journeyed along the Silk Route and tried to find the land where silk was made lived about AD 100 and was a Macedonian dwelling somewhere in the region of the Black Sea; his name was Maës Titianus. He was—as we might expect—a silk dealer or a silk worker. Ptolemy says that he did not succeed in reaching China, 'yet one must admit that he sent certain persons there'. Presumably he stopped at one of the great Inner Asian silk markets. There he seems to have heard of the Great Wall of China, for one of his reports says that 'to the east of the land of the Scythians there are circular, lofty walls to be seen, all linked together, and surrounding the land of silk'. That is all we know about Titianus' journey. The Macedonian was scarcely interested in geography and ethnology, he was concerned only with Chinese silk.

So it came about that it was not the West that first discovered the Far East, but the Far East that discovered the West. And this occurred in a systematic way, in a series of carefully-sounding journeys of inquiry whose results were set down in ancient Chinese chronicles. And the first impetus was given by the disappearance of the Yuechi from the Chinese frontier lands. As we have heard,

the Huns drove the Scythians towards western Asia. But as the Scythians were extremely useful to China as silk traders and allies, in 138 BC the Emperor Wu-ti commissioned a man named Chang-k'ien to travel westwards and to look up the Yuechi. Chang-k'ien actually managed to break through the territory of the Huns and undertake a twelve-year journey to Turkestan and almost to Persia. On a second journey he reached Burma, and on a third he concluded agreements with India. So China had pushed open the door to western Asia. And even in the time of the Emperor Wu-ti Chinese envoys encountered at Hither Asian princely courts the first citizens of the 'Ta-tsin kingdom'—these were the first Roman subjects.

About the time of the birth of Christ Chinese ships sailed regularly to India and Indonesia and purchased there all kinds of wares. Travellers from the Roman Empire received further news about China from the Indians. In a nautical handbook from the first century AD, which deals with the coasts around the Indian Ocean and is called the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, it states that the inhabitants of 'the land of Thinae' transport wool and silks to India and Persia. 'The land of Thinae,' it goes on to say, 'lies in the far north: it is not easy to travel there, and only seldom do any of its inhabitants come to our shores.'

But a few years later a Chinese expedition explored the lands of the Euphrates and reached a western sea—perhaps the Mediterranean. The leader of the undertaking was the general Kan-ying. Apparently he had been commissioned to travel further and visit the capital of the 'Ta-tsin kingdom'. But he couldn't bring himself to venture any further; Syrian informants had told him all kinds of horrors about the Mediterranean. In his annals of the trip Kan-ying says: 'Around this sea there lies something which causes a man to long for his home; one is overcome by melancholy feelings . . .' Kan-ying's melancholy feelings were the reason why this unique chance for contact between Rome and China was missed.

But the Chinese-Syrian contact lasted for a while. Chinese merchants went—we are told in the book *Liang-shu*—'occasionally to Ta-tsin' or rather, to the eastern frontier provinces of the Roman Empire. And Syrian merchants sailed to the east and were the first to reach a Chinese port, Kattigara—'at the beginning of the unknown world', as the Roman historian Martianus says. And so it came about that in the second century AD the Chinese were

several times able to welcome 'men from the western sea' in their land, men who said they were Romans and who had been brought in Chinese, Syrian or Indian ships to the Middle Kingdom.

We can read in the book called *Hu-han-shu* how the Chinese thought of Rome, seen as it was through Syrian-Levantine reports. 'The land of Ta-tsin is very vast, possesses many cities and has conquered a great number of peoples. They build their houses of stone, and there are inns on the roads. The inhabitants wear their hair short, and dress in beautiful clothes. The capital has ten palaces, whose pillars are of crystal . . . There are gold, silver and precious stones, and the people are very rich, especially through their trade with Parthians and Indians . . . They have a frank and upright character, and their merchants charge everyone the same price for their goods.' A short, clear report, a little too matter-of-fact, but written down with the Chinese care for politeness. Europeans have seldom spoken so kindly about a foreign culture as the Chinese do here.

China's interest in the western world soon came to a halt again, unfortunately for geographers and ethnologists. Not until the seventh century AD did a gifted explorer penetrate once more the Inner Asian steppes and mountains. China had become great again under the T'ang dynasty, and the traveller was the Buddhist pilgrim Hsüan-tsang. For sixteen years, from 629 to 645, he wandered through the whole of Central Asia and a great part of India before writing his *Journey through the one hundred and thirty kingdoms*, an amazingly factual and modern book—one of the most significant books in the literature of travel, which in the Chinese Middle Ages enjoyed the same consideration as the work of Marco Polo in the European Middle Ages.

But the great Hsüan-tsang learnt nothing more about Europe. And when in the thirteenth century the Mongols conquered China, the bold pilgrims and adventurers of the Middle Kingdom were concerned with other things than wandering westwards and finding out what had happened in the meantime to the fabulous Roman kingdom of Ta-tsin. It is usually thought that it was the Venetian Marco Polo who was the first to renew contact between the east and the west—the first white man whom the Chinese saw, the first author to tell the west about the Chinese.

But this is not quite correct. In the fourteenth century Arabian explorers arrived in Kaifong, the capital of the Chinese province of Ho-nan, and by chance met many Jews, who, as reported by the

Arab Abulfeda had been living there 'since Allah knows when'. Various missionaries also speak about age-old Jewish colonies in Ho-nan after visiting China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In Chinese annals and inscriptions these Jews are referred to as 'Tiao-Ki-Kiao'. Chinese scholars cannot agree about the date when they settled in Kaifong; some are of the opinion that already at the time of Alexander the Great there had been a Jewish community in the province of Ho-nan. But it is more likely that a large number of Jewish families wandered after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year AD 70 through the Iranian and Indian lands and a few years later were received by the Emperor Ming-ti and settled in Ho-nan. This would make the Jewish refugees the first Mediterranean people to step on Chinese soil.

But Marco Polo had yet other fore-runners. In the sixth century AD it was suddenly learnt in Byzantium that Chinese silk was—as Theophanes puts it—'the work of worms'. Someone had even succeeded in 'hiding the eggs of the silkworms in a hollow stick and bringing them safely to Byzantium'. Who was this silk-smuggler? The Byzantine writer Procopius tells of 'several Christian monks' who visited the land of silk and 'there carefully learned the art so that the manufacture of silk might be brought to Rome'. Perhaps the monks actually did go to China, or at least to the Inner Asiatic frontiers of China. At any rate, 'after this time', according to Procopius 'the art of weaving silk began in the Roman Empire'. And exactly eighty years later, when the great explorer Hsüan-tsang was about to depart on his journeys to Central Asia and India, a Christian missionary knelt before the Chinese imperial throne and endeavoured to win the Son of Heaven and his subjects over to Christianity.

Unfortunately this Christian-Syrian monk Olopön or Alopën has left no records behind him. The one thing we know about him is inscribed on a stone that was found in the Chinese province of Shan-si. It is called the Nestorian Tablet, it dates from 781, and its inscription contains, besides a summary of the Christian-Nestorian faith, an account of Olopön's deeds and the astonishing admission that the Syrian missionary had almost succeeded in making Christianity the religion of the Chinese state. This is hardly an exaggeration for, more than a hundred years after Olopön's journey, Nestorian monks streamed into the Middle Kingdom, appeared as Byzantine envoys or legates at the Chinese Imperial court and were received by the rulers with honour and shown much favour.

The Nestorian sect, an early fore-runner of the Christian Orthodox church, had more than a quarter of a million adherents in China. But shortly after the ninth century the Emperor Wu-sung, who was ill-disposed towards foreigners, forbade Christianity as well as Buddhism, and the silken curtain was lowered once more. What Olopön and his followers had seen vanished into the mists of time.

The history of the Chinese people begins about four hundred thousand years ago, in the second Ice Age interglacial phase, and the honourable place in which remains of the very earliest ancestors of the Chinese came to light is called Chu-ku-tien, a small village, known because of its coal-mine, south-west of Peking. Here there is a mountain with many caves, known as the Dragon Mountain, and from the limestone strata in this mountain archaeologists from eight nations dug up, in exemplary co-operation, the skulls, teeth and skeletal remains of forty-five pre-historic people. It was the richest pre-historic site ever to be found belonging to such a distant past. And Peking Man—*Sinanthropus*, as the scientific world baptized the pre-historic human form from the Dragon Mountain—is still one of the most splendid prize exhibits of ethnological endeavour.

He was a primitive man, an ape-man with many animal-like features. Primitive men of the same age and type have been found in various other places—in Java, near Heidelberg, in Algeria, in East and South Africa. They are documents of that obscure, highly interesting and fateful epoch in which primitive man finally freed himself from the animal kingdom and began to create human pre-history. Little would be known about this era, and nothing about the civilization of early man if tools and other relics of Peking Man had not been discovered in the Dragon Mountain—implements made of flint, quartz and sandstone, the skulls and bones of big game animals, hearths with the remains of ashes, stores of fruit and many other things. Chu-ku-tien revealed that as long as four hundred thousand years ago man was hewing stone, using fire, gathering stores of food and living in large communities, and was perhaps not very different from many primitive native races still living.

According to some Chinese anthropologists and students of pre-history, however, Peking Man reveals much more than that. After the last war the excavations at Chu-ku-tien were started again. The Chinese scholar Weng Chung Pei, who had already

taken an important part in the unearthing of the first Peking Man, and his colleague Wu Yu Kang found numerous other remains of *Sinanthropus*, examined them and then declared that despite his very primitive nature, Peking Man in several respects resembled astonishingly the present-day Mongols and Chinese. He is the direct ancestor of the Chinese people.

This statement may be dictated by the Chinese pride in their ancestors. For it can hardly be accepted that rough sketches of present-day races were made over four hundred thousand years ago. But there is a grain of truth in the statement. In various places in China there were found stone implements of a later date which form a bridge between the culture of Peking Man and the culture of Chinese Neolithic Age Man. Above all there were found—in Ho-nan, Shan-si, Szechuan and other provinces—skulls, teeth and dorsal vertebrae of an early man who apparently occupies an intermediate place between Peking Man and the 'Shan-ting tung-jen'—the primeval ancestor of the Chinese-Mongolian race who lived about twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand years ago in the East Asiatic Early Ice Age.

The east and south-east areas of Asia were in the Mesolithic and Neolithic Ages a centre of human and racial development and cultural progress, as were the Mediterranean and Near Eastern regions. The various stages in human progress here were not very different from those in Europe and West Asia. We find hunting, collecting and mussel-heap cultures, the first ceramics make their appearance, the first battle-axes, the first copper implements and utensils. In the years 1922 to 1925 the American scholar of pre-history, Roy Chapman Andrews, uncovered many cultural layers at Shabarach Usu in Mongolia which prove how in East Asia the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic Ages gradually merged from one to the other. It was a continual development, without western influence, made by men who according to the sinologist Eduard Erkes, 'constitute an anthropological unity and show all the same physical characteristics'—those of the present-day Northern Chinese, Tunguses and Mongols.

About the same time as on the Nile, the Indus and in Mesopotamia, Neolithic nomads became settled farmers on the Hwang-hai and the Yangtse-kiang. They invented implements for grinding corn, wove baskets, produced textiles, cultivated millet, wheat and rice and began to domesticate animals like dogs, pigs and ducks. According to results of Chinese researches, there were six main

civilizations in China over five thousand years ago. Each of these cultures was presumably connected with a certain tribe. So the ancient Mongolian race was divided into six branches, thus:

<i>Region</i>	<i>Carriers</i>	<i>Cultural Elements</i>
1. North-East China Southern Manchuria	Tunguses	Millet culture, rearing of swine
2. North China	Mongols	Cattle-breeding, wheat and millet cultivation
3. North-West China	Turkish tribes	Horse-breeding, copper implements
4. West China, Tibet	Tibetans	Sheep-breeding, cultivation of barley
5. Yangtse-kiang area	Tai-tribes (related to Siamese)	Rearing of swine, cultivation of rice
6. South-East China	Yüe-tribes (related to Malays)	Cultivation of rice, seafaring

In this list one misses the actual Chinese. But at that time there was no Chinese people, who developed first towards the end of the Neolithic Age. The cradle of the Chinese people is the region round the middle course of the Hwang-hai, the 'Yellow River' in northern China. There the East Asiatic peoples were active, intermingling their tribes and their cultures, and there, somewhere around three and a half thousand years ago, arose the first Chinese kingdom, ruled over by a dynasty that was presumably of Tungus origin. In the twelfth century BC this Shang kingdom was conquered by a federation of Tibetan and Turko-Mongolian tribes who founded the Chu Dynasty and set up a thoroughly well-organized government which soon ruled over the greater part of northern and central China. The Tunguses were gradually forced towards northern Asia; not until the seventeenth century AD did a Tungus tribe, the Manchu, come back to China, where they occupied the Imperial throne and the high positions in the government and thus renewed the bonds with the ancient, mythical Shang kingdom.

During the Chu era the early Mongolian, Tungus and Tibetan tribes of northern and central China finally grew into the Chinese nation. A specifically Chinese culture was developed, a Chinese language and a Chinese script that consisted of about fifty thou-

sand characters. But a group of peoples who have had quite a decisive influence on the development of China had not yet made their appearance at that time; they were the Tsh'u of the Chinese annals, the Tai tribes of southern China and the Yangtse basin.

The Tai tribes are also descendants of the ancient Palaeomongoloid race. They live as Shan in present-day Burma, as Lao in western Indo-China and as actual Tai in Siam, where they comprise the greater part of the population. Their language is related to the Chinese-Tibetan tongues, their religion a form of Buddhism that is permeated by spirits and superstitions. The Tai developed the cultivation of rice, and knew how to domesticate pigs and water-buffaloes, and they did these things, not in Further India, but in their own homeland, in southern China. They reached Further India after a chain of migrations which lasted two and a half thousand years and which led to the creation of numerous Tai principalities in Siam, Burma, Assam and Indo-China. And this migration not only altered the ethnological picture in Further India, but also finally formed the character of the Chinese nation.

Three thousand years ago on the banks of the Yangtse-kiang flourished the great Tai kingdom of the Tsh'u. Tai farmers cleared the primeval forest which then covered the south of China, planted rice-fields, harnessed the water-buffalo to the plough and led lives not much different from those led by Chinese tenant farmers in the south only a few decades ago. It was a highly developed culture. The Tai had their own script, made books from bamboo with silken bindings, built beautiful houses and buried their dead in richly decorated graves. In the third century BC there arose from their ranks a man who is reckoned to be China's first poet. This man, named K'ü Yüan, the real founder of Chinese literature, was actually not Chinese but Tai.

But in K'ü Yüan's time the ancient magnificent kingdom of the Tsh'u was only a shadow of its former might. The migrations in northern China, especially the conquering expeditions of the Hsiung-nu, had forced countless Chinese southwards. The Tai intermingled with them, took over the Chinese language, and were gradually absorbed into the Chinese way of life. The poet K'ü Yüan also spoke Chinese, and it was his works which contributed largely to the fact that Chinese speech and culture-elements were assimilated by the Tai. On the other hand, the Chinese immigrants took over from the Tai the cultivation of rice, the rearing of the water-buffalo, the method of building temples, the dragon festivals

and many characteristics which to-day distinguish the southern Chinese temperament.

The southwards migration of the Chinese extended over a period which is almost as long as Chinese history, even to-day it is still not really finished. And the Tai who refused to be assimilated also streamed southwards—to the Yun-nan and Assam, to Burma, Siam and Laos. The majority of the Tai peoples nevertheless intermingled with the immigrants to form the southern Chinese. Only a few offshoots have still preserved their linguistic and cultural peculiarities in the southern Chinese provinces of Yun-nan, Kweichow, Kwang-si and Kwang-tung. But the days of these last-remaining Chinese Tai are numbered; the Miao too, the Yao, Chuang, the Bai-i and the other groups and clusters of aborigines in remote mountain districts will presumably soon be speaking Chinese and feeling themselves to be southern Chinese like all the other descendants of the once so mighty and culturally powerful Tshu peoples.

Chinese culture did not develop in a closed land, it struck out in all directions, like the cultures of the Mediterranean and the ancient orient. The Chinese discovered lands and islands of whose existence the west became aware only in the Middle Ages. Three thousand years ago they were already ruling in Korea; about the time of the birth of Christ Chinese ships were sailing regularly to Formosa, Java and the Philippines, and in AD 499 the Chinese monk Hui-shen explored a kingdom named Fusang, lying twenty thousand Li (that is, sixty degrees of longitude) from the coast of China, 'whose inhabitants build their houses of wooden boards and know nothing of war'. Scholars are still wrangling over the identity of this 'Fusang'. Had Hui-shen reached Japan? Or the Sakhalin peninsular? Or had he discovered, a thousand years before Columbus, the American continent? Whatever the answer may be, China's scholars knew something about the size of the earth and about the motley mixture of their races, perhaps more than the historians and geographers in the most brilliant periods of Hellas and Rome. 'If one compares the earth with the universe, is it not like an ant-heap on a vast plain?' the philosopher Chuang-tse wrote as early as the fourth century BC. 'And if one compares China with the earth, is it not like a single grain of rice in a great granary?'

That fairyland of gold in the eastern ocean, the Zipangu mentioned by Marco Polo and searched for by Columbus, was very

familiar to the Chinese. In fact we do not know exactly when China first made contact with Japan's island kingdom. But we know of various embassies which Japan sent to the Chinese Imperial court in the first centuries AD; the annals say, indeed, that Japan was then one of China's vassal states. The Chinese sang no hymns of praise about Zipangu, as Marco Polo did: they referred instead to the Japanese as 'Wo-nu', or 'dwarf-slaves'. In the early Middle Ages, when Japan could employ rather more authoritative measures against her neighbours, the Chinese officially replaced this hateful name by the polite expression 'Yi-pen-kuo', or 'Land of the Rising Sun'.

Only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when America had long ago been discovered, did Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch seafarers convince themselves of Yi-pen-kuo. They adopted the Chinese designation Yi-pen and distorted it to 'Japan'—which means practically 'Rising Sun'.

CHAPTER V

TO STRANGE SHORES

*Rendezvous with the Stone Age: Gog and Magog: Sinbad
the Sailor: Black Ivory: Lord of the Mines*

Rendezvous with the Stone Age

All the same, I would not deny that in olden times some ships there may have been that did reach Americam, though many more were driven there by storms than got there by art.

Sebastian Münster, 1544

IT WAS AN unheard-of, adventurously planned book which the scholar Sebastian Münster proposed to the Henripetrinisch publishing company in Basle; he wanted to describe the whole world, with all its countries, races, customs and laws, its animals, plants and natural resources in a nine-volume work. Such *Cosmographies* were in fact nothing new in 1544; for example thirty-seven years before, the cartographer Martin Waldseemüller had composed in Lorraine a *Cosmographiae universalis introductio*, on whose maps the new world discovered by Spain was for the first time called 'America'. But Sebastian Münster's project was to surpass everything that had so far appeared in the world of books.

There had been many changes in the thousand years which had passed since the end of the Ancient World; Marco Polo had travelled in East and Southern Asia, Arabian scientists had explored the coasts and the oceans between Africa and the South Seas, the Portuguese had succeeded in sailing round Africa and reaching India by sea, the Spaniards had discovered a new world on the other side of the Atlantic, and finally Magellan had circumnavigated the world. Negroes and Hottentots, Mongolians and Malays, Indians and Polynesians were subjected to the scrutiny of ethnological research. Foreign civilizations rose out of the mists of the unknown—in India and Further India, in East Asia, in Mexico and Peru.

So there was a mass of new material, a flood of fresh information, but which the people of those days were unable to digest properly. So it was not facts that the geographers and cosmographers of that period were interested in, but curiosities, bits of gossip, tall stories and sensations.

Above all, the exploits of the greatest European explorers of the early Middle Ages, the Northmen or Normans, were forgotten. At a very early date which cannot be determined these born seafarers seem to have launched their splendidly seaworthy ships and sailed out far across the oceans; some details in pre-historic Swedish rock-drawings even hint, though vaguely, of age-old connections between Scandinavia and the Spanish-North African Mediterranean area. In the ninth century AD Norwegian, Swedish and Danish Vikings made their appearance on nearly all the coasts of Europe. They took root in England and France, proceeded to Spain and southern Italy, re-appeared in Asia Minor, in North Africa, and on the Euphrates. Swedish Varangians founded the first Russian kingdom, followed the course of Russian rivers to West Asia and went on pillaging expeditions as far as Constantinople. About 875 a Viking named Ottar sailed through the Arctic Ocean, reached the White Sea and perhaps made the acquaintance of Samoyedic or other Finno-Ugrian North Pole dwellers.

Even more significant were the Norman voyages to the north-west, into the unknown North Atlantic. At the beginning of the ninth century Norwegian Vikings overran Celtic Ireland; about 867 they discovered Iceland and there founded a Norman free state; a century later Erik the Red landed in Greenland and took numerous settlers to the west coast of this great Arctic island. And as Greenland in the eyes of present-day geographers belongs to the New World, it may be said that the Vikings had then already discovered America. Then about 985 the Iceland Viking Bjarni Herjulfson caught sight of the American coast—in the region of present-day Labrador or Nova Scotia. In the year 1000 Erik's son Leif set foot on 'Vinland (Wineland) the Good, where wild vines flourish, and make most excellent wine'. Subsequently the Greenland Vikings undertook various voyages to Vinland, which led them to Newfoundland, the Saint Lawrence River and present-day New England. There they founded colonies, clashed often with Red Indian tribes, and even—as some Viking graves in the interior indicate—advanced well into the continent, from which

they may have sent wood for building and other natural products back to Greenland as late as the fourteenth century.

The Greenland and the American-Vinland Norman colonies finally died out because of failing supplies, lack of numbers, scurvy and other illnesses. When, after 1721, the Danes again established themselves in Greenland, they found in the later Viking graves skeletons of degenerate, dwarfish men whose bodies had been crippled and deformed by starvation. And we shall never know what happened to the Vinland settlers—whether they returned to Greenland, were killed by Red Indians or were assimilated by the American race.

The Normans have preserved these great feats in their epics and heroic sagas—in the *Narrative of the Greenlanders*, the *Eirik-Raudi Saga* and in other myths and legends. But until the beginning of the eighteenth century no one believed that these sagas contained true facts, and that therefore Columbus was not the first European to set foot on American soil. Not until 1705 was the Vinland question brought up, in a book called *Historia vinlandiae antiquae* by the Danish scholar Thormod Torfaeus. A hundred years later his compatriot Carl Christian Rafn analysed the Nordic heroic sagas and Alexander von Humboldt contributed some opinions on the subject, since when Leif Erikson, whose statue now stands in Boston, has been held to be the real discoverer of America.

Was he really the first? Many other candidates have been put forward, among them the Carthaginian Himilko, the Chinese Buddhist monk Hui-shen, who about 500 BC visited across the ocean a land he calls 'Fusang', and even a Jewish prophet, Lehi, of Jerusalem, who, according to a strange tradition in the Mormon sect, migrated as early as 600 BC to America with many of his countrymen, where he founded the Red Indian race, who 'because of their fratricidal wars were punished by God with the curse of a red skin'. It may be that Himilko reached the Sargasso Sea, and Hui-shen Sakhalin or Kamchatka, and the Mormon fairytale of the Jewish descent of the Red Indians is of course a pseudo-religious propaganda-legend. More interesting are Celtic-Irish traditions which say that about a hundred years before Leif some islands in the Atlantic were discovered and settled by Irish monks. These ancient tales have been compared with rumours current among the Iceland Vikings of a mythical 'Land of the White Men'—a 'Great Ireland' near to Vinland.

Much has been written and argued about the alleged discovery of America by the Irish. Attempts have been made to locate, in North East America, the remains of Christian worship, Irish or Welsh speech-elements and so on; some have even gone as far as to identify the 'White Gods' of Central American cultures with these alleged missionary activities of Irish clerics in the New World. We still know little more about the 'White Gods' of the Aztecs and the Mayas than what the Spanish Conquistadores have told us, and the Spaniards, as is well known, attempted, through religious zeal and Christian missionary fervour, to see everywhere in the cults and myths of overseas people the relics of Christian piety. Finally, Sebastian Münster, on the subject of *Celtic-speaking Indians*, enunciated an opinion which requires no further comment:

'However it may be, it is certain that the Spaniards found no trace of this expedition from Britain in the New World . . . The crosses which were found in Comana could just as easily have been erected by heathens as by Christians . . . Montezuma's forefathers may have been foreigners, but simply from other parts of America. And that a few of their words resemble Welsh can fairly be attributed to the fact that often in quite unrelated languages we encounter a few words which resemble each other.'

So the Irish discovery of America is questionable. Its discovery by the Normans is proven (although the Arctic explorer Nansen and other critics asserted that Vinland was simply Ireland, Spain or even the land of the imagination), but that discovery went unnoticed by the world at large. The Vikings were seafarers, farmers and conquerors, not writers and scholars. Leif may have thought that Vinland was part of the European continent, and certainly did not guess that he had set foot on an entirely new region. And so the ethnological material to be garnered from the Nordic voyages is not very rich.

In various places the sagas mention encounters with 'Skrálingjar', with native inhabitants. As far as Greenland is concerned, these must have been Eskimos. The contacts between the Vikings and the Eskimos were mostly confined to attempts 'to drive out the Skrálingjar', and to the natives' corresponding reactions. At some time in the fourteenth or fifteenth century the biologically stronger Eskimos, who were better adapted to life in that severe climate than the degenerate Normans, weakened as they were by hunger and scurvy, prevailed against their foes—a very unusual

example of a primitive Stone Age civilization conquering and wiping out an apparently superior civilization.

But the Normans also encountered 'Skrálingjar' in America. In Labrador these must have again been Eskimos, but in the New England States they would be Red Indians. 'They wondered greatly at the people they found there,' the *Eirik-Raudi Saga* says. 'They were small, ugly people with tangled hair, great eyes and broad faces.' The Vikings made no appreciable distinction between the Greenland Eskimos and North American Indians, who were of quite a different appearance. They only stated that more 'Skrálingjar' lived in Vinland than in Greenland—'so many, that the sea was black with their skin-covered boats, as if they had been bits of charcoal.' There was a little bartering, but there were also all kinds of troubles and various bloody skirmishes with the natives. A few Red Indian children were taken prisoner, baptized and brought up in the Norman settlement.

That is really all we know about the Vinland adventure of Leif and his followers. It is extraordinary how the Vinland natives are always depicted as Eskimos in the sagas. Were the Vikings such poor observers? Or did Vinland lie much further north than we assume to-day? Various finds testify to the contrary. Whether one or two Vikings pressed on with Indians to the Great Lakes and the sources of the Mississippi, whether Norman blood still runs in the veins of certain light-skinned Eskimo or Indian tribes, and whether they were culturally influenced by the immigrants—all these questions belong to the misty regions of hypothesis. They cannot alter the fact that Vinland has sunk into oblivion, leaving no trace behind.

Four hundred years after Leif Erikson another Norman added his name to the annals of ethnology—this time a Norman Frenchman, a nobleman named Jean de Bethencourt et Grainville. He strongly affected the destiny of a mysterious race, about whose origins and descent the wildest and most daring speculations have been offered. These were the Guanches, the aboriginal inhabitants of the Canary Islands.

The Canaries, as we have already seen, were known to the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians. There is very little to be found in Phoenician sources about the original population apart from the fact that the explorers carried out all kinds of massacres on the inhabitants, the primitive Guanches. Carthaginian seafarers knew the most varied races of people—Hither Asiatics, Hamitic

tribes, Greeks, Celts, ancient Iberians and a quantity of Negro tribes, and they could therefore not be expected to show much surprise at discovering a blond, blue-eyed race of cave-dwellers still living in Stone Age conditions.

It is extraordinary that no one knows when or by whom the Canaries were re-discovered. Arabs, Frenchmen, Portuguese, Spaniards and Genoese are named; a shipload of captured Guanches appears to have been seen in Lisbon about 1335. More precise information cannot be obtained until 1341 when two ships, fitted out by the king of Portugal, and manned by Florentines, Genoese and Spaniards, reached the islands in July of that year, under the command of the Genoan Niccoloso da Recco and of the Florentine Angiolino del Tegghia de Corbizzi. They stayed five months on the Canaries and returned to Lisbon, bringing back with them so much that was of interest that no less a person than Boccaccio wrote a pen-portrait of the Guanches.

According to Boccaccio the Canaries were 'masses of rock without cultivation but rich in goats and other animals, and populated by naked men and women who in their manner of living resembled wild beasts . . . A few among them seemed to give orders to the rest, and were dressed in goatskins that were decorated with red and saffron-yellow dyes. From a distance these skins looked very fine and seemed to be sewn together with gut. As far as one can tell from their behaviour, these savages have a prince to whom they show great respect and obedience . . . Their speech is very gentle, and their way of speaking is lively and precipitate like the Italian . . . Four of them were kept on board ship, and it is these who were brought back.'

Boccaccio broached a question which was to be the main problem confronting all later Guanches investigators. How was it that here on the Canaries along with primitive cave-dwellers there were also living people of obviously higher culture, 'in little houses with gardens full of fig-trees and palms, cabbage and other vegetables'? Even these civilized Guanches on the eastern islands went quite naked, apart from a loin-cloth, but they cultivated wheat and barley, lived in town and village communities, had kings, priests and nobility, worshipped a female deity and ceremoniously embalmed their dead. And both groups were blond, blue-eyed and tall, like racial descendants of a Germanic tribe.

In the succeeding centuries the islands were rich hunting-grounds for slaves who were captured by the sailors of many

nations, who hunted down the blond, naked creatures and sold them to North African dealers and rulers. Then in 1402 Bethencourt conceived the philanthropic plan of making the Canaries a French colony, taming and clothing the natives and winning them to Christianity. He succeeded—with the help of forceful measures—on the island of Lanzarote. But the Guanches on the other islands had no desire to exchange their blissful nakedness for Bethencourt's civilization. And so it came to fighting, with the baptized people of Lanzarote helping the Norman Frenchmen to conquer two more islands. But he did not dare to attack the main islands with their rigidly-ordered caste society.

One year later Bethencourt returned to the islands with a bishop and a host of eager Norman immigrants; the baptized Guanches greeted them with joy, the others with stones. Two clerics in his company, Pierre Bontier and Jean Leverrier, studied the life led by the natives, and added many more exciting details to Boccaccio's account. According to them, the more primitive section of the population had their wives in common, fed themselves on roots and goat's milk and used stones and sharpened wooden spears as weapons; these cave-dwellers could climb as nimbly as goats in the mountains and could run so fast that they could catch hares.

But the majority of Guanches on the larger islands of Grand Canary and Teneriffe were organized into various states; at the head of every state was a king, served by a senate elected from noble Guanches. A priest looked after the ceremonies devoted to the invisible Great God and the female fertility-deity, conducted law-cases and led the sporting contests of which the Guanches were passionately fond. The natives did not know the use of metal, also they had no boats and could not travel between the islands. So every island tribe had its own language which could not be understood by the other islanders. When a Spaniard once asked some Guanches on Grand Canary where they had come from, they are said to have answered: 'God set us on these islands, and then forgot us!'

Later relics were found on the islands of an ancient megalithic culture, as well as rock-paintings and numerous undecipherable inscriptions. But by then the Guanches' fate was already sealed. Bethencourt had given up his colonial project and the islands had fallen into the hands of the Spaniards, and as the strange island race obstinately withstood every attempt at civilization, in the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was gradually wiped out by Spanish troops. The courage which the Guanches displayed in these desperate encounters astonished even the most hardened Spanish generals. In 1483 on Grand Canary the Spaniards were put to flight and utterly annihilated by the king of a state named Telde; in 1494 on Teneriffe the naked cave-dwellers slew eight hundred heavily-armed soldiers and only after a year of fighting were they overcome by a great squadron of troops; on other islands, conquered Guanches threw themselves into the sea from sacred cliffs rather than be taken into captivity.

When the last free Guanches had been killed and the rest of the population, baptized by force, had intermingled with immigrant Spaniards, Normans and North Africans to form a mixed race that was still blond and blue-eyed, ethnologists began to turn their attention to the Canaries. However, it was too late—for there remained only ruins of the Guanches' civilization, and of their language only about seven hundred place-names and three hundred or so other expressions were preserved. Suddenly this mysterious race, so brutally extinguished, came to be regarded by the scholarly world as 'a valiant, peace-loving shepherd folk of great mildness of temper and purity of life', as a nineteenth-century description has it, as 'a pattern of uprightness, fidelity, honour, moderation and dependability', as 'hard-working, respectful of old age and of boundless hospitality'. Which makes one wonder why their conquerors should have destroyed these rare virtues and wished to replace them by their own moral code. About the middle of the nineteenth century the first scholars began to try to solve the riddle of the Guanches.

In 1845 a Frenchman, Sabin Berthelot, collected all surviving examples of the Guanches' language, studied the mixed-blood race on the islands and declared that originally two races had lived there: a primitive cave-dwelling race and later an immigrant, civilized race that had sunk back into primitive ways. Alexander von Humboldt considered the Guanches to be a race related to Europeans, but who had 'come from elsewhere to settle on the Canary Islands'. About the middle of the nineteenth century, one of the greatest anthropologists, the Englishman James Cowles Prichard, expressed himself even more precisely. Prichard, who was moreover an important alienist and as Commissioner for the London asylums had developed a keen eye for the most varied forms of mental illness, was writing at the time his *Natural History*

of *Man*, in which he sought to classify mankind not only by colour but also by multifarious physical peculiarities. And it was natural that he should be struck by a racial group that had lived on a cluster of North African islands but that had been blond and blue-eyed like descendants of a Germanic tribe and had lived in caves like Ice Age men.

The hypothesis that Prichard put forward was, according to modern notions, astonishingly just; Prichard saw the Guanches as related to the blond and blue-eyed ancient Berber tribes of North Africa, to the ancient Iberians of prehistoric Spain and to the Basques of the western Pyrenees; he ascribed these peoples to 'the Atlantic Race', a concept that was accepted by the entire scholarly world. Civilized connections of the Berbers must once, in pre-historical times, have sailed to the Canaries from North Africa. They were, to quote the geographer Oscar Peschel, 'a gifted tribe that once had a very high civilization', but that on the Canary Islands 'after a lengthy severance from the continent gradually sank to the poverty-stricken condition of a savage tribe'. The Guanches saved a few relics of their former culture 'which persisted like fossilized remains in their later savage state'.

But Prichard and those who shared his opinions were soon contradicted. In 1873, commissioned by King Ludwig II of Bavaria, a German scholar, Franz von Löher, visited the Canaries and saw the brave Guanches with quite different eyes from those of the calm, exact research scholars like Berthelot, Humboldt and Prichard. Löher came from the Wagnerian world inhabited by the Bavarian monarch, he was struck by resemblances between the heroic myths of the Guanches and the Germans, and put forward the bold, sensational theory that the aboriginal inhabitants of the Canaries were of German descent.

Numerous holes can be picked in this theory. There are no Germanic words in the Guanche language, but there are expressions which recall the Berber language. The buildings, mummy burials, megalithic monuments, inscriptions and many other cultural elements on the Canaries point not to Central Europe but to North Africa. And above all, ruins, skeletons in ancient sites and textual references in the works of Greco-Roman authors indicate that there were Guanches on the Canaries long before the migration of the races; presumably they were already there in the third millennium BC. Yet Löher's theory died hard. Gustav Kossinna writes of 'a great Nordic migration' which he claims

swarmed over North Africa in the third millennium BC, during which blond-haired people reached the Canaries—a hypothesis which was accepted by numerous ethnologists, although there is not a shred of evidence for such a pre-historic migration of Nordic races.

In fact, the real solution to the problem is much simpler and considerably more interesting than all the Germanic theories put together. In 1925 one of the most distinguished American ethnologists, Ernest A. Hooton, published his investigations under the title *The ancient inhabitants of the Canary Islands*. About the same time the German anthropologist Eugen Fischer and various other students of ethnology and pre-history addressed themselves to the problem of the Guanches, examining their mummies and measuring their skulls. Fischer wrote: 'We are concerned here with faces having broad-angled jaws and broad cheekbones, and a rather flat-bridged nose; with raw-boned, heavily-built figures that are clearly different from the slenderly-constructed Mediterranean races'. But just as clearly are the skulls of the Guanches different from the long, narrow skulls of the Germans. There was only one race which had the same skull and bone structure as the aboriginal inhabitants of the Canaries—and that was the Cro-Magnon race of the Early Ice Age.

The Guanches are in fact descendants of Cro-Magnon man, the creator of the Palaeolithic cave-paintings and art works of southern Europe, who migrated to fresh fields at the end of the Ice Age—to northern Europe, Asia, and across the Bering Straits to America. There he gradually altered, built up new races and tribes, and became the forefather of many white- and brown-skinned peoples. But a few Cro-Magnon groups flowed from Spain into Africa. These African Cro-Magnon men preserved their original racial features and in the Mesolithic and Neolithic Ages created on north-African soil a quite characteristic culture—the Capsian culture.

Mills and millstones, cross-axes, stone rings and digging-sticks, stone arrow-heads, traces of pre-historic cultivation and nomadic pastoral economy reveal how Cro-Magnon man lived in North Africa at that time. He erected megalithic structures, worshipped female deities and evolved a matriarchal form of society. The aboriginal inhabitants of the Sahara, the ancient Libyans, the Berbers—blond, blue-eyed people with almost square faces—were true children of the Capsian culture. The inhabitants of the

Canaries went forth from the ranks of these North Africans. They brought the Capsian culture to the islands, developed it no further, but because of their thousand-year-long isolation reverted to the level of cave-men which they had abandoned when they had left post-Ice-Age Europe.

The blond hair and blue eyes of the Guanches is a major proof of the historian's view that the Ice Age Cro-Magnon race were also blue-eyed and blond-haired. Blond people are found not only among Europeans and Berbers, but also among many Asiatic races and even among Polynesians and Red Indians. A large part of the Cro-Magnon race lost this distinguishing feature on their long migrations, during which they intermingled with dark-haired races. But it remained a dominant feature among the northern branches of the Indo-Europeans, and also among the Guanches, 'forgotten by God'.

If the people of the Canaries were still alive, science to-day could study on the spot how Mesolithic descendants of Ice Age man looked and what cults, customs and forms of society they have developed. The race-murder of the Guanches has only one parallel in history—the brutal extermination of the aboriginal Tasmanians in South Australia, a race which was still existing on the Neanderthal level. And it is a bitter irony of fate that at the same time as Prichard, Humboldt and other scholars were deploring the extermination of the Guanches, the Tasmanians were being hunted down like wild beasts, transported to uninhabited islands and left there to die of hunger.

Faded paintings on sun-bleached rock walls, puzzling, undecipherable inscriptions, mummies clad in goatskins and large-boned Cro-Magnon skulls—that is all there is left of the brave, mysterious and much-discussed Guanches. Here and there in the islands one still catches a glimpse of a true Canary Island face, four-square, large-boned, blue-eyed, with a lock of blond hair falling over the forehead. And to-day, as in times gone by, many inhabitants of the Canaries live in caves and cave communities similar to those which once were seen by the Norman nobleman de Bethencourt.

Gog and Magog

So that when we met these barbarians, it seemed to me as if I had entered another world.

Wilhelm von Rubruck, 1255

'SON OF MAN, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog,' cries the Prophet Ezekiel. And he continues the terrifying vision by saying that Gog shall ascend out of the land of Magog and come like a storm, 'to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited'. We know that in Jewish history this fiery race from the north was that of the Scythian Cimmerians, who in the seventh century before Christ shook Hither Asia to its foundations, conquered Mesopotamia and Palestine and came to a stop only at the frontiers of Egypt.

But since then the oriental as well as the occidental world has used the term 'Gog and Magog' to denote the most various races from the north and east, wandering tribes that came from the steppes and invaded established civilizations. The 'Gog and Magog' of the Koran and early Arab literature are identical with the Germanic tribes of the migration, and with the Normans. Byzantine historians meant by this term Attila's Huns. Ancient German chroniclers identified the biblical terror-race with the Hungarians. For a while Christians, Jews and Mohammedans united in calling all heathens 'Gog and Magog'. And finally the name fixed itself upon the great conquering race of the Mongols.

The Mongols entered western consciousness in an extremely curious way. In the sixth and seventh centuries the great religious revolutionary movements had reached Central and East Asia. From India, Buddhism in its Lamaist variety entered the Tibetan-Mongolian area, from the Near East Islam sent out ripples to Turkestan and China, and from Syria and Byzantium Christianity stretched feelers over the whole of Asia. Nestorian and Manichaean Christians of Asiatic descent gathered supporters in India, in China, among the shamanistic Turko-Mongolian riders of the steppes. Travelling merchants, missionaries and silk-dealers reported on these Christian-Asiatic communities at the other end of the world, and although in 845 China forbade the practice of Christianity and Buddhism, thereby giving the death-blow to East Asiatic Nestorianism, a rumour persisted in the East Roman Empire and even in the Vatican itself that a mighty 'Priest-King'

named John lived in East Asia, and was only waiting to get in touch with the Pope and the western world in order to found God's kingdom on earth.

More precise information about this mythical Priest-King was not to be obtained. For the new world power, Islam, gradually cut all connections between the west and the remainder of the earth. Arabs occupied the Mediterranean, Hither Asia, northern India; Islamic kingdoms lay along the ancient silk routes, and Christian Europe must have felt that all the world beyond its frontiers was a Mohammedan world. The rumours about the Priest-King were fundamentally nothing but fantastic wish-fulfilment dreams, for Christianity longed for a strong ally against the overwhelming power of Islam, but imagination fixed the Priest-King's abode in India, or in China, or in Abyssinia. And about the middle of the twelfth century came the sudden great news, from Syrian sources. Somewhere in the east (we now know it was at Samarkand) a great Moslem army had been slain by an unknown Inner Asiatic ruler. This ruler, it was decided at once, could be no other than John, the long-awaited Priest-King!

In fact the victor over the Moslems bore the name of Yi-lü-ta-shi and was the chieftain of a wild nomad tribe, the Kara-Kitai Mongols. The Kara-Kitai did not take advantage of their victory. But fifty years later another steppe tribe came into prominence—the Nirun-Mongols under their brilliant young chieftain Temudshin. How this Temudshin succeeded in uniting the many nomadic Mongolian, Turkish, Tartar, Uighur and Kirghiz tribes of Inner Asia and leading them to attack the great powers of the earth is one of the dark secrets of history. Perhaps Temudshin felt himself called by a mythical spirit belonging to his shamanistic world; perhaps he was influenced by Chinese, Nestorian or Islamic dreams of a world-wide empire. But perhaps he was only a very intelligent, very self-assured and very clever general and organizer. In 1206 a dozen mounted tribes paid homage to him in his capital at Karakorum. They had always been skirmishing with one another; now they acclaimed him as Genghis-Khan, 'perfect Lord', and stormed away under his leadership right across Asia to the Great Wall of China.

On April 14th, 1219 there reached Pope Honorius III a letter from a Syrian bishop in which it was stated that John the Priest-King had now finally marched into the field against the Saracens and the Seljuks, with a slanting cross on his banners, and would

shortly deliver Jerusalem from the Moslems. A wave of excitement swept over the Christian world. But what had really happened? Genghis-Khan had conquered northern China and made a vassal of its Tungus-Chinese emperor. Then he had turned westwards, overthrown the Tartars, devastated the Mohammedan sultanate of Choresm and occupied large areas of Persia and Turkestan. The Mongols swept irresistibly on—to the Indus, the Euphrates, the Caucasus and the Black Sea. And when in 1223, in southern Russia, European and Mongolian troops encountered one another for the first time, it finally became clear that the emblem on Genghis-Khan's banners was no cross, but a flying falcon, and that the all-conquering riders of the steppe were not the soldiers of a Priest-King, but were 'Gog and Magog'.

The Mongolian attack was a shock to the west. Helplessly the European states awaited Genghis-Khan's advance. But the mounted hordes swept back again, and Europe's life was saved literally at the last minute. The great Khan Temudshin had died and the law of the steppe required that all warriors should be present in Karakorum to elect a new ruler. While the mounted tribes were electing Temudshin's third son, Ogdai-Khan, to be their 'perfect Lord', Europe remained inactive, as if Genghis-Khan had been only a grim, long-vanished nightmare.

But Ogdai-Khan too, after subjugating the remainder of China and Persia, returned once more to the west. In 1237 the Mongols under the leadership of Temudshin's grandson Batu-Khan overran northern Russia, and rode on to Poland, Hungary and Silesia. They swarmed through Germany as far as Regensburg, then on to Weimar Neustadt and to the Adriatic. In 1241 a German army of cavalry was slaughtered by Batu-Khan at Liegnitz. Once again the western world seemed to be at the mercy of the tempest from the steppe.

And again a miracle occurred. Ogdai-Khan died in the vastnesses of Asia, at the same time as the battle of Liegnitz. Again the Mongol armies withdrew to Inner Asia in order to elect the next ruler; owing to political intrigues the election lasted for seven years, when finally another grandson of Temudshin, Mangu-Khan, entered the palace in Karakorum. Subsequently Mangu-Khan and his brother Kublai-Khan, who succeeded him on the throne, concentrated on the spread of their power in Asia. The Mongol Empire, one of the greatest in the history of the world, was divided into various subsidiary states; Kipchak in Russia, Sibir in West

Asia, Ilkhans in Asia Minor and Persia, Zagati in Turkestan and North India and finally the great kingdom of Yüan, which comprised Mongolia, China, Tibet and parts of Further India. Everywhere the conquering Mongols took over the culture of the vanquished races; Islam became their religion in the west, Buddhism in the east. The Mongols never returned to Central Europe, perhaps they did not find it interesting enough.

But the Mongol horror remained as if branded on the consciousness of the west. Temudshin's and Ogdai's troops became for Europeans the symbols of barbarism, of terror, of Apocalypse. They were 'Gog and Magog'.

In Sebastian Münster's description we have a clear account of the terror the Mongols inspired. 'They do eat rudely and beastlike all manner of creatures' flesh, dog and cat meat, horseflesh and the flesh of the great mice, that we do commonly call rats. And that they may show their fierce spirit and take revenge, when they capture their enemy they do roast him over a fire, devour him and tear him with their fangs like unto wolves and then do guzzle his blood that they did previously run off into vats. . . . When they desire to descend upon a land, they do divide their army into divers hosts, attack in all parts at once, that resistance in every part becometh impossible, and that no man escape them. And when they have victory in hand, they spare no one, neither men, women, children nor the old, but slaughter all with great axes, like unto sows they do slay them. . . . The young wives, they that are pretty, they do violate against their wills and lead them away to serve them unto death. . . .'

Exactly the same kind of atrocity-stories come to the imagination of the average man to-day, when he thinks of a Mongol raid. But only about four years after the battle of Liegnitz the general panic in Europe gave way to a hope that it had all been a ghastly mistake, and that John, the Priest-King was still possibly behind the Mongols, as a vassal of the Great Khan, perhaps as the oppressed ruler of a Christian-Nestorian minority. Vague reports came from the east; the Great Khan himself, or some of his tribal leaders, wished to be converted to Christianity, or had even become Christians already. In fact, the Khans, who were utterly indifferent to religion, and allowed their subjects to please themselves in religious matters, had for political propaganda reasons gone over to the Lamaist faith, in order to win Tibet and Further India.

In 1245 Pope Innocent IV sent a Franciscan monk, Giovanni del Piano Carpini, to the Great Khan, in order to convert him, to ask about John the Priest-King and to stir his conscience. 'For we are exceedingly astonished,' said the Pope in an accompanying letter, 'that you, as we have heard, do overwhelm many lands, those of the Christians as also those of the heathen, and do fearfully devastate them. We desire, after the example of the King of Peace, that all men may live peacefully and in the fear of God. To that end do we beg, beseech and admonish, that you completely abstain from such onslaughts, and, by doing suitable penance, divert the heavy wrath of God.'

The attempt to establish relations with this puzzling and terrible Mongol was a clever move on the part of the Vatican. Perhaps there was some way of making the riders of the steppe into allies, and then the west, side by side with 'Gog and Magog', could put an end to Islam. A year previously the Crusaders had finally lost the holy city of Jerusalem. The might of Islam seemed more secure than ever, the more so since the Mongol rulers in Hither Asia were taking over increasingly the customs, language and the religion of the former Arabic-Persian lords. What could be more urgent than to gain the greater part of the Mongols for Christ and so form a powerful counterweight against the ideological compact between Arabs, Turks and west Mongolian Tartars which was looming on the horizon?

The Papal Legate Carpini, the first of a long line of diplomatic clerics who were to spin the threads of policy between Rome and Karakorum, was a disciple of Francis of Assisi and was acquainted with many European countries. With a number of followers he circumvented the Islamic blockade by going across southern Russia, the Kirghiz steppe and the Dzungaria to the residence of the Great Khan. A remarkable achievement! Carpini could never have done it if the Mongol Khans had not been, despite all atrocity tales, tolerant and friendly men who were interested in all foreign civilization and culture and gladly seized the opportunity to show their great empire to a prominent European. Moreover, travel in the vast Mongolian lands was excellently organized, there were everywhere stages for changing horses, fresh mounts, postal and information services. Carpini was not the first European who travelled through the Mongolian empire at that time; Germans, Frenchmen, Flemings, Englishmen, Hungarians and Lombards lived then in Karakorum, Peking and other places,

working as craftsmen, developing businesses and receiving impressions of 'Gog and Magog' that were quite different from those commonly held by their compatriots at home. Here, as everywhere, business and trade took advantage of the general boom of success, and there was no Khan who did not magnanimously extend a protecting hand over these east-west contacts.

Carpini's accounts of his travels do not tell us much. He said almost nothing about the customs of the Mongolian peoples, he was only interested in fulfilling his mission. But in this, too, he had little success. The Great Khan Kuyuk, one of the regents between Ogdai-Khan and Mangu-Khan, revealed himself to be a free-thinker who made no distinctions between Lamaists, Mohammedans, Christians, Jews and supporters of the ancient shamanistic religion. How did Carpini, he asked, know that God considered Christians worthier people than those belonging to other denominations? The Mongols, he went on, in philosophical-dialectical vein, had slain and plundered at the command of God—'for if we had not had God's strength behind us, how could we have performed such things?' From that it followed that the west was sinning against God if it set itself against the Mongols. 'Therefore,' the Khan wrote to the Pope, 'you must come here in person and at the head of all the kings of Europe without exception and pay us your respectful homage. This is what we would have you know.'

Carpini returned to Rome, his mission a failure. But the Vatican did not give up so easily, it sent further embassies. The king of France also took part in this world missionary crusade and sent the Dominican André de Longjumeau to Karakorum. But the most important of these travellers to East Asia before Marco Polo was a much-travelled Franciscan father from the village of Rubrouck in the north of France, who has gone down in the history of discovery as 'Guillaume de Rubruk or Ruysbroek'. He, too, was sent to look for an alleged Christian Mongol Khan named Sartak on the lower Volga. But as Sartak—as Guillaume later reported—'just made fun of the Christians', the Franciscan journeyed on to Karakorum and there had a very interesting talk about religion with Batu-Khan, the conqueror of eastern Europe, in which Christians, Mohammedans and Buddhists also took part. The result of this disputation, reminiscent of Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, was as follows: Batu-Khan asserted that the representatives of the three religions could not even disperse a little bad weather, and smilingly waved them away. 'It seems to

me,' Guillaume wrote afterwards, 'that it would be useless to send another missionary to the Mongols.'

Nevertheless Batu-Khan was tolerant enough to allow Christian, Jewish and Mohammedan, as well as Buddhist festivals to be celebrated in Karakorum. There were four prophets, so he told Guillaume de Rubruk, namely, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Moses and Buddha, and 'he respects and honours all four, and asks for help from the one who is truly greatest among them'. The wise Khan did not want to fall out with anyone, and presumably did not realize why the non-Mongolians quarrelled about problems that he considered to be mere ideological trifles. When Guillaume once tried to explain Christian belief to him, 'the Khan remained silent, and just shook his head'.

After Guillaume's journey, all hope vanished of Christianizing the Mongols or of finding John the Priest-King anywhere in the steppe. But this journey was from a scientific point of view more illuminating than all other investigations which had taken place until then in the Far East. Although Guillaume had an outspoken horror of the Mongols and thought of himself as being 'in the hands of the Devil' when he was with them, yet he was the first to describe the life of the steppe people in detail and almost lovingly, and it was through him that Europe really learnt what 'Gog and Magog' were like. These Mongols were simple nomadic shepherds, excellent bowmen and horsemen, unspoilt children of nature who drew strength from their very naïveté and primitiveness that enabled them to overrun the slack, corrupt kingdoms of the earth. The Khans had not the slightest notion of the military potential, the political conditions and the forms of society in the west; for them Europe was nothing more than a westerly appendage of Siberia, that one could occupy or leave in peace according to one's pleasure, just like all the other regions in western and northern Asia. For them the Pope and the Emperor were on the same footing as the many tribal chieftains, the Saracen sultans, the Tibetan and Burmese petty rulers with whom they came into conflict from time to time.

After all these unhappy impressions, Guillaume must have been glad when the Great Khan Mangu let it be known that he wished him and his missionary plans to the devil. Before he left, the confused and hurt Legate rather indignantly added a few derogatory remarks to his travel account, to the effect that Karakorum was smaller and shabbier than the market town of Saint-Denis near

Paris and that the Great Khan's palace could not compare in size with the smallest French friary. 'The Mongols do not take anything from one by force,' he admits grumblingly, 'but they are very persistent beggars, unashamedly clamouring for everything they set eyes on; for they see themselves as the lords of creation and think that no one should refuse them anything.' So in 1255 that was the greatest race on earth—a race of beggars, living on sour milk, wearing clothes made of filthy felt, and possessing a metropolis, compared with which that little hole-and-corner town of Saint-Denis was a world capital! It was a bitter pill to swallow.

Guillaume de Rubruk's report was so revealing that Roger Bacon published it for posterity. But forty years later appeared a lively, almost fairytale-like description of a journey which did full justice to the reality of Mongol life—one of the most beautiful and significant books in geographical and ethnological literature. This time the author was no historian, no diplomat, but a merchant of Venice—Marco Polo, the uncrowned king of travel writers.

Marco Polo was descended from a patrician family of Dalmatian origin, long since established in Venice. He was predestined to be a traveller in Asia, for his father Nicolo and his uncle Maffeo Polo owned a factory in the Crimea and were on good business terms with the Mongol rulers on the Volga and in West Asia. From 1260 to 1265 the Polo brothers belonged to that great number of European merchants who benefited by the Mongolian Khans' benevolent attitude towards foreigners in order to travel widely in Asia—as for as Kambalugh, the present Peking, where the Great Khan of the Yüan Provinces, Kublai, resided. Now Kublai-Khan was without doubt the most cultivated, tolerant and charming of all the Mongol Khans; he was a Buddhist, had assimilated Chinese civilization and imposed its culture upon his subjects, promoted art and learning and had for his advisers in all spiritual and governmental matters Chinese, Persian, Arab and European scholars. And his capital was anything but a dirty little market town—it was, in fact, a splendid city.

It was inevitable that the Polo brothers, despite all the rebuffs that Guillaume de Rubruck had received, should broach the question of his conversion to Christianity with this most intelligent and humane ruler. But Kublai-Khan had the same reactions as his predecessor: 'Why should I become a Christian? You surely know that the Christians in my lands have done nothing very

startling, whereas the Buddhists (they were called 'heathens' in the Polos' report) can do whatever they wish.' Nevertheless Kublai made the two Venetians a very fair proposition: 'Return to your Pope and request him in my name to send me a hundred men that are sufficiently learned in your scriptures, that they may be matched against my Buddhists. They are to show their powers, triumph over the Buddhist priests and demonstrate their ability to do wondrous deeds, even as my monks do. If I can see such things with my own eyes, then I shall be christened.'

On their return, the Polos presented their report to the Vatican. Pope Gregory X very wisely did not take up the Great Khan's



4 Kublai Khan, ruler of the greatest Tartar empire, from the drawing by the Chinese artist San-ts'ai-t'u-hui.

challenge. When the two Venetians in 1271 started off for Mongolia and China once more, accompanied by Nicolo's seventeen-year-old son Marco, they took only two monks with them. But these went in such terror of the Mongols that they deserted in Armenia. Young Marco however was enjoying himself in East Asia and remained with the party. That was his great good fortune; for four years he wandered with his father and uncle through one fairyland after another—Mesopotamia, Persia, Turkestan, the Pamirs, the Lop desert, Mongolia and northern China. Marco Polo was presented to Kublai at the Great Khan's summer residence, the ruler took a fancy to him and made Marco his companion of honour.

This was the greatest good luck for the business firm of the

Polos. Marco enjoyed the favour of the Great Khan for seventeen years; travelled with him over the whole of his vast empire, was leader of the diplomatic corps and finally even became governor of the southern Chinese city of Hang-chow, and all through this period, what wonderful business Nicolo and Maffeo must have done! Marco could soon speak fluent Mongolian, Uigur, Persian and Arabic; he could not get on so well with the Chinese language. On his official journeys he travelled as far as Tibet and Burma; he lived in the most varied parts of China and obviously led the existence of a pampered and highly-respected government official, whose every wish was granted by the Khan.

Marco could not understand how earlier travellers had brought back such negative impressions of the Mongols. The 'Tartars', as he called the Mongols, had decent manners, behaved in a friendly way, were fair in their judgements and 'believed in a great and noble God to whom they daily offer incense and prayers. Their women are the most modest and honourable in the world. . . . It is also extraordinary to see in what a friendly way the men treat their wives; one never hears them using insulting expressions. . . .' And the Khan himself was no filthy nomad chieftain, but 'a brave and bold man, a capable and wise general'. Finally, his summer residence did not in the least give the shabby impression which had so repelled Guillaume. 'In the middle of a park full of game there rises, in a pleasant grove, a royal pleasure-palace that stands on gilded and painted pillars. Round each pillar a gilded dragon spreads his wings, while his head bears the roof's wide eaves and his claws clutch the walls on either side. The roof is composed of gilded bamboo, that is delicately varnished, so that the rain does not penetrate. On all sides, the structure, like a great tent, is pegged to the ground by more than two hundred silken cords, for otherwise, owing to the lightness of the bamboo, the edifice could be blown away by a storm. The whole is so cunningly constructed, that all parts of it can be dismantled, borne away and easily re-assembled in another place.'

As a former Mongolian dignitary, perhaps Marco Polo tended to exaggerate the beauties of his master's empire? Hardly. What possible advantage would there have been for him in doing so? When he left the Khan's great empire, he went back to Italy for good, and did not need to consider the interests and feelings of his former master—who in the meantime, moreover, had died. At the very most, one can only reproach the Venetian with having a

very loving objectivity regarding the oriental world. Like so many later sinologues and sinophiles, he was fascinated by East Asia. Such an enthusiasm for Mongolia did not fit in at all with the conventional viewpoint of the European Middle Ages.

Numberless passages in his book show that when something displeased him at court or anywhere else in the giant empire, he wrote frankly, without fear of retribution. He was revolted by the uncleanness of the shamans, by the greed and orgiastic way of life of a Saracen governor named Achmed (who later came to a bad end), by the doings of the Peking astrologers and by many other things. But against all this he set the excellent government, the exemplary travel conditions and the thoroughly well-organized social welfare systems in the Khan's great empire. 'All Kublai-Khan's thoughts are directed towards the well-being of his peoples, so that they make a good living by their work and are able to increase their fortune. . . . When there are bad harvests and natural catastrophes he not only forgoes the collection of tithes but sends special officials to relieve the people with gifts of corn and grain, sufficient for their daily needs, until the next sowing. . . . He considers these misfortunes to be punishments sent by God, and lets it be known that he does not wish for things that have been marked by the wrath of the Almighty to be handed over to him as tribute.'

It is impossible here even to begin to mention Marco Polo's reports on the many races that he was the first to see and describe. He went to Tibet, and—apart from the brief visit of a monk named Oderich—another five hundred years were to pass before other Europeans set foot in this forbidden land. According to Marco Polo the Tibetans 'dressed badly in leather, animal skins and hempen cloth; they have their own peculiar language and practise black magic, performing thereby the most extraordinary things. For example they can call up storms with forked lightning and peals of thunder.' He experienced in Burma the world of Buddhism, the gorgeously-gilded temples, the tame elephants and the strange custom of male childbed: 'When a wife has given birth to a child, she leaves the bed when the infant has been washed and swaddled, and her place is taken by the husband, who tends the child for forty days; meanwhile the woman goes about her household tasks, brings food and drink to the man in bed and suckles the child at his side.'

He was able to get to know the land of Zipangu also—the Japanese island kingdom that Kublai-Khan was just then attempt-

ing in vain to conquer: 'The inhabitants have light-coloured skin, are well educated and have good manners. They have great quantities of gold, and the country's springs are inexhaustible; the riches of the Imperial Palaces are said to be incredibly beautiful.' Marco Polo's description of 'golden Zipangu' was to be, two hundred years later, an important influence on Columbus, and indirectly prepared the ground for the discovery of America.

But the Venetian was especially impressed by the land of China. The inhabitants of 'Cathay', as he calls it, are 'pleasant and courteous, greet each other with great complaisance and charm and have been very well brought-up. . . . It is their custom to bathe at least three times a week. . . . They consider that the highest virtue lies in respecting and honouring one's parents. Peking is an extraordinarily magnificent city, perfectly planned, with streets that are so straight, that one can look from one city gate and see the other gate at the opposite end of the city. . . . All strange and costly things are brought to the capital from all over the world; India in particular sends precious stones, pearls, spices and aromatics, and Cathay brings from every corner of her empire her most priceless treasures in order to satisfy the clamouring needs of the great crowd of individuals that here swarm round the Imperial court. The business done in Kambalugh (Peking) exceeds that of any other place.'

Even more brilliant and splendid was the city of Quinsay of which Marco Polo was governor. To-day it is called Hang-chow. With its seven million inhabitants, paved streets, numerous canals and bridges, three thousand bathing establishments and the fairy-like gaiety of the bustling harbour at the mouth of the Yangtse-kiang, it appeared to the Venetian as the greatest wonder in the world. Polo compared what was then the greatest business and trading port on earth with his own Venice, but found the 'heavenly city' on the Yangtse much more lovely and more civilized than the republic on the Adriatic, which was already a very impressive and important city.

Naturally Marco Polo enthused not only over the superior culture and civilization of Quinsay: 'Courtesans live here in such great number that I could not venture to estimate how many there are. Gorgeously dressed and strongly perfumed, they live in well-appointed houses and are attended by numerous servants. These women are past mistresses in their arts of flattering and fondling, which they accompany by such words as are suited to everyone's

taste—so much so, that foreigners who have once experienced their charms are totally beglamoured and so enraptured by their amorous and wanton sports that they never forget these pleasures. Infatuated by sensual joys, they call Quinsay, on their return home, the "heavenly city"; and they live in longing for such time as they may visit their paradise again.'

The three Polos were now not only guests of honour of the Great Khan, but were also prisoners in a golden cage, for Kublai-Khan did not wish to let the educated 'latins' return home, so indispensable had they become to him. Nicolo and Maffeo were almost buried beneath the piles of treasures which they had collected on their travels—jewels in particular, for the Polo firm were first and foremost jewellers. But what was the use of all their precious stones, if they could not return to Venice and reap the benefits accruing from the goods they had accumulated during their seven years in Mongolia?

An accident made possible the return of the Venetians. Kublai wanted to marry a Yüan princess to the Ilkhan of Persia, who was his countryman and ally, and needed men who could speak foreign languages to afford the lady an escort of honour on the journey from China, across India to the Near East. The Polos offered their services; the emperor could not refuse their request to take part in the expedition, the more so as the princess—whatever her reasons may have been—pleaded specially for Marco's company on the trip. And so in 1292 the three adventurers started off with the princess and many dignitaries in a fleet of luxurious imperial four-masters and on the three-year voyage called at the islands of Java, Sumatra and Ceylon before reaching Persia. Perhaps, as rumour has it, they also called at Madagascar and saw something of the East African coast. They handed over the princess to the son of the Ilkhan, for the original bridegroom had in the meantime departed this life. And when the princess had to part from her favourite Marco, she wept bitterly. Marco, like a true gentleman, refrains from telling us if he had played a part in a little romantic tragedy. . . .

This voyage through the Indian Ocean brought with it all kinds of troubles, and entailed many sacrifices. About six hundred men died of starvation and scurvy, though the Chinese ships were provided with all possible refinements and supplies. But the three Polos survived everything, without taking any hurt. And so Marco was able to tell Europe about quite a new corner of the earth—

about Indonesia, the Spice Islands, the harbingers of the South Seas. Here, too, another two centuries were to pass before the next European visited the Indo-Malayan archipelago.

When the Polos returned to Venice, no one would believe what they told about their experiences, no one would believe that they were the men who had set off for the east twenty-six years before. They were presumed to be dead, their business was in a relative's hands, their property belonged to their heirs. Then the three displayed the treasures they had brought back—brocades and damasks, pearls, precious stones and almost priceless treasures of gold. And this argument convinced the Venetians that they were telling the truth.

Marco's contemporaries were not so convinced by his accounts of his travels; they were laughed at. And when Marco, on a business trip, fell prisoner to the Genoese and while in prison dictated his *Description of the World* to a fellow-prisoner, his contemporaries considered the book to be a tissue of bare-faced lies.

But in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the correctness of Marco's account was posthumously acknowledged. Contact with East Asia was not broken off. Everything that later travellers in Asia reported—Montecorvino, Jordanes, Oderich, Marignolli and Schiltberger—confirmed Marco Polo's descriptions. But the Europeans only very slowly became aware that the Saracen, Indian and Chinese civilizations were equal to the classical cultures of the Mediterranean area. And very slowly grew the desire to enter into permanent relationship with these distant empires, to sail to India and 'Tartary' and to win the gold of the east for Europe.

But a stern political fact stood between this desire and its realization. The Mohammedan arch-enemy had forestalled the west. The monopoly of all the treasures of the east lay in the hands of the Arabs.

Sinbad the Sailor

I was driven by a fixed idea; in my heart there dwelt a passionate desire to see the sublime sacred relics of foreign lands. So then I decided to leave my loved ones, and left my home, as the bird leaves the nest. I was at that time two and twenty years of age. *Ibn Batuta, c. 1350*

IT WAS A political-religious movement of unexampled power that in the seventh century AD spread from the Arabian deserts over half of the then-discovered earth: the followers of the Prophet Mohammed blazed their trail over North Africa and southern Europe and were brought to a halt only in France. They conquered the most ancient civilizations in history—Egypt, Syria, Babylon and Persia. They followed in Alexander's footsteps to India, occupied the coasts of the Indian Ocean and discovered fabulous, distant parts of the earth of whose existence humanity had so far been in total or almost total ignorance—South East Africa, Madagascar, the Malayan archipelago and the western islands of the South Seas.

But Islam was no destroyer of cultures as other world-shaking powers had been; the Arabs, the carriers of an age-old and refined civilization, brought art, science and philosophy to the lands they occupied, respected the traditions they found there, and wove them into their own ideology. The geographical and natural scientific knowledge of the Greeks had long ago been lost to the west. But Arab scholars—for example the natural scientists Avicenna and Averroes, the geographers Mas'udi and Idrisi, the mathematicians Al-Khwarizmi and Abu'l-Wafa—translated Pythagoras and Euclid, Herodotus and Megasthenes, Aristotle and Ptolemy and developed Greek knowledge further. Through the Arabs Europe learnt of the achievements of the most gifted race of mathematicians in the world, Indian algebra and the Indian system of counting were introduced to western lands. The Arabs brought the compass from China, they drank the wisdom of the east at Egyptian and Babylonian sources, they learnt from Persians in Iran, from Bactrians, the heirs of Alexander.

The crusaders of the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, on the whole rather uncultivated swashbucklers, experienced for the first time, on their expeditions to the Holy Land, the meaning of a

civilized people. They had set out to drive rude Saracen 'infidels' from the lands of the Bible (and also, of course, to break the Arab blockades against the west) and in the east they encountered, not man-eating savages, but cleanly-dressed, civilized, widely-travelled and scholarly men, who at the sight of bombastic knights from Europe merely wrinkled their noses in disgust. In the land of the Saracens, people washed and perfumed their bodies, the women wore enchanting clothes, the food was delicately and finely spiced, the houses and castles looked comfortable, and the doctors were no sawbones, but masters of medical science. What Europe learnt from the Arabs in those two hundred years of crusades would fill a whole book. Counting was now done with Indian figures, which were called 'Arabic' numerals, foods were spiced or sweetened, clothes were embroidered, dwellings were decorated with carpets and tapestries, armour was replaced by silken garments, handkerchiefs were used for blowing the nose, musical stringed instruments were invented, as well as dances, round games and social pastimes. People heard about the arts of navigation, astronomy, algebra and chemistry. They adorned themselves with gold and precious stones. The knights took back home with them the eastern custom of the tourney. And the courtly poets of early medieval Germany created immortal works of poetry from legends and the tales of their time—after Arab models.

Many knights encountered in Antioch, Acre and Jerusalem orientals who could talk to them about India, Africa, China and the distant Spice Islands. But the Arabs not only travelled in southern and eastern countries, they explored the north also—the Christian countries. From 797 to 807 Charlemagne and the Caliph Haroun al Rashid exchanged envoys. Forty years later the Arab poet Al-Gazal appeared as ambassador of a Moorish prince in Scandinavia. Arab dealers, merchants, scholars and travellers journeyed down the Volga, across Germany to the Baltic and the coasts of the Arctic Ocean, while at the same time other Arabs were visiting Nanking, studying the Great Wall of China, founding settlements in Africa and encountering Papuans and marsupials in New Guinea.

So it is understandable that about 1150 a Christian monarch, the Norman King Roger II of Sicily, who was passionately interested in geographical and ethnological questions, should have commissioned an Arab to draft the first complete maps of the world since the days of Ptolemy. This Arab scholar was Idrisi of

Ceuta; his maps have been preserved and show that as early as the beginning of the Middle Ages the Arabs possessed a very clear notion of what the world looked like. The geographer from Ceuta was presumably merely one expert among many, possibly not even belonging to the first rank. Two hundred years before him there had lived a much more important scholar, Abu-Hasan Ali Masudi, whose work entitled *Golden Meadows* influenced the Norman king's geographer considerably.

Masudi voyaged—mostly on Chinese ships—to the Sunda Isles, to New Guinea and perhaps even to the South Seas. A few of his contemporaries reached Japan and Korea, others became familiar with Madagascar and South Africa. And so it comes about that on Idrisi's map appears a curious 'Wawak Land', inhabited by dwarf-like men, a land in which 'the apes wear golden collars and the dogs have golden chains', and which scholars have attempted to identify with South Africa, Madagascar or Japan.

Each of these men was a Sinbad, a sailor like the one in the *Arabian Nights*. Even before the tenth century Arabs were voyaging to the South Seas; Arab script and traces of Arab culture have been found on several islands of Micronesia. Arab traders knew African rivers like the Senegal and the Niger, they bought and sold in the West African city of Ghana, 'the most populous city in Negro lands, and the one that does the most business'. Many places in southern Asia, in the Sudan, in West Africa were centres of a highly-developed civilization, world-famed cities rich in Arabian science and Islamic wisdom. The Moorish traveller Yaqut, who lived in the twelfth century, describes how the Arabs of those days entered into negotiations with the native inhabitants.

Caravans of camels carrying the necessary barter goods—glass beads, copper rings and other items of usually worthless junk—crossed the Sahara and announced their approach to the Negro markets by the beating of drums. The Negroes, 'completely naked savages, who had hidden themselves away in holes in the ground, now came out of their hiding-places' and gazed at the visitors' wares, which were spread out in orderly heaps on the ground. Meanwhile the Arabs had withdrawn. After examining the objects on display, the Negroes would bring whatever they had to offer in exchange, gold, provisions and also slaves. If the Arabs agreed to the exchange, then they beat their drums again, the agreement was concluded, and each took his share. It was the same method of 'silent barter' as had existed in the days of Herodotus.

Among the many Arab writers who portrayed foreign life only one is outstanding, Abu Abdallah Mohammed Ibn Batuta. He embodies in perhaps the purest way the type of restless, inquisitive, highly intelligent Sinbad who spent his whole life wandering about the world. He was born in the Moroccan city of Tangier, wanted to become a lawyer and at the age of twenty-two undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca, returning to Morocco a quarter of a century later. In this period Ibn Batuta travelled over nearly the entire world, North Africa, southern Russia, Inner Asia, the Orient, India, China, Indonesia and some southern Asiatic islands. He served as judge or ambassador in Asiatic countries, was twice shipwrecked, fell into the hands of Indian partisans and another time was captured by pirates. He gave an account of the sea-bird called the roc, of the Veddas in Ceylon, of the mixed races of India. And when he finally returned home and had taken a year's rest, he again departed for foreign lands. From 1350 to 1353 he travelled through Spain, the Sahara and the West African territory of the Niger, which was reached by the first Europeans only five hundred years later.

Everywhere he met members of his own faith, who spoke Arabic and helped him on his way. Indeed the world of Islam formed a complete unity from West Africa to China, from Spain to the South Seas, as may be illustrated by the following story. In the interior of China Ibn Batuta met a compatriot from Ceuta named Al-Bushri, who owned a large business there, and ten years later in the interior of Africa he met a brother of this same Al-Bushri, who was buying gold there. In Egypt he got to know an Imam who had three brothers—one in China, another on the Indus, and the third in Hyderabad.

When at sea, Ibn Batuta travelled in great luxury. The Chinese junks that plied between East Asia, India and Indonesia carried both cargoes and passengers, with cabins of various classes, bath-rooms, toilets and very comfortable quarters for prominent guests. But when travelling on land Ibn Batuta had to put up with the same discomforts as the European adventurers of a later age who made journeys from their various colonies by caravan or safari into the unknown.

He deals at great length with the civilizing influence of Islam; again and again in his writings appear natives who have been converted to Mohammed, 'upright and devout people, eager in the defence of their faith, who devote their whole lives to the worship

of their god'. On the other hand, the 'heathens', the Buddhist and Hindu non-Moslems, are dismissed in brief asides. Ibn Batuta remarks very indignantly that an 'infidel' stands by every Indian well, who 'gives the other infidels to drink out of vessels, but only pours the water into the hands of Moslems'. On the Malabar coast he argues about the custom by which 'no Moslem may enter the houses of infidels or eat from their dishes. If they do, then the dishes are broken; and they throw to the dogs and the birds whatever food is left in them'. As a devout Mohammedan, it was a great shock to him to find that in many lands the Islamic religion and Arab culture were completely disregarded, and that there were even civilized people who had not the slightest wish to be showered with the blessings of Baghdad and Mecca.

On the Maldivé Islands in the Indian Ocean Ibn Batuta's orthodox attitude conflicted strongly with harsh reality. There lived there at that time a mixed Indian-Ceylonese race, superficially Mohammedanized, under the rulership of half-Arab sultans. One of the islands' rulers entertained the world-travelled scholar like a prince, even wished to marry him to his daughter and gave him the post of judge. Whereupon Ibn Batuta tried to dispense justice as he had been wont to do in devoutly orthodox Morocco. He decreed that the men should attend the mosque more regularly, and that the women should not run around naked. Of course this caused an upheaval among the islanders who had not expected that this intruder from North Africa would plague them with senseless laws about morals and hygiene. And when Ibn Batuta finally attempted to punish the Vizir's son for some trifling misdemeanour, he found himself compelled to leave the island in a great hurry.

The first 'infidel' who gained Ibn Batuta's respect was a Hindu-Sinhalese prince in Ceylon, who showed him great hospitality. Now the prince's subjects were pearl-fishers, and he showered his guest with pearls of great price. It is no wonder that Ibn Batuta esteemed the Ceylonese very highly, although he 'met not a single Moslem among them'. While climbing the highest mountain on the island, he encountered a most remarkable group of beings: 'Hosts of bearded apes, of which each group had its leader, whom they obeyed as if he were their sultan. The leaders wore round their heads a wreath of leaves and carried a stick. Four apes accompanied each leader. All the other apes kept at a great

distance; and only when one of the four leaders spoke to them would they come near, bringing their lord a gift of fruit.'

The zoologists tend to laugh at this story of the apes, but ethnologists take it seriously. For it is quite possible that these were not apes, but a tribe of primitive men who might have been Veddas, living as they do to this day in the mountain forests of Ceylon. If this is the case, then Ibn Batuta would be the first non-Indian traveller to see this aboriginal race, for Megasthenes knew the Veddas only by hearsay.

The Indo-Malayan region was one of the cradles of civilization and culture, and an age-old racial bridge between the Further Indian mainland and—by way of the Indonesian islands—Australia, New Guinea and the coral islands of the South Seas. On Java paleaontologists dug up the relics of primitive men three to five thousand years old—the Pithecanthropus, the Modjokerto Man and the gigantic Meganthropus. The somewhat later aboriginal Javanese, the Neanderthal-like Solo Men and the Wadjak Men, reminiscent of Late Ice-Age races, form the genealogical link between the Pithecanthropus forms and the present-day primitive races of south-east Asia and Australia.

Since the last Ice Age these primitive peoples have migrated to the south and the south-east across the bridge of islands. Dark-skinned Tasmanians of almost Neanderthal appearance peopled the Indian Archipelago and the Australian continent, and until the nineteenth century still persisted on the island of Tasmania. Light-skinned races of the Wadjak type followed them, forming the aboriginal populations of India and the Sunda Isles; to-day they live in the Australian bush and have also left some traces in the peoples of south-east Asia. Both these types, the dark-skinned and light-skinned, were then very similar to one another; they were aboriginal forms of humanity, like the Palaeolithic races, that once—twenty to fifty thousand years ago—lived all over the Ancient World. In Australia the race was able to live on for thousands of years.

In the Neolithic Age the dark-skinned and the light-skinned races begin to show considerable differences. We have already met both groups in India, as Negritos and as Veddas. The dark-skinned Asiatics settled in southern India, wandered through the Malayan archipelago, settled in Malaya, in the Philippines and on various small islands, reached New Guinea in the form of Papuans, and the western South Seas as Melanesians. And the Vedda tribes

migrated through vast areas of southern Asia, settling in southern India, in Ceylon, in the Malayan interior as Senoi, in southern Sumatra as Kubu and as Toala in the south-western part of Celebes.

At some time or other light-skinned, agile hunters and collectors sprang up, 'Primitive Malaysans,' as they are called; they amalgamated with the Veddas and to-day live withdrawn existences in the primeval forests of the Greater Sunda Isles or, restless seamen, sail the Burmese and Malayan coasts. More highly developed 'Ancient Malaysans', almost European-looking carriers of a primitive hoe-culture, followed them—the Bataks, who now live in the interior of Sumatra, the Dyaks of Borneo and other tribes once described as head-hunting. The majority of inhabitants on the Lesser Sunda Isles, the Moluccas and many islands in the western South Seas are also Ancient Malaysans.

But there were also Malaysans in East Asia, the southern Chinese Yüe tribes for example. They were close neighbours of the Mongolians, mingled with them, learnt the crafts of metal-working from them, as well as cattle-raising and governmental organization. Gradually they were forced southwards by Annamites, Tai tribes, Chinese and other mongoloid groups. As 'Late Malaysans' they appeared three to four thousand years ago in Indonesia, where they introduced bronze culture and soon became masters of the sea in the south-east Asian area. They still call themselves 'Orang-Melaju', 'wandering men', though they have long since become settled and achieved political leadership in the Indonesian Republic and in the Federation of Malayan States.

From Further India peoples of even stronger Mongolian characteristics broke through, the Tai tribes, the Tibeto-Burmese and Annamites, the Mon and Khmer tribes. Countless waves of mongoloid tribes belonging to the most widely different culture-levels swept in the course of the centuries and millennia over Further India, thrust back the original inhabitants into remote-lying districts and developed advanced civilizations, of which at least one was the equal of the great cultures of Hither Asia. Perhaps Arabian travellers saw this civilization, the ancient Khmer culture in Cambodia, whose remains were discovered in the city of Angkor about 1815 by Jesuit fathers and described in the second half of the nineteenth century by the French scholars Mauhot, Delaporte, Aymonier and Fournereau. It is quite certain that this former capital of the Khmer kingdom with its terrace-temple of Angkor-

Wat, the greatest piece of architecture in south-east Asia, was visited in 1296 by a Chinese traveller to India. At that time Angkor was still at the peak of its splendour, the testimony of the Chinaman is the only eye-witness account we possess of the kingdom of Khmer.

The parallels between Angkor-Wat and the Tower of Babel are astonishing, when we read the Chinese report. The Khmer temple was also a place where God and humanity were united in a religious cult, only here, unlike patriarchal Babylon, it was not a deity who had intercourse with an earthly wife. The matriarchal society of the Khmer people did things the opposite way; the snake-goddess embraced the ruler of the country. 'All the dwellers in this land declare,' says the Chinese account, 'that the spirit of a nine-headed snake lodges in the tower of the temple, who is the mistress of all the lands in the empire. She appears every night in the form of a woman. The king sleeps with her; and even his most beautiful wife would not venture to enter the temple at this time. He leaves the tower in the second hour of the night, and can sleep with his wives and concubines. If the spirit of the snake should one night fail to appear, that means the hour of death has arrived for the king. If the king fails to appear on any one night, then a dire misfortune will occur.'

Angkor and the kingdom of Khmer flourished from the ninth to the fourteenth century AD. Then the country was more and more closely beset by Vietnamese, Siamese and Malayan races. And the greatest, most flourishing form of government of south-east Asia with its over-rich culture lived from then on only in the chronicles, novels, folk-tales, poems and sculptures of Cambodia.

At the same time the Indian influence on the Indo-Malayan region disappeared. These Indo-European-south-east Asiatic relationships belong to the most obscure and fragmentary chapters in the history of the peoples; we realize their great significance, but there are innumerable unanswerable questions. The one contemporary testimony to the presence of Hindus in Indonesia is the Temple of Borobudur on the island of Java. The sculptures on this temple celebrate a great colonizing undertaking from the year AD 78, which led to a mass migration from India to Java. The Indian author Dhan Gopal Mukerji calls this colonial expedition 'one of the most glorious events in the history of India'; Hindus from the Ganges founded various kingdoms on Java and Sumatra, 'constructed fortified and open cities and developed trade with

the mother country, a relationship that continued for several centuries'.

But this was probably not the first advance of Indo-European seafarers towards the south-east. Several hundred years before the birth of Christ prayers were offered in Java to the Indian god Shiva, and Chinese reports lead to the conclusion that the majority of Malaysians as early as the first and second centuries AD were devout Hindus. Indian empires existed until the sixteenth century on Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Bali and Malaya. The Hindu religion led to the construction of great and splendid buildings, and for three hundred years almost the whole of Indonesia was a vassal to the mighty Hindu state of Madjapahit on Java and Madura. The Malays of the upper classes became more and more impregnated with Hindu blood; the almost European appearance of many present-day Indonesians is due—at least partly—to these fifteen hundred years of Indian influence.

When Ibn Batuta travelled in the Indonesian archipelago, the capital of Madjapahit still existed. But in Sumatra Islam had taken hold a few decades before, and in Ibn Batuta's time was spreading rapidly and fairly peacefully across Java, Malaya and the Spice Islands. From 1500 the Islamic sultans began to enforce Mohammedanism throughout the entire Malayan region by bloody wars of conquest. Remains of Hindu culture persisted only on the islands of Bali and Lombok, which for this reason in later times became centres of interest for ethnologists and other interested travellers. Otherwise, Mohammed had finally been victorious over Buddha and Shiva, and ethnologists could have written *finis* with an easy conscience to the racial history of the Indian-Malayan region, if one thing had not remained unexplained.

This is the Polynesian problem. We know that members of the most varied primitive races migrated from the earliest times from Indonesia to the South Seas, the Tasmanians, the Australians, the Papuans, the Melanesians, the Ancient Malayan parts of the population of the Mariana and Palau Isles. But at some time or other—between the first and eighth centuries AD, and perhaps even earlier—a seafaring race with its own language and civilization appeared in the South Seas. These were people of almost European aspect, but who employed a primitive Indonesian language—the Polynesians. They could not have had anything to do with the Indian invasion of the Sunda Isles, for the Malayan languages were, through the Indian influence, interwoven with Sanskrit words,

while in the Polynesian dialects not a single Sanskrit word can be found. It seems certain that the Polynesians came from north-east Indonesia to the South Seas. But where did they originally come from? Was their original home, the mythical 'Hawaiki', one of the Sunda group? Or was it in India or Hither Asia? Had there been in south-east Asia besides the civilizations and races of the aboriginal inhabitants—the Malaysians, the Mongols and the Indians—yet another, a European element? Or are the resemblances between Polynesians and Europeans just a coincidence? We shall hear more about this in a later chapter.

It is a long way from the bright, fairytale impressions which Arabian Sinbads received on their voyages between India and the South Seas, to the analyses of culture, race and civilization made by modern scholars. We can see how strongly Mohammedan civilization influenced south-east Asia even as late as two hundred years after Ibn Batuta's travels when we read the notebooks of Antonio Pigafetta, that very enlightened man who accompanied Magellan on his voyage round the world. For example, in Borneo Pigafetta encountered a sultanate, the kingdom of Brunei, which differed only very slightly from the sultanates of North Africa and Hither Asia.

'We were conducted to the interior of the palace,' writes Pigafetta. 'We came to the great audience chamber, in which there were dozens of courtiers. We were requested to take our places on a carpet, where the things we had brought were placed in front of us. A smaller chamber gave on to the room in which we sat, and in it there were kneeling about a hundred bodyguards. These formed a kind of living wall; for at the rear of the room hung a splendid curtain which concealed the entrance to the monarch's quarters. We gathered this from the fact that all present were gazing in the direction of the curtain which after a few minutes was drawn aside. Our assumption was confirmed. Upon a throne sat an enormously fat man, whose girth alone had something truly majestic about it. He was chewing betel and spitting it out, with a very thoughtful air, on the carpet at his feet. Behind him were ranked the dignitaries of the realm. It was Siripada, the ruler of Borneo.'

Pigafetta also gave posterity some details about the manners and customs of the Malaysians at that time. It was a picture with which Ibn Batuta himself must also have been familiar. 'The inhabitants are Mohammedans,' writes Pigafetta, 'but they have very strange customs. They regard their right hand as pure, their left

hand as impure. They employ this "impure" hand only for such purposes as seem to them to be unclean. For example, they invariably wipe their arse with the left hand, but refrain from using this hand when they are eating. They never kill an animal without first looking in the direction of the sun and bowing several times. They do refrain from meat which they have not slaughtered themselves. On Borneo quicksilver is regarded as a kind of fountain of youth; everyone is convinced that it not only cures all illnesses, but also protects the body against pestilence.'

What Pigafetta here saw coming to the superficial surface of Islam were the ancient primitive cults and the long-overlaid recollections of the Hindu period. The Prophet's missionaries had the same experience as their Christian colleagues did later; the archaic spirits and demons, totems and taboos had indeed been forced into the background by conversion, but they constantly kept re-appearing under the mask of the new faith. There was one corner of the earth where they could not be reduced to silent shadows—the great, fascinating, apparently untameable mass of land south of the Mediterranean—dark Africa.

Black Ivory

There must be slaves, otherwise the price of sugar would be too high.

Charles, Baron de Montesquieu,
c. 1748

ABOUT THE MIDDLE of the fifteenth century Portuguese scholars and others belonging to the western world set themselves an interesting problem; were the queer black-skinned creatures which Henry the Navigator's captains had brought home from Africa animals or human beings? These 'Negroes' did indeed have two legs like an ordinary person, but they distinguished themselves from the normal human being by the colour of their skin, their thick lips and fuzzy hair, their strange manners and customs. In a contemporary report they were described as 'very great apes, that are so clever, they may even—if well-trained—be used as slaves'. Another author does indeed consider them to be human beings, but complains that 'they stink frightfully', and continues: 'Their lower lips are thick, red and so big that they hang down on their breasts . . . Their eyes do stand far out from their heads. They are, in short, quite hideous to look at.'

The French doctor and natural scientist Anselm d'Ysalguier from Toulouse could easily have given an answer to the problem. In the years 1405 to 1413—that is, long before the beginning of the Portuguese expeditions—he had explored the Niger, and in the great commercial city of Gao he married a young and apparently beautiful Negress. Later he returned to Toulouse with his wife. There were three daughters of the marriage, all 'beautiful and well-formed', as Ysalguier's biographer writes, and who 'enjoyed an excellent education'.

Through its contacts with the Islamic world, Europe had already, before 1441, had various encounters with Negroes and mixed Negro races. They were held to be simply rather darker 'Moors', or Arabs of an unusual type. What the civilizations of antiquity had thought of the Negroes was unknown or buried in the dusty recesses of medieval scholars' studies. And so it happened that the black-skinned, fuzzy-haired creatures which the Portuguese Nuño Tristão brought to Lisbon from Cape Blanco in 1441 were a world-shaking sensation. More than that—the appearance of these first black slaves in late medieval Europe was a moment of destiny in the history of mankind.

It was thanks to Prince Henry, a younger brother of King Edward, that Portugal became a great sea-power and cast her eyes upon the lands across the ocean. This prince, the Navigator as he is called, sold his own possessions in order that his country might have a fleet which he sent on repeated voyages of exploration southwards along the African coast. At first it was the Priest-King who occasioned the prince's voyages of discovery; John now was identified with the Christian ruler of Abyssinia, a great empire known to the Portuguese only by hearsay and which they tried to reach by sea. Then they had the idea of sailing round Africa to reach the wondrous kingdoms of India. But the first expeditions cost more money than the prince could raise, and the project seemed at an end.

Then Nuña Tristão arrived in Lisbon with his Negro captives. Three years later the court chronicler Gomes Eannes de Azurara announced that 'it had pleased God' to reward Tristão's next voyage with special grace 'for all the trials endured in His service: for he captured one hundred and sixty-five Negroes, men, women and children'. A year later Lançarote discovered Senegal, and learnt for the first time of even greater Negro states in the interior of the continent. The explorer and friend of Prince Henry, Diogo

Gomes, was now able to contradict vigorously the general conception of the equatorial regions as places where, owing to the great heat of the sun, it was impossible for humans to survive: 'On the equator there live Negroes of so many tribes as to be almost beyond belief.'

Prince Henry's enthusiasm was seen to be justified. After about fifty years the Portuguese were sailing round the Cape of Good Hope, conquering India, discovering Brazil and the Moluccas and establishing the first European colonial empire since the downfall of the Roman Empire. They also indirectly influenced the Spaniards, Dutch, British and French in their voyages of discovery. With Nuño Tristão's Negroes began the age of the Conquista, of European imperialism and the mastery of the white man over the black.

Prince Henry had not only set in motion a political and economic revolution, but had also—perhaps involuntarily—started a four hundred-year-long manhunt which was to turn the African continent into a tragic land of blood, sweat and tears. Portugal became Europe's leading slave-trafficker. And creatures that one can capture and sell—so ran the dialectical arguments of the slave-dealers—do not belong to the animal kingdom, but to the human race. Yet in 1748 the French philosopher Montesquieu declared, 'One simply cannot believe that God, in his great omniscience and wisdom, could have set a good soul in a black body . . . It is impossible to accept that these creatures are human beings.'

The clergy put forward a different opinion about the zoological status and the quality of soul of the African Negro. It was not only desirable to enslave the Negroes, they must also be converted to Christianity. Prince Henry drew up Utopian plans for sending back Negroes who had received Christian baptism to Africa, where it was hoped that they would win their tribes for Christ. These plans required that the Africans should be considered as real human beings. In fact Henry allowed a few baptized Negroes to return to Africa, but these Christian slaves swiftly vanished in the jungle and were never heard of again. After the Prince's death in 1460, when his seamen had reached Sierra Leone for the first time, all pretence of romantic idealism vanished, leaving simply the naked and unashamed grasping after profit—gold and 'black ivory', as the slaves were called.

Another twenty years were to elapse before the Portuguese, in

even more extensive voyages, went beyond that point in the Gaboon which had been reached in only one voyage by the Carthaginian Hanno. In these twenty years the small nation of the Iberian peninsula rose to be a great seafaring power. In 1482 Diogo Cão reached the mouth of the Congo; four years later he set up a stone cross as proof of Portuguese possession on Cape Cross in south-west Africa. Another two years later, Bartolomêu Dias sighted the Cape of Good Hope, and in the years 1497 to 1498 Vasco da Gama sailed round the southern tip of South Africa and discovered the sea route to India. Europe had broken through the Islamic blockade, and Portugal was on the way to becoming a major world power.

Meanwhile the Portuguese had also advanced into the interior of the African continent. A large Portuguese force in 1483 found its way to the mighty commercial centre of Timbuctu, the metropolis of the African state of Mandingo on the Niger, and there tried to find more precise information about the sources of Africa's gold. Pedro de Covilhão, perhaps the most important explorer of that time, travelled, disguised as a merchant, right through the Islamic world to Abyssinia and East Africa; he even reached India—on an Arab or Indian ship—ten years before Vasco da Gama. As he later remained for the rest of his life in Abyssinia, almost nothing is known of his experiences.

Portugal had therefore, within a century, sailed round a gigantic continent, had broadly mapped and explored its coasts and set up factories and established colonies in various parts. The Portuguese encountered the most various Negro civilizations; they saw strange customs and forms of society, totally unexpected rites and ceremonies, black rulers, secret societies—a completely new world which must have brought a little fresh air into the dusty studies of academic scholars. But the ethnological information derived from this period is very meagre. The slave-dealers were really only interested in capturing the natives; contemporary chroniclers dismissed the Negro in a few lines.

'We met a few Negroes who were on a fishing expedition, and took four of them prisoner,' wrote Dinis Fernandes from Cape Verde. Diogo Gomes did indeed conclude a peace treaty with the Negroes in Gambia, because he had heard 'that in this land there is gold in great quantity', and he wanted to obtain it without too much trouble. But otherwise the explorers are almost entirely concerned with the hunt for gold and for slaves; they speak of 'bar-

baric man-eaters, that slaughter their prisoners, of Moors that make sacrifices to the devil', of savages 'that from their earliest youth are inclined to unchaste behaviour, that cut themselves about the face and body and smear themselves with colours to show themselves off'.

The African was transformed into an animal-like wild creature, in order to justify slavery on moral grounds. The Portuguese example was followed by Spain, Holland, England, France, Germany, Denmark and North Africa during the succeeding centuries. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century, according to Livingstone's estimate, at least three hundred and fifty thousand natives were stolen from Africa every year. The French Cardinal Lavigerie, one of the most outstanding fighters against slavery, declared that at its peak in the eighteenth century the great man-hunt in Africa cost the lives of some two million Negroes a year.

The slave system became an indispensable part of economic life. The cultivation of sugar and cotton, tobacco and coffee was closely linked with the possession of black slave-workers. Planters, dealers, merchants, ship-owners, industrialists, factory-owners, stock-holders, entire classes of society, nations and economic systems lived on and depended on slave labour. Without slavery not only would the price of sugar—to quote Montesquieu—have risen, without slavery the nations of Europe would never have achieved so quickly the political and economic supremacy, which they have held for the last five hundred years.

Until the end of the fifteenth century the slave trade still lay in the hands of the Arabs and the Portuguese. The Arabs provided the oriental world, the Portuguese the occidental world with 'black ivory'. But it was still not apparent how closely wedded slavery and mercantilism would become. The Portuguese opened up several markets in West Africa; what they received in return for the trash they sold the natives can be seen in the names which these regions still bear to-day—the Gold Coast, the Pepper Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Slave Coast. Towards the end of the century King João II of Portugal had several forts set up in Guinea, under whose safeguard the slaves were collected and transported. Eighty years later, when owing to the colonization of America there was a tremendous call for slave labour, Portugal created in Lagos and Angola huge organizations for the trans-shipment of African slaves to the New World.

Here the Portuguese were indeed the organizers and benefi-

ciaries; but soon they no longer had to concern themselves with the actual capture of the Negroes. Portugal's greatest historian, João de Barros, governor of a province in Guinea, wrote this in 1550: 'The peoples of the African coast, who at first had resisted the Portuguese, began to trade with the Europeans on peaceful terms. As soon as a Portuguese ship appeared, crowds of them streamed down to the coast in order to exchange slaves for goods. Their king was prevented by royal affairs from taking an active part in this trade; yet he did not want it to fall entirely into private hands, so he made a treaty in 1469 with Fernão Gomes in Lisbon, by which he was paid 200,000 reales a year for five years in return for his good will.' Thus began the corruption of Africa, the active participation of native chiefs and rulers in the enslavement of their compatriots and fellow tribesmen. When Gomes' agreement came to an end, business was done in Lisbon and other capital cities and ports with 'human stocks and shares', and through slave-concessions. Trade concessions and the even more widely prevalent smuggling of slaves, done to outwit the concession-holders, soon led to the depopulation of vast areas in West Africa.

A modern standard work on slavery gives details of what prices the Africans fetched at that time: 'In 1446 in Senegal twenty-five slaves could be bought from the native chiefs for an old horse; about 1460 in Gambia twelve slaves could still be got for the same price; a little later, on the Congo, as many as twenty-two slaves could be obtained in exchange for a well-fed dog. On the Portuguese market, on the other hand, Negroes cost at least a hundred ducats a head. So it was an extremely profitable line of business.'

One would be doing the Portuguese an injustice if one failed to mention foreign competition, which soon took away Lisbon's lead as the great slave market of the western world. There were the Flemish merchants, the English slave-merchant John Hawkins, and the English societies, the African Company and the Company of Barbary Merchants, which in the course of forty years sent three and a half million slaves to America.

The Portuguese chronicler Azurara describes a scene from the days of the early voyages of discovery: 'The prisoners were brought ashore. They were black, and so ugly of face and body that one felt they must have come from some lower world. But who could have hardened his heart against them, and felt no pity? Some of them lowered their faces, that were streaming with tears. Others gazed towards heaven and cried aloud. Still others struck

themselves in the face with their fists. Then they cast themselves down full length upon the ground. Some sang laments from their own land. We could not understand the words at all, but their sadness gripped our hearts. Their suffering was increased because families were torn asunder. The parents were dragged from their children and the husbands from their wives. The officials had no consideration and everything was done very high-handedly. But scarcely had the first separations been made than the sons ran back to their fathers, and the mothers rushed to embrace their little ones. They laid themselves flat on the ground. They did not complain as the lashes of the whips descended upon their naked bodies. But their hopes that they would be allowed to keep their children were vain.'

Three hundred years later, at the height of the British slave-trade, things were still exactly the same. The slave-merchants delivered brandy, cloth, knives and glass beads to the tribal chiefs and so won their complicity, often taking advantage also of tribal disputes. One report says: 'A forked piece of timber about eight to nine feet long was placed on the slave's neck. An iron hook fastened the prongs of the fork behind the slave's head, so that he could not release himself. The shank of the fork, which was made of hard, heavy timber, hung down in front and impeded the wearer so that he could not run away with his burden; indeed it was impossible for him even to lift it. In order to set the slaves in motion, they were placed in a row, one behind the other. The end of the timber shank was placed on the shoulders of the slave in front, then a guard set the first slave in movement, and the rest followed after . . . Such security measures were necessary because if a slave escaped the buyer forfeited, by law, all claims upon him.'

On the transport ships the Negroes were mostly chained together in the deepest holds. Many fell ill and were suffocated there, the dead, the dying and the sick were thrown 'like damaged goods' into the sea. If the slaves finally reached their destinations, then their fate only improved if their purchaser looked after their physical well-being in order to get the most out of the slaves he had bought so dearly. That this was far from being the case is proved by the numberless reports of slave-whippings, slave-massacres, slave-suicides and slave-uprisings which run like a trail of blood through the history of the New World's sugar and cotton plantations.

Only very few writers on Africa at the time of the first expedi-

tions could dissociate themselves from European prejudices. One of them, to-day almost unknown, is the surgeon and adventurer Samuel Braun of Basle, whose book, *Samuel Braun's Voyages*, appeared in 1624. Braun undertook three voyages to Africa from 1611 to 1620, sailing as surgeon on Dutch vessels, and his account is of great interest to ethnologists. He describes the rainy seasons, the burning-off of the savannah lands, the Negro's primitive methods of cultivation, the use of millstones, the hut walls made of woven fibres, the clothes, the religious ceremonies. He knows the African marriage-markets, and something about wedding and childbed customs. He praises the African sense of justice: 'they are honest with one another and so do not steal each other's possessions: but they do not hesitate, whenever possible, to help themselves plentifully to our own stores'. He sees clearly that slavery is an ancient African custom, but from his account we gather that the real hardships of slavery began only with the arrival of Europeans. The bondsman of an African chief had indeed to work for his lord, 'but he is not led away out of his own country'.

A specialist in tropical medicine to-day would recognize in Braun's book many illnesses which still plague Africa's masses: 'Worms, that do grow out of the body, and which one must pull out very gently,' sleeping sickness, sores, epidemics of fever and many others.

New sicknesses and epidemics came to Africa through the slave-dealers; they raged among the helpless primitive tribes who were not conditioned to withstand them, and caused as many deaths as the hunt for slaves itself. But Africa had her revenge. Syphilis, brought by conquistadores from America and carried by other conquistadores to the dark continent, became the scourge of Africa, and of the slave-dealers also, whose 'occupational disease' it very soon became.

Braun visited quite a different Africa in southern Nigeria, a highly developed state with a refined metal culture, rich in masterly works of art. This was the kingdom of Benin, 'where the inhabitants make very fine clothes that are exported far and wide'. The surgeon from Basle was obviously astonished by this civilized land and its self-assured inhabitants. The Portuguese could have told him that they knew of many such Negro kingdoms.

The Lord of the Mines

It is really no more than a mockery if one accords the title of king to a beastly barbarian, or if one graces his abode, that is no better than a cow-byre, with the sublime appellation of Palace.

Robert Norris, on the kingdom of Dahomey, 1789

KING POSA AHADÉ of Dahomey, whom Robert Norris calls a 'beastly barbarian', was certainly a despot. The history of the kingdom of Dahomey and other African states and provinces is a series of mass murders, tortures and horrors committed in honour of a quasi-divine monarch who regarded every one of his subjects as a bond-slave, and turned every public festivity into an orgiastic blood-bath. Sometimes, therefore, one reads in modern works on Africa that the European slave-trade had its good side, for it saved countless people from the sacrificial knife of a native tyrant.

In fact, the despotic Negro kingdoms were by no means products of a particularly treacherous African character, they represented a stage of development in human society which the European and Asiatic civilizations also had to pass through. The black tyrants of Dahomey, Benin and other states in Guinea are the West African counterparts of the Egyptian Pharaohs, the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs, the Roman Caesars and countless absolutist rulers in the orient and the occident. The records of every civilization speak of tyranny, just as everywhere and at all times there has been slavery. In this respect the Africans were no better and no worse than Europeans, Asiatics, Incas and Aztecs. The Negro peoples had, and still have, like all other peoples, the historical task of overcoming their own tyrants, developing more humane forms of society and by so doing reaching the next level of civilization. Many had succeeded in so doing as early as the time of the Portuguese voyages of discovery.

The four hundred-year white war against Africa has not helped forward this development in the slightest, and has not preserved millions upon millions of enslaved Negroes from something worse; it has, on the contrary, brutally brought to a stop an historical process's normal development. For the black priest-kings and despots were the best allies of the European intruders, they were their

trade associates and procurers of slaves; later they were often protected by their invaders. Even to-day the chieftain, the 'King', is still the main supporter of colonial powers in Europe. And democratic movements among the native Africans are to-day still regarded with suspicion by the colonial imperialists.

'The customs of the Europeans forced their way into our land,' as the African Mazwimabi Njandeni puts it, a man from the once noble and proud warrior state of the Zulus. 'They destroyed everything in which we delighted, everything for which we had a special love and affection, having been handed down to us from our forefathers . . . Whoever refused to serve the Europeans was beaten and whipped, however old he might be. When we were children we were amazed when we saw that an old man, who already wore a head-ring, was punished by a European. We were very amazed, because we do not have such a custom, that old men should be beaten by others. Also it was not our custom to punish a grown-up in the presence of children . . .' Such Negro voices, of which there are countless numbers, are more worthy of our trust than the wordy protestations of conquistadores and colonists that they only wanted to set free the people of Africa from native despots and prepare them for the benefits of European civilization.

The date on which the representatives of a European and an African power first met is known: it was on August 28th, 1482. The Portuguese admiral Diogo Cão on this day discovered, six degrees south of the equator, the estuary of a gigantic river. On the banks of this river he met friendly Negroes, clad in pretty cotton garments, who explained to him that they were subjects of the Mani Congo, the great king of the Congo. Admiral Cão suspected that the Mani Congo must be someone more than a half-naked chieftain, so he behaved with great diplomacy, sending and receiving envoys, and avoiding any action against the population. In Lisbon the news that an empire existed in Africa must have burst like a bomb, though there are no contemporary records of the occasion, for the Portuguese, like the Spaniards, refrained from publishing detailed statements about their discovery. But Cão's behaviour on his second visit to the Congo indicates that King João II was greedily awaiting material details about the empire of the Mani Congo.

This time Cão risked an act of violence—in order to satisfy his monarch's curiosity. He took four distinguished subjects of the Mani Congo who had wished to inspect his ship and made them

prisoners, explaining that he wished to ship them to Lisbon and that he would bring them back, at the latest, in fifteen months' time. At this time four envoys from the Portuguese admiral were staying at the court of the Mani Congo, who did what any statesman in his position would do: he held the four Portuguese as hostages. He did more, he explained to Diogo Cão that if his subjects really returned within fifteen months, then the Congo and Portugal would remain on friendly terms, but if not, then unfortunately he must put the four hostages to death. Cão agreed and sailed away, and four Portuguese were able to study the Congo kingdom while four Congo Negroes were able to study the Portuguese kingdom for a year.

In Lisbon the subjects of the Mani Congo were treated like representatives of a European princely family. The Negroes were loaded with presents, taught the language, thoroughly questioned about their homeland and promoted to the rank of Fidalgos, therefore becoming members of the lower nobility. The four Portuguese had similar experiences at the court of the Mani Congo; in the midst of the primeval forest they experienced a well-organized political system with taxes and rates, there was a brilliant court, a great civil service. The state constructed roads, imposed tolls, supported a large army and had a monetary system—of cowrie shells, of which the Mani Congo and a few West African chiefs then had the monopoly. The Congo kingdom even had a few satellite states, for example the state of the Ngola in present-day Angola. The original kingdom was about the size of France and Germany put together, and a region which extends from the Gaboon to Angola and from the Atlantic coast to the present-day Stanley Falls also belonged to the Mani Congo's territory. So the Mani Congo was not just 'some African village headman' as later travellers to Africa maliciously declared.

With Cão's return to the Congo and the exchange of hostages began a political and cultural connection between a European and a Negro kingdom unique in the history of European-African relations. Both states entered upon a treaty of friendship on completely equal terms. King Nzinga Nkuwu, the Mani Congo then in power, had himself baptized and from then on was known as Dom João da Silva, 'King John of the Wood'. It really looked as if a powerful independent Christian state had arisen in Equatorial Africa.

Many young Congo Negroes from then on enjoyed the benefits

of education in Lisbon, and returned, completely Europeanized, to their native land. Numbers of Portuguese settled in the Congo, married Negro wives and produced a mixed population that soon provided the priests, officials, craftsmen and merchants in the kingdom of the Mani Congo, and played the part of intermediaries between the black and the white worlds. The plan might have been successful if Cão and Nzinga Nkuwu had been able to hold in check the activities of over-zealous missionaries and grasping slave-dealers. But the missionaries demanded such a radical break with the ancient customs and traditions that a rebellion broke out which compelled the king to renounce his new faith. When his son Nzinga Mbemba—Affonso I as he called himself—came to the throne and declared himself a Christian, he did everything in his power to create a synthesis between African and European culture, yet even this friend of Portugal had repeated difficulties with Lisbon.

Soon Portugal's King Manuel regarded the African partner state not as an ally but as a profitable colony. The Portuguese ambassador at the Congo ruler's court, Simão da Silva, insisted on introducing Portuguese government, justice and military organization, which Affonso at once saw was complete folly. The missionaries demanded the abolition of polygamy, destroyed the Bantus' social system, quarrelled constantly over educational and ecclesiastical points and even took part in the slave-trade. The Congo king's law forbidding the capture of slaves in his kingdom was consistently broken, rapacious slave-traders once even made an attempt on Affonso's life. The greatest opportunity Europe had ever had in Africa was thrown away. During the next two hundred years the Congo kingdom dwindled finally to the tiny province of Kabinda, north of the Congo, which to-day is still a Portuguese colony.

The despots in Dahomey, Benin and Yoruba did their best to avoid Europe's would-be-fraternal kiss of death, and so were able to preserve their independence until the nineteenth century. As early as 1472 the Portuguese Sequeira had visited the marvellous city of Benin in Nigeria. Fourteen years later this brilliant land was considered to be a vassal state of John, the priest-king, for its second Portuguese visitor, Affonso d'Aveiro, clothed his impressions of the place in the following words: 'Twenty leagues from the coast there lives a monarch to whom his subjects show the same reverence as Catholics do to the Pope. When foreign ambassadors



26 The authentic appearance of an ancient German. This head is from a body preserved in a peat bog for 2,000 years, at Tollund in Jutland.



27 The Chinese learnt polo from the Hun horsemen.

28 Every Mongol tribe still carries its own banner, as it did in the days of Genghis-Khan.

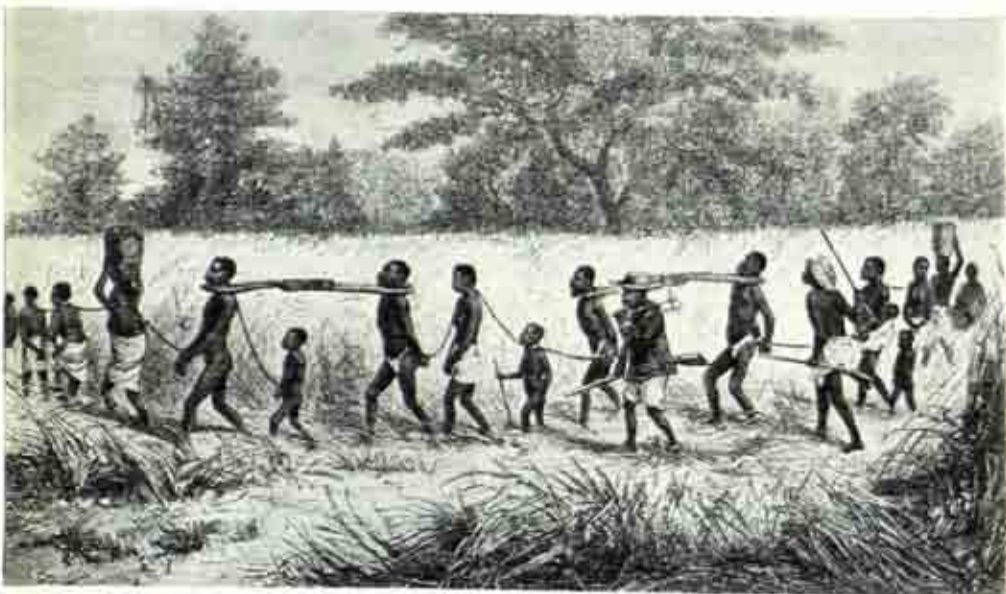




29 The Temple of Borobudur, the most impressive evidence of Indian culture in Indonesia.



30 The Dyaks belong to the ancient Malays, a very old people who were driven into the forests by the modern Malays. A Dyak girl.



31 Black Ivory, the tragedy of the African peoples, Negro slaves being driven to the coast by armed slave-traders.



32 A Bakulu chief from East Africa.



33 The advanced West African culture of Benin produced bronzes like this figure of a warrior from the twelfth to the seventeenth century.



34 A South American Indian today. This Guarani Indian from the Parana River region has decorative scars on his face.



35 The portrait heads of the Mochica Indians of northern Peru give a vivid idea of the appearance of the people of the later Inca civilization.



36 Stone relief of a man from Oaxaca, one of the forbears of the Aztecs.



37 Monolithic statue from the moon pyramid at Teotihuacan.



38 Toltec male figures from Mexico.



39 Central American civilization reached its highest level in the Mayan culture of Guatemala, Honduras and Yucatan. A reclining god from Yucatan.



40 Authentic representations of past life in Siberia are to be found in old Russian travel books. A Yurak on snowshoes.

41 The Ainus of eastern Asia puzzle anthropologists. The women of this Ainu family have moustaches tattooed on their upper lips.





42 The peoples of the far north are artistically and technically gifted. A contemporary Eskimo sculpture of a man with a seal line.



43 The Red Indian of a hundred years ago. A man and woman of the Assiniboin tribe seen by the Prince of Wied and Karl Bodmer on their travels.

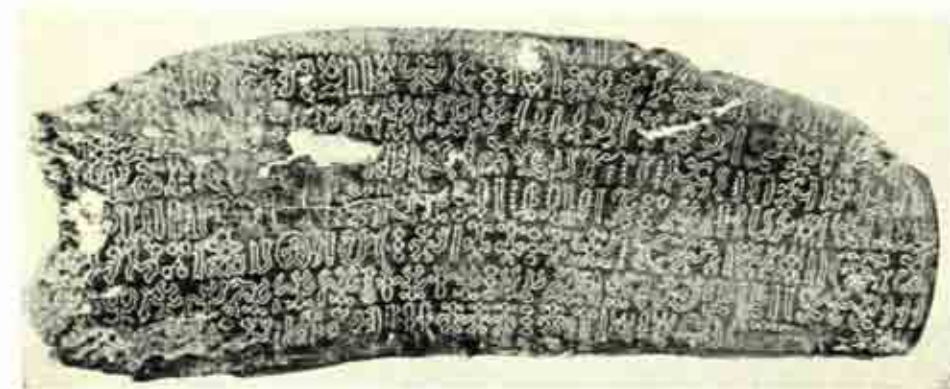
44 A New Zealand Maori with spiral tattooing.



45 Men conquered the Pacific in outriggers like these.



46 Generations of scholars have tried to solve the puzzle of the stone statues on Easter Island.



47 The hieroglyphics on the Rongo-rongo tablets from Easter Island have never been fully deciphered by scholars.

come into his presence, they are never afforded a glimpse of his face. A curtain hides him from their sight: he only sticks out his foot, that they may kiss it when taking their departure.'

Later, Benin and the other Upper Guinea kingdoms appear in reports of explorers as terrifying dictatorships, but the real character of these lands, with their bronze sculptures, ivory carvings and their 'six thousand' cities, is depicted by Leo Frobenius in his book *And Africa Spoke*: 'When the European seafarers of the late Middle Ages came to the Bay of Guinea and set foot on land, they were very astonished at the sight of carefully laid-out streets and roads bordered for miles with specially-planted trees; they could travel for days and see nothing but the most superbly-cultivated fields, people in splendid garments made from cloth they had woven themselves. It is quite certain from the accounts of seamen in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the portion of Negro Africa stretching from the Sahara to the south was then at the height of its civilization, a civilization which the European conquistadores destroyed in their advance.'

We can find proofs of the artistic excellence of this civilization in many European art galleries and museums; velvet-like textiles made from banana leaves, silks woven from palm-fibres, spears with engraved copper heads, masterly sculptures of ivory and wood, bronze-castings and statues of the highest artistic merit. Frobenius writes: 'We know . . . that the peculiar organization of the African states was in being long before Islam: and all their arts and crafts, the agriculture and careful education are centuries older than those in Central Europe.'

The beginning of the Yoruba civilization in Nigeria was, as modern archaeologists assert, in the first century BC; only about AD 1700 did it begin to disintegrate. Modern ethnologists have found the art of the Yorubas so astonishingly high in quality that they did not ascribe it to a Negro race, but instead believed it was the product of Egyptian, Ethiopian, Greek and even Early-Christian Coptic influences. It was Leo Frobenius who first ranked the culture of the Yorubas with that of the Mediterranean. We do not know if it received impulses from the Mediterranean, but one thing is certain, that its carriers were Sudanese Negroes.

The Yoruba empire consisted of city states similar to those of ancient Greece. Around the time of the birth of Christ some of these states had a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Art objects of the highest quality were

found in their ruins—glazed urns, tiles with pictures of animals and gods on them, bronze implements, gigantic granite figures. The Yorubas introduced the cultivation of yams, the preparation of cheese and the breeding of horses into West Africa. They had outstanding artists in metal, gold-casters, cotton-weavers, wood-carvers and potters. Their professions formed themselves into guilds with their own laws, their children were brought up in educational camps, their public affairs were directed by a courtly aristocracy and an exuberantly expanding bureaucracy.

When the slave-trade began, the Yoruba civilization had passed its peak. It is remarkable that this great civilization should have been the chief source of the slaves which Portugal shipped to Central Brazil and above all to Bahia. Perhaps it was because the Yoruba Negroes were stronger and bigger, better nourished, more industrious and of higher intelligence than the natives of the West African bush. Yoruba culture was transplanted by these slaves. Yoruba music became the music of Brazilian slaves and Brazilian carnivals—the present-day samba. The Negro women of Bahia dress to-day in bright materials, full skirts and brilliant shawls, adorn themselves as their female ancestors did with jingling necklaces and bracelets and wear turbans on their heads. The coloured sculptors of Brazil are creating work which is reminiscent of Nigerian carvings.

Only the gigantic ruins of another African empire remain, in the south-east of the continent, which we already know of as Zimbabwe. In the early Middle Ages this civilization was taken over by black conquerors; they were Bantu of the Shona tribe. These Shona, after whom Mashonaland is called, constructed on the ruins of the ancient Rhodesian gold state the greatest Negro empire of all times, an empire covering two hundred and fifty thousand square miles and with a central population of three millions.

In 1499, when the Portuguese sailed round the Cape for the first time, this empire was still in existence. At its head was the Monomotapa (or Mwene Motopa, as he was really called), the Lord of the Mines. He enjoyed a consideration equal to that accorded to an Arab sultan or a modern captain of industry, he bartered gold and slaves for all kinds of manufactured goods with ships of all nationalities then sailing the Indian Ocean. As the Emperor of Gold, he treated on equal terms with the Portuguese, and here for

the first and only time Europeans had to incline themselves before an African monarch.

The historian João de Santos writes: 'The Portuguese had to approach the king, not crawling flat on the ground like the kaffirs, but bare-footed all the same. When they reached him, they lay down on the ground, reclining on their sides, and spoke to him without looking at his face. After every few words they reverently clapped their hands.' The Mono-Motapa's subjects had to be much more respectful: 'If Mono-Motapa drinks, coughs or sneezes, it is known over the entire city. On such occasions his relatives greet him with loud cries and clapping of hands. Others outside the palace hear the noise and do the same . . . If the king possessed any good or bad quality, any bodily infirmity, a fault, a vice or a virtue, then his nobles and his servants strove to imitate him as closely as possible in this respect; if the king were lame, then they all limped.'

The land of the mines also had a matriarchal system like the empire on the Congo. The Mono-Motapa always married one of his own sisters—like an Egyptian Pharaoh. The most influential position at court was held by the king's mother, if there were disputes about the succession to the throne, it was she who gave the decision. In this ancient land there were two-storeyed houses, a feudalistic landed aristocracy and a standing army with a regular force of heavily armed ox-riders. All these things impressed upon the Portuguese that here they were in contact with a mightier government than that of the Congo, and one which needed even more diplomatic handling.

'Mono-Motapa is a great empire,' runs one of the few contemporary accounts of this astounding Negro state. 'The name, which is also the name of its emperor, means roughly the same as Caesar. It is a pleasant and healthy land, full of cattle, but very cold . . . The places where gold is to be found can be recognized by their hardness and barrenness. There is also an ancient castle there built of great big stones with walls five and twenty spans in thickness; over the gates stand Phoenician letters, wherefore it is called "the Fortress of Solomon". The people in this land have fuzzy hair and are cleverer than all other Negroes . . .'

Like the matriarchal societies of antiquity, that of the Bantu was completely misunderstood by Europeans: 'The best warriors of the Mono-Motapa are women, that are called Amazons. They burn away their left breast, in order to be able to handle the bow

more easily. They are nimble, steadfast women, brave in battle. They live together in their own territory; and at certain times they capture men to whom they later send the boy-children that are born to them, while they keep the girls.' It was the age-old myth of the Hellenes, transported to Africa and the Bantu tribe.

Shona was overrun during the seventeenth century by the Roswi Negroes and in the eighteenth century by the Nguni Negroes, and so was gradually destroyed. Portugal, which up till then had always been beaten in every attempt to conquer the Mono-Motapa, now finally won the upper hand over south-east Africa. The Portuguese took over all the mines, put on the thrones candidates who were acceptable to Lisbon, placed the country under their military protection and compelled the emperors of the mines now to become puppet-rulers, to forgo the homage of European visitors. From then on the Portuguese might approach the king with their hats on, wearing shoes and carrying weapons, and were no longer required to clap their hands every few minutes.

In the nineteenth century the colonial powers conquered the last great African empires with the exception of Christian Abyssinia. The kings, princes and chiefs were compelled to sign treaties that turned them into powerless and helpless tools of degrading colonial domination. 'I agree to everything,' the Zulu ruler Dingaan finally said, with weary resignation, when he had to conclude such a treaty with the British. 'But I know that the first to break the treaty will be the whites themselves.'

The consequences can be seen to-day. When in 1948 the peaceful farming tribe of the Kikuyu after a long series of treaties callously broken by the British took arms and formed the Mau-Mau, the rebels' manifesto read like this: 'Children of God, pray for our leaders and their safety, for it is they whom our Lord hath chosen to lead us forth from this present state of slavery, which we knew not until the Europeans came to this our land of East Africa . . . And let us be comforted, for in the eyes of this our God there is no difference between the black man and the white man.'

CHAPTER VI

CAPTAINS, CONQUERORS AND KINGS OF COMMERCE

*The people of the supposed Indies: Demons and white
gods: From Stone Age to Socialism: Shamans in the taiga:
The Frozen North*

The people of the supposed Indies

They are of a brown, almost reddish appearance, with pleasant facial features and well-formed noses. These people seem to me to be of such purity and innocence that they could very soon become Christians—the more so, that the Lord our God has seen fit to give them good bodies and good faces, like natural men.

*Pero Vaz de Caminha on the Red
Indians, 1500*

AMERIGO VESPUCCI of Florence, a bank official and book-keeper of the Medici, was forty-two years old when he first conceived the idea of finding out more about the world. A certain Colón or Colombo or Columbus—an Italian compatriot of Vespucci in the service of Spain—was alleged to have found the western route to India and to have brought back with him 'ten Indians and forty parrots'. Amerigo began to take an interest in this matter and pondered all sorts of exciting plans which culminated in the decision to do as Columbus had done and to take part in a voyage to India following the same route.

The few sentences in which he announces the discovery of the New World to the Medici do not tell us much about this plan; they indicate however the Florentine's interest in human nature and customs. 'India,' he wrote, 'is thickly populated; there are many of the female sex who go quite naked, only covering their shame with

certain sprays of leaves.' His announcement also contains the first authentic reference to the appearance of syphilis in Europe: 'A new plague was brought to Europe by those who voyaged with Columbus. They caught it from the females of a certain island; and when they returned to Spain they infected many strumpets with the same.' So the first words by Amerigo Vespucci about the continent which was later to be called after him did not refer to gold or to the Genoese explorer's feat, but to the nakedness and the venereal diseases of the Red Indian women.

Certainly, sitting on his office stool in Seville, Amerigo must often have day-dreamed about the naked ladies of India. And six and a half years after the discovery of America the Spanish seamen Vincent Yanez Pinzón and Juan Diaz de Solis, whom he had helped to equip a new expedition to America, allowed themselves to be talked round into taking him with them. They needed a man, in any case, who could write and do accounts and relieve them of the boring administrative business. So in 1498 Amerigo Vespucci started on his first voyage to the New World; he was to make three more—one under the Spanish and two under the Portuguese flags—before 1504. Then in 1504 there appeared from a press in Florence a slim volume of sixteen pages in which Vespucci reported on 'the islands discovered during his four voyages'.

Mundus Novus, New World—that is what Vespucci calls the new land discovered by Columbus. 'To the south of the Equator I found a continent which in many regions is more populated by men and animals than Europe, Asia and Africa, and which moreover enjoys a pleasanter and milder climate than the other known parts of the earth.' Mundus Novus—the cosmographer Martin Waldseemüller from Saint-Dié in Lorraine seized upon these words and proposed that 'this new region should be called America, after the wise man Amerigo who discovered it'. Apparently Waldseemüller had not heard of Columbus.

The world followed the suggestion of the Lotharingian cosmographer. Columbus had died the year before, believing to the very end that it was India to which he had been. Though geographers and historians tend to look down their noses at Vespucci, ethnologists owe him a great debt, for it is thanks to him that the world has piquant and provocative accounts of Indian customs as we have already seen. In his letters to the Medici he is always talking about women and love, but there is nothing imaginary in

what he writes, for he was deeply interested in reality—the customs of the Red Indians.

Spanish explorers had until then given very meagre accounts of the inhabitants of the New World. Not a single sentence of Columbus indicates any ethnological interest in his 'Indians', but everywhere one senses his anxious pains to smother a frightful suspicion—that the race he had discovered were not Indians, but only uninteresting savages.

On October 20th, 1494, the Italian writer and chronicler of the voyages to America, Pietro Martyr, expressed this suspicion quite openly. His sharp intellect soon realized that in Columbus' reports there was something wrong. He examined the seven Red Indians whom Columbus had brought back and he saw at once that these were not Indians, Christians, Negroes, Jews, Moors or subjects of the Great Khan: they were a completely new race. Therefore Columbus' 'India' must in fact be quite a 'new world'. Here for the first time we find the words which were to be taken up by Amerigo.

Vespucci's first voyage to America was a small, very insignificant affair which led him to the Gulf of Mexico and probably to Honduras, Yucatan and Florida. Yucatan and Honduras were regions in which the ancient Maya civilization had left its influence, but Vespucci did not encounter any Maya tribes, though he made the acquaintance of a few primitive tribes in Central America:

'They are of medium height and very well built. Their skin is slightly red; I believe that if they had clothes on, they would look just as white-skinned as we do . . . Their faces are not particularly beautiful, because they are broad and have a fierce expression. Their weapons are the bow and arrow, which are very finely made. The women, too, know how to use them, and hit everything they aim at. When the men go to war, then they take the women with them, not as fighters, but as bearers of foodstuffs . . . The troops have no leader. Each soldier is his own general. They live in natural freedom and are subject to no man . . . They know nothing about laws. Quarrelling is very unusual among them, and the parents do not punish their offspring . . . They eat their food off the ground, without tablecloth or linen. The food is contained either in earthenware dishes, which they make themselves, or in gourds cut in two. They sleep in great nets made of cotton, which are hung up in the air. It may be thought that this would be a very uncomfortable resting-place; but I must say that it is soft and rest-

ful, for I tried it myself. Indeed I dozed off for quite a while in one of them, a thing that no Christian person had ever done before me.'

One sees here the researcher coming out in Amerigo Vespucci; he enters palm-leaf huts of the natives, observes their feather head-dresses, their white and green decorative stones, and states: 'They make nothing for themselves out of the rich things such as we use in Europe, such as gold, precious stones and pearls; they are content with what nature gives them.' In his descriptions the whole atmosphere of tropical America comes to life. Canoes and dug-outs glide through the coastal waters, there are little skirmishes with warlike Red Indians, camp-fires flicker in clearings, brown-skinned men roast whole iguanas in the glowing ashes, and other tribes of a more peaceful nature accompany the Spaniards on their expeditions to the interior, carrying the exhausted whites in hammocks across the rivers.

And it was always the Red Indians' love-life that most fascinated the explorer from Florence: 'They have no marriage. Each man takes as many wives as he likes, and casts them off when he no longer needs them. And the women do the same, and no shame is attached to them for doing so . . . These people are quite extraordinarily lascivious . . . If a Red Indian wishes to show his friendship to someone, he allows him to sleep with his wife. A father or a mother hold it a great honour if a white man sleeps with their daughter, even if she is still a virgin . . . We stayed the night in that very place, for they offered us their wives, so that we could not restrain ourselves.' These 'disorderly habits', as Amerigo terms them, have no undesirable after-effects: 'The women immediately use something that kills the fruit of the womb.'

Vespucci took one of these passionate Red Indian maidens back with him to Seville. He was so blindly in love with the pretty slave-girl that Pinzón and de Solís, highly amused by the late-summer madness of the almost fifty-year-old Florentine, decided to play a trick on him; during Vespucci's absence they sold his sweetheart to an unknown purchaser. Amerigo spent fortunes trying to get her back. Legend says that he eventually found her in Toledo—but too late, the little savage had long ago found a younger and presumably more attractive lover. Naturally there could now be no further question of working together with Pinzón and de Solís. The enraged and disappointed Vespucci joined Alonso de Hojeda and Juan de las Cosa who were then preparing an expedition to South America, 'not a voyage of discovery', as

Vespucci wrote to Lorenzo de Medici, 'but an exploration of what has already been discovered'.

It was one of the most fruitful voyages of that time. Hojeda and de las Cosa reached the north of South America, followed the coast westwards, discovered the Red Indian lake-dwellings of Venezuela, which name, 'Little Venice' derived from the nature of the buildings, and finally set a course in the direction of the island now known as Curaçao. One of the expedition's ships, on which Vespucci sailed, explored the north coast of Brazil, sailed some way up the Amazon, then still unknown, and joined the main squadron near Haiti. The Spaniards had left their spheres of interest in Central America for the first time and had penetrated to regions which only a few months before had been discovered by Portugal and formally taken possession of by her. Amerigo Vespucci could now give his contemporaries new and interesting details about the Indians of the South American coast.

The primitive races in the 'Green Hell' of the Amazon impressed Amerigo as being 'fantastically mis-shapen'. He believed 'that these people feed chiefly on human flesh. They do not, indeed, eat those of their own folk but . . . they steal men belonging to other tribes. They do not eat womenfolk, for these are regarded as highly unpalatable.' The cannibalism of the Brazilian Tupí and Gé tribes cannot have been very dreadful: 'They are very nicely behaved; they led us to the place where they live, about two miles inland, and gave us everything we asked for—more out of fear, I think, than out of love for us. Yet they are a very sturdy-bodied people and very courageous. They received us with great joy and led us inside their houses, where they made preparations for a meal and we were able to eat to our heart's content.'

Certain races impressed the tiny Italian as being 'real giants. Their height was such, that any one of their men, kneeling before us, was higher than any of us when we were on our two feet. These giants carried with them bows and arrows, mighty spears that were made like sabres, and great knobbed clubs. When they saw how small we were, they spoke to us in a commanding tone of voice. But when two of our sailor lads let off their muskets, the giant Indians took to their heels.' Amerigo saw Indians butchered and helped to capture a few, behaving like any gold-greedy conquistador. But he also kept his eyes open, remarking that the Indians chewed cola-nut leaves to refresh themselves and quench their thirst, he watched the river tribes catching fish and turtles,

observed the circumcision of youth and the initiation-rites of young women. He deplored the fact that 'the wives here are so shy that they never give themselves to us foreigners', but found consolation in 'the unmarried girls who offer themselves to the seamen'. He was obviously grieved when the greater part of the Indians died of an unknown fever on the voyage back.

Meanwhile the Portuguese had got wind of Spanish ships in Brazilian waters, and did the best thing they could in this situation; they endeavoured to win them over to the Portuguese side. The only man who accepted their offer was Vespucci, who undertook two more voyages to America on Portuguese ships—one to Brazil and La Plata under Gonçalo Coelho, the second to Patagonia under an unnamed captain. Then, irritated by numerous difficulties and intrigues in Lisbon, he returned to the service of Spain, published his experiences and in 1508 was promoted to 'Master pilot in the Indian service', that is, he became the instructor of future captains and pilots. Now, after his many American amours, he hove to in the harbour of marriage. His office was not a very rewarding one, for when he died in 1512, his widow had to make numerous petitions in order to receive the most meagre of pensions.

On the voyage to Brazil with Gonçalo Coelho Vespucci saw Labret-Indians, the first Botocudos. 'They have noble faces,' he wrote, 'but they disfigure themselves in the most frightful way: cheeks, chin, lips and ears are pierced with holes; sometimes I have seen people with as many as seven holes in their face, each hole about the size of a plum. They dig out the flesh and fill the wounds with blue and marbled stones, also with crystals, fine alabaster or very prettily-worked bones. It is a revolting, unpleasant and ugly custom. . . . At the ears they wear costly ornaments, rings in the form of chain-links, hung with dangling pearls, like the Egyptians.' Amerigo must have encountered a tribe with an extraordinary love of finery, for most of the members of this group wear only the well-known labret, 'Botoque', or 'barrel-bung', was what the Portuguese called this piece of carved wood, and accordingly the wearers of it were called 'Botocudos'. This nickname became a collective term for all Brazilian forest-Indians who do not belong to the more highly-civilized Tupi-Guarani race.

Among the Botocudos also Vespucci discovered cultic cannibalism: 'I have seen them hanging out salted human flesh on beams, just as we hang up pork or ham in the sun or in the smoke.'

And when he advised the Botocudos to give up this habit, they are reported to have said that 'the flesh is of incomparable savour, the pleasantest and most delightful dish that can be imagined'. Amerigo is here obviously drawing the long bow; probably what he saw was simply salted monkey-flesh, for there has never been a race which adopted cannibalism for purely culinary reasons. Human flesh—according to the ethnologist Walter Hirschberg—was always eaten by tribes 'who believed that in this way the special abilities or bodily powers of the dead person could be assimilated by the living'.

Vespucci makes similar errors of judgement about the sexual life of the Botocudos. He declares that they can have sexual relations with anyone they please, that there is no incest law, and that the women, 'licentious beyond all measure', use the extract of a herb as an aphrodisiac on their men, whose sexual parts are so affected by it 'that many of them look as if they had been castrated'. Vespucci makes many mistakes here, for it is precisely the Indians of America who have the strongest incest taboos. As for the alleged deforming of the penis, this would be due to initiation circumcision-rites or venereal diseases. But Amerigo's assumptions were taken seriously, and white settlers in later years practically wiped out the good-natured, brave and not so uncivilized Labret-Indians, whom they regarded for centuries as bestial cannibals.

Much more sympathetic was the judgement expressed by Pero Vaz de Caminha about the Botocudos. In the spring of 1500, a few months before Vespucci saw Brazil for the first time, a Portuguese armada of thirteen ships on their way to India under the command of Admiral Pedro Alvares Cabral were driven out of their course in a westerly direction by the Gulf Stream. On April 22nd Cabral sighted the Brazilian coast in the neighbourhood of present-day Porto Seguro, south of Bahia. Pero Vaz de Caminha was with the expedition, and chronicled the discovery.

Caminha met representatives of the two great racial groups in Brazil. These were members of the Tupí-Guaraní group, who to-day compose the majority of civilized Indians on the land, and members of the Gé group, to which belong most of the primitive tribes of the primeval forest. Probably he became acquainted with the Tupinikin tribe in the first group and the Aimoré tribe in the second—that is, the Botocudos. From an anthropological, linguistic and cultural point of view there exists between a Tupinikin

and a Botocudo a difference as great as that between a Central European and a Laplander. The Portuguese did not notice this. The Spaniards, too, had not made any distinctions worth mentioning between the racial groups of the Caribbean, the Chibcha and the Aruak, whom they had encountered there. In this respect, attention was first aroused by the Aztecs and Mayas in Mexico, by the Incas in Peru, and finally it was realized that the American Indians were no homogeneous race, but a mixture of the most varied peoples, races and languages, possessing cultures which included Palaeolithic features and types reaching to the most refined heights of civilization.

In Caminha's report the Labret-Indians appear as pleasant, friendly, if somewhat unmannerly people of good appearance, 'who are completely innocent, for they run around quite naked. In a hole bored through the lower lip they wear a bone peg, a span long and of the thickness of a cotton spool, and pointed at the outer end like a borer. They place the peg through the lip from the inside. . . . Some had holes bored in their lips, in which were stuck wooden discs like the plugs of water-barrels. Several wore three pegs, one in the middle and one at each corner of the mouth. Still others ran around painted with gaudy stripes, so that their bodies were half natural colour, half blue-black. There were even some that were patterned like chess-boards.'

Cabral and Caminha must have been unusually sharp-witted observers and tactful diplomatists, far in advance of their times. Not once did they have a dispute with the natives, and their short stay in Brazil has an air of paradisaical peace. Admiral Cabral gave the reason for this; he held it to be useless to take prisoners among the Indians, 'for people removed by force will give no precise details about their land, and will confirm only the things they are asked about'. Nightshirts and crucifixes were given out, a mass was read in the presence of the natives, but Father Frei Henrique did not insist upon the savages being baptized.

This was the one idyll in all the bloody years of the Conquista. The peoples of the New World suffered all that their brothers in Africa had suffered by contact with, and contamination by, Europe. The American Indians, too, were regarded as 'not real people', and several missionaries expressed doubts as to whether it was theologically admissible to preach the word of God to such creatures, 'more beast than man'. Pope Paul III put an end to these pious scruples by a decree of July 2nd, 1537: he announced that

all savages were 'veri homines', completely human, 'bearers of an immortal soul and thereby qualified to be admitted into the fellowship of the church'. Yet this in no way relieved the plight of American Indians. Whoever refused baptism—the majority—were helpless victims of man-hunts, slavery and gradual exterminative processes.

There are very few accounts of that time which do not present the American Indians as hideous monsters led by the devil, so the ethnological material is very scanty. But shortly after 1500 a significant voice was heard raised in protest against the hounding and slaughter of the natives—that of Father Bartolomé de las Casas, the great chronicler of the Conquista, and Bishop of Chiapas in Mexico, who became the Indians' friend and intercessor. He addressed the conquerors with passionate pathos: 'No, no, and yet again no! Let there be peace in every place and for all men, peace without distinction of race! There is only one God, who is the God of all peoples—Indians, heathens, Greeks and barbarians. He suffered death for all of them. Be sure of this—the conquest of this land across the sea was a great wrong! . . . Ye employ violence and fury, overwhelming everything with fire and flame, making slaves, plundering and looting, and robbing people of their lives and homes, people who, until ye came, did live quietly and at peace. . . . Do ye believe that God has given ye the prerogative among all other peoples, that ye should possess more than they do of the plenteous fruits of nature?'

Las Casas fought all his life with fiery vehemence for the rights of the Indians. His efforts had little result, for the new lords of the plantations in America declared that without Indian slave labour the lucrative nature of their possessions would be endangered. Then Las Casas hit upon the unhappy idea of replacing Indians by African slaves. He explained later: 'I believed that the African Negroes would be able to endure the hardships better than the Indios, whom I saw dying on every road, and I wished to replace a greater suffering by a lesser.' Through this misguided principle Las Casas did indeed become 'the Father of the American Indians', but also the father of Negro slavery in America. Soon afterwards he recognized his error, but then it was already too late. The great friend of the Indians in America was therefore directly responsible for the fact that even in 1900 the majority of Brazilian, West Indian and North American Negroes were the descendants of slaves.

While the Bishop of Chiapas was still fighting for his Indians and when Cortez was making his first preparations for the discovery of Mexico, the most intelligent and unprejudiced recorder of native life at that period, Antonio Pigafetta, was concerning himself with the American Indian's world. He took part in Magellan's voyage round the world aboard the *Victoria*, under Captain Delcano, which was the only ship in the expedition to sail right round the world and come safely home. As Magellan, before discovering the route to the Pacific, had spent eleven months feeling his way along the South American coast and had spent the winter there, Pigafetta was able to study the most varied Indian tribes in detail. He acted like a modern researcher, being practical, factual and without pre-conceived notions. He is perhaps the first ethnologist of modern times.

Although the American Indians are not Christians, it would, he declared, 'be false to number them among the worshippers of idols. They worship no earthly creature and allow themselves to be led solely by their instincts. They are true-hearted and of good demeanour, if at times a little simple. For example, some of the women, when they saw us lowering our landing-boats, pointed to their children, as if to say that our dinghies were surely the children of the big ships'. Pigafetta does not entirely agree with the reports of their nakedness: 'On certain occasions I saw them wearing clothes that were made from parrots' feathers'. And he is relatively correct about the cannibalism of the Tupinambá: 'This custom is practised only in war-time. At the end of a battle they drag away the enemy dead and feast upon their flesh.'

Pigafetta assured himself of a permanent place in the history of ethnological research by his discovery and description of the Tehuelche, the nomadic Indians of Patagonia. These light-hearted, naive children of nature with their brightly-painted faces and guanaco-skin clothes seemed like giants to the little Italian. The heavy fur shoes of the Tehuelche caused Magellan to name them 'Patagonians', 'the paw-footed people'. While the fleet lay at anchor, relations with the Patagonians were excellent; they were showered with gifts, and copiously wined and dined. One of them developed such a colossal appetite that Pigafetta wrote: 'It is quite commonplace for him to devour a whole sack of ship's biscuits, and to drink half a bucket of water with them. Meat he eats raw; and yesterday when a mouse ran over his feet he swiped

it, wrang its neck and began to eat it without bothering to remove the skin.'

Pigafetta understood why the Patagonian seized this opportunity to eat his fill. The Tehueche were nomads who moved on to better hunting-grounds when there was nothing more to be had in the region where they had pitched their tents. Their existence was a continual alternation of fat and lean periods, a state of affairs to which their organism had become adapted.

Not once did Pigafetta hold up the Patagonians to ridicule. On the contrary, he praised the methods used by their medicine-men in curing illnesses: 'If they have a pain in the head, they make a wound in their forehead with a sharpened flint and draw off superfluous blood. If they have pains in the stomach, they stick an arrow in their neck, which has the same effect as an emetic would have on us.' Pigafetta rounded off his achievements by learning Patagonian and was the first man to make a list of Tehuelche words.

He also foresaw American Indians' destiny, realized how defenceless they were before the overwhelming flood of white conquest. 'We are treated here like demi-gods,' he noted in his diary. Almost everywhere in the New World the apparently invincible Spaniards and Portuguese were regarded as demi-gods. Pigafetta says, 'The Indios kept pointing up to heaven, as if to ask whether we had come down from the sky.' Yet the conquistadores were anything but demi-gods, as the civilizations of America were to discover.

Demons and white gods

The white men shall return to their native lands, and everything then shall be in order within the walls of Tenochtitlan.

Montezuma's last words to the Aztecs before being stoned to death in June, 1520

THERE EXIST COUNTLESS numbers of contemporary documents from which can be reconstructed the course of Spanish conquest in Mexico and Peru. Yet scarcely any other chapter in human history has been more obscured by misconceptions and falsifications than that concerning the downfall of the ancient American civilizations. We have letters and reports from the

conquistadores and the testimony of baptized Indian princes; above all, there are many books of history from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which are based on carefully-sifted material from the Spanish official archives. But every author of these works was prejudiced in favour of the Spanish cause; every line reflected the heroism of the conquistadores and the rightfulness of their deeds.

The murdered civilizations of Central and South America were depicted as realms of the devil, the gods of the Incas, Mayas and Aztecs were dismal demons, but the Spaniards were white gods, whose coming had long been foretold by the legends. 'I do believe that he (Cortez) is the great Lord, whom we have awaited so long. . . .' The Aztec Emperor Montezuma, according to Spanish sources, said these words at his surrender. But did he really say them? Were the Aztecs and the Incas really expecting the arrival of white gods who 'one day would return with great might and take what is due to them'? We do not know, for the records of ancient American civilizations have been destroyed to an extent known by no other culture on earth. The descendants of the Incas, Mayas and Aztecs sank to the level of pariahs who had only the very vaguest recollections of their days of greatness.

In Sebastian Münster's *World Chronicle* we find a synopsis of Spanish accounts from the period of the conquest. The chapter on the history of Mexico does indeed give interesting facts about the royal hierarchy and the nobility in the kingdom of the Aztecs, but it also betrays how devoid of understanding about Aztec culture and society the Spanish chroniclers were—Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Francisco Lopez de Gomara and Gonzales Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes. No less biased were the two leading historians of Indian descent belonging to that period, Diego Muñoz Camargo of Tlaxcala and Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl of Tetzaco. Nevertheless it was through Ixtlilxochitl that history first heard of the legendary Toltecs and Chichimecs, who according to him had lived in Mexico long before the arrival of the Aztecs. Four hundred years later it was confirmed that the ancient Mexican civilization was in fact created not by Aztecs but by the mysterious Toltecs.

Münster gives the Chichimecs as the aboriginal inhabitants of Mexico, 'quite barbaric and savage people, who went naked, dwelt in the mountains and were without religion'. The later Aztecs were descended from them, 'the Aztecs worshipped the idol

Vitzliputzli, through which the devil speaks, built the city of Mexico, destroyed the other Indian kingdoms, conquered the Snowy mountains and took over the country as far as the North Sea and the South Sea'. All kinds of mythical and heroic wars follow, until Montezuma (or Motecuzoma, as he was really called) took over the government in 1502. This stern, upright Aztec emperor, who had done everything he could to keep peace with the Spaniards, becomes, in the histories of the time, a half-demented demon.

'He was very arrogant, wished to be worshipped as a god . . . If ever one of his judges allowed himself to be bribed, then he condemned him at once to death. . . . Finally God began to punish him for his arrogance, then by certain signs struck terror into his heart.' Then followed the myth of the 'white gods'. As Montezuma was offering up human sacrifices to his god, as was the custom in his country, 'he heard a voice which said that he should abjure such ways, for the Almighty would not in the future allow such sacrifices to be made'. After a few more sinister omens Montezuma learns of the landing of the Spaniards. 'Although very alarmed, he believed that the ancient white god Quetzalcoatl, who had departed from thence several hundred years before, had returned from another world.' Montezuma surrenders his land and his city to Cortez, is taken prisoner by him, and finally, 'overwhelmed by despair, is stoned to death by his own people'. According to Indian sources it was the Spaniards who murdered him. Then Cortez conquers the capital, Tenochtitlan, the present-day Mexico City, overthrows the Aztec religion and introduces Christianity. 'Now there are many monasteries in Mexico, and there is hardly any place where do not dwell monks and priests. The Indians are now embracing the new religion as eagerly as they did the old devil-cult; they do fast, and mortify their flesh with such keenness that often after processions the streets and squares are covered with blood.'

It is clear that the fellow-combatants and biographers of Hernando Cortez were eager to make their contemporaries aware of the might of the Aztec emperor, for then their victory over the warriors of Montezuma and Quauhtemoc appeared all the more wonderful. At the same time the Aztecs must be depicted as devil-worshippers and barbarians, otherwise the destruction of such a great civilization could not be condoned. The Huitzilopochtli cult was indeed an affair of bloody sacrifices, but the Christianity of

the West was in no way superior; the Inquisition alone put more people to death than all the sacrificial offerings of the Central Americans. But it was a long time before such a point of view came to be accepted.

From 1826 to 1846 an almost-blind American scholar, William Hickling Prescott, sat in a darkened room, had all available documents from the period of the Conquista read to him and, with the help of a writing instrument invented by himself, made notes for his two great historical works about the conquests of Mexico and Peru, written 'according to the strict rules of historical criticism, and separating fact from falsehood by using the firm basis of contemporary testimonies'. Prescott's efforts brought about a revolution in the study of American history.

A few decades earlier the German scholar Alexander von Humboldt had gazed in astonishment at an ancient Inca road in the Peruvian Andes. 'It runs almost to Cuzco,' he wrote to his brother Wilhelm on November 25th, 1802, 'is constructed entirely of dressed stones and is dead-straight; it is comparable with the very finest Roman roads.' Humboldt was no less astonished by the ancient Mexican civilization which he got to know a year later. He saw the lagoons and the now-vanished flower-islands of the city of Mexico, above all he visited the pyramid of Cholula, one of the oldest and most mysterious architectonic creations in the Americas. And he ascertained that 'the symbolism of the new religion has not completely wiped out the memory of the old'. At the top of the pyramid the Indians celebrated their Lady's Day, as once their forefathers had celebrated their festivals of the Toltec gods.

Despite all the distaste he felt for colonial domination in South America, Humboldt did not dislodge the Spanish heroes from their pedestal. But Prescott made quite clear to his readers that Cortez had been not just an extraordinarily daring and capable general but also avaricious, cunning and narrow-minded, whose reputation is forever tarnished by the frightful bloodbath of Cholula, the destruction of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, the treatment of Montezuma and the underhand murder of the last Aztec emperor Quauhtemoc.

Nevertheless, because of his outstanding abilities Cortez comes rather well out of Prescott's account. But the conqueror of the Peruvian Inca kingdom, Pizarro, becomes a violent, revengeful and treacherous man who rang the death-knell of ancient

America's most brilliant civilization. The American scholar's sympathy is unmistakably on the side of the Indian rulers Montezuma, Quauhtemoc, Atahualpa and Huascar. It becomes clear that Cortez with his five hundred Spaniards, his sixteen horses and forty guns could never have conquered Mexico if the Tlaxcaltecs, the old arch-enemies of the Aztecs, had not been his allies. A similar thing happened in Peru; only the fratricidal conflict between the Incas Atahualpa and Huascar made it possible for Pizarro and his small band of followers to lever the great, gold-laden kingdom of the sun off its massive hinges.

Even in Prescott's time archaeologists, who until then had scarcely shown any interest in American Indian civilization, began immense excavations in Central America. John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood discovered in Honduras, Guatemala and Yucatan ruins, sculptures and the remains of entire cities which, as we know, were built by the Mayas. The Frenchmen Guillaume Dupaix and Comte de Waldeck endeavoured in several expeditions to make a general conspectus of the Mexican ruins. Prescott had guessed that in ancient America as in the Ancient World there had been many empires, and a continuous historical development. In his opinion the pyramids of Teotihuacan had been raised in the remotest antiquity. 'Who were the builders?' he wondered. 'Were they the mythical Olmecs, whose history is lost in the mists of legend and fable, or the peace-loving and industrial Toltecs, about whom we have scarcely more definite information? What happened to the tribes that built them?'

After Prescott's death in 1859 one great discovery followed the other. The Maya hieroglyphs were deciphered. The American consul Edward Herbert Thompson examined a Mexican sacred well in order to prove that the Mayas were identical with the people of lost Atlantis. About 1912 the American Hiram Bingham discovered in the mountainous region of Cuzco the first Inca fortresses. Pyramids, temples, statues, treasures of gold and coloured frescoes came to light. Museums all over the world were filled with clay masks, vases, robes, bottles, beakers, tools, weapons and works of art from Central America and Peru. The discoveries and excavations are still not at an end, and the same questions are being asked as in Prescott's time. Where did these civilizations come from? How old are they? Were they created by the Indian race, or did they receive their inspiration from the Ancient World?

There are two schools of thought in this matter—the Convergent and the Diffusionist. Supporters of the latter believe that all civilizations are children of one great mother-civilization whose age-old ruins have been found in Sumeria and Crete, on the Indus and on the Nile. The civilizations of the Toltecs, Mayas, Aztecs and Incas must, therefore, have migrated at one time from the Ancient to the New World. They point out that in Central America man built the same step-pyramids as in the orient, that in southern Asia the sunshade is a symbol of dignity as well as in America, that the number 4 had special significance in the civilizations of the Ancient as well as the New World. They cite Maya words which recall corresponding words in European-Asiatic vocabularies, Maya frescoes that resemble the frescoes in Egyptian temples, American Indian sculptures in which are depicted bearded men of apparently European or oriental aspect, and religious rites in Mexico and Peru which, with a little imagination, one can interpret as Near Eastern, Buddhist, Ancient Egyptian, Jewish or even Christian ceremonies.

On the other hand followers of the Convergent school of thought think that everywhere in the history of mankind the same predispositions at the same level of development must lead to the same or similar results. They consider it probable that in every fairly intelligent and gifted race there are natural tendencies towards the development of higher civilizations and that these tendencies are exploited whenever favourable circumstances, useable materials and compelling necessities are at hand. The many apparent similarities between civilizations, they say, mean very little. 'We are dealing here,' says the researcher into American Indian history, Hans Dietrich Disselhoff, 'with achievements which are familiar to all the higher levels of humanity.'

The ancient Americans did not know the use of iron, carts and draught animals, of the plough, the potter's wheel, glass or any stringed instrument; wheels are found only on small Aztec toys made of clay. Men did not cultivate any of the Old World's crops; instead they grew New World plants—maize, tomatoes, chillies, potatoes and cocoa. The Convergent school of thought insists that ancient American civilizations are autochthonous, having arisen on American soil and been created by Indians without any trace of outside influence.

For more than a hundred years the Diffusionists have been trying to bring new arguments to defeat the Convergent theory, and

the Convergents have been trying hard to pull to pieces the arguments of the Diffusionists. The vast majority of present-day Americanists agree with those researchers who consider all legends about white gods to be a European invention, and all the rumours of white Indians brought forward by the Diffusionists to be, in Disselhoff's words, 'on closer inspection, baseless fabrications conjured up by credulous sensation-mongers'. Quetzalcoatl and Huiracocha are, according to the conceptions of orthodox Americanists at least, white gods only insofar as they are personifications of the blazing, white-hot, life-giving sun, like Helios and Apollo in Hellas, Re, Aton and Osiris in Egypt, Shamash and Nergal in Babylon, Mithras in Persia and Amaterasu in ancient Japan.

The opponents of Diffusion take rather more seriously the hypothesis of a southern Asiatic origin for the ancient American cultures. Instead of the white gods there were American elephants. On some Central American carvings, for example on the pyramids of Copán and Palenque, there were found representations of elephants, and pictures of elephants could also be seen in Maya manuscripts. As there are no elephants in America the archaeologist and anatomist Grafton Elliot Smith, the actual founder of Diffusionism, came to the conclusion that these pictures were of Asiatic origin, that southern-Asiatic culture-carriers had provided the Indians across the Pacific with 'the concept of the elephant', which was then given artistic form in the Maya temples, though the Mayas themselves did not know the animal.

The elephant pictures soon lost their conclusive force when archaeologists brought to light the bones of mammoths and mastodons from ancient Mayan cultural deposits, of elephant-like creatures, therefore, that were proved to have belonged to the post-Ice Age fauna. Helmut de Terra, who discovered in Mexico eight different sites with remains of these prehistoric elephants, was of the opinion that 'the accumulation of elephant remains could not be accidental, but may have been made by aboriginal tribes'. In 1952 Manuel Maldonado-Koerdell and Luis Aveyra discovered the skeleton of a prehistoric elephant, between whose ribs there lay obsidian-bladed lances. As early as 1928 Franz Spillman had discovered mastodon bones together with fragments of Maya pottery. Mastodons may have existed in Central America as late as the first century AD, so we may assume that the ancient

Mayas depicted on their monuments early American relatives of the elephant, and not the true elephant of Asia.

The elephant theory was followed by that of the Cambodian Indians. One representative of Diffusionism, the Austrian ethnologist Robert von Heine-Geldern, who now lives in the United States, believed he had discovered that southern Asiatic culture had spread to India, to Iran, to China and even, by way of Polynesia, to America. He considered it possible that even before the birth of Christ there was a lively commerce between southern Asia and Central America and Peru—a connection which was broken only about AD 1200. Further India or Indonesia—especially the brilliant Khmer civilization of Cambodia—were in this way supposed to have influenced the American Indian empires from the cultural, architectural, social and religious point of view.

Nevertheless, von Heine-Geldern makes certain reservations: 'It must be strongly emphasized that the problem is not yet solved.' Other Americanists are more reserved and believe that—to quote Walter Krickeberg—such contacts between Asia and America could only have been absorbed 'when the material foundations for a higher civilization had already been laid in America and when the Indians themselves were already spiritually prepared for the acceptance of foreign ideas and artistic forms of expression'.

This, too, is still a very vague assumption. As long as nothing to the contrary is proved, the researcher who wishes to work on a basis of precise facts must be an opponent of Diffusionism and must regard Indian civilizations as autochthonous, uninfluenced by the Ancient World, but on the contrary murdered and devastated by the arrival of Europeans.

From stone axe to Socialism

Everything was counted, from the game slaughtered on the hunt to the sling-stones which were deposited in the government arsenals.

Louis Baudin on the State Socialism of the Incas

THE ANTHROPOLOGISTS of an earlier day included the inhabitants of America in a fifth, red-skinned racial group which they placed on the same level as the four other groups—the white Europeans, the yellow East Asians, the black Africans and the

brown Malayan-Polynesians. This classification has long been out-moded. To-day we no longer see the races of mankind as set, unchangeable entities but as products of constant physical, spiritual and social development.

There is no American Indian race in the true sense of the word, nevertheless one can divide the three hundred and seventy or so larger races and tribes of America into six or seven main groups. No such neat categorization can be applied to the one hundred and twenty-five Indian language families; all attempts to relate them to each other or to some language from the Ancient World have failed.

The term 'American Indian' is therefore a collective name for all those peoples and races that once migrated to America in the days before Columbus, there to spread and proliferate by mixed breeding. 'Roughly speaking, the great Indian racial group is composed mainly of Mongoloid and European elements,' as Disselhoff puts it. Stone Age men from Europe, similar to the Stone Age Cro-Magnon races, moved over northern Asia and the Bering Straits into the New World; other Stone Age men from East Asia, similar to the early Mongolian-Turkish races, wandered across eastern Siberia into the still uninhabited continent. Yet other races may have contributed to the formation of the American Indian, for some of the latter have been found to resemble Melanesians, Polynesians and ancient Siberians. Melanesian elements were especially numerous in the skulls and skeletons of prehistoric American Indians; after them, dark-skinned southern Asiatics seem to have made a great incursion—either by land or by water—into the American continent. All these immigrants intermingled and were driven on by fresh invaders, moved southwards, mastered the forests and the mountains, and went through similar stages of development as their racial connections they had left behind in the Ancient World. And so, step by step, the American tribes, states and civilizations were brought into being.

Until recently the scholarly world accepted that the first hunters and collectors crossed an ice or land-bridge in the neighbourhood of the present Bering Straits about ten thousand years ago—that is, after the withdrawal of the North American ice-cap. As early as nine thousand years ago—so the C-14 test tells us—big game hunters who tracked guanacos and giant sloths had long been established near the Magellan Straits, in the Palli Aike cavern. Of similar antiquity is the first aboriginal American whom the

Danish palaeontologist Lund discovered in 1844 in the Lagoa-Santa caves of Minas Gerais in Brazil. Both of these types had long, high skulls and prominent cheekbones, more reminiscent of Melanesians and the European Ice Age races than of aboriginal Mongolians. Then, in Ecuador, Punin Man came to light, some five to six thousand years old, exhibiting resemblances at once with Negritos, Papuans and Melanesians, and finally at Santa Barbara in California, aboriginal Americans of Mongoloid type were dug up, all about eight thousand years old.

In 1927 the notion that man had trod the American continent at the earliest ten thousand years ago began to be questioned. The American archaeologist Figgins found in New Mexico stone lance-heads between the ribs of Ice Age mammoths. Such lances or javelins were shortly afterwards discovered in Colorado and in various other places east of the Rocky Mountains and as far north as Canada. In addition there were found flint scrapers and knives, sandstone palettes with traces of yellow and red colour, drawings scratched on bones and various small implements which recall the civilization of the Early Ice Age in Europe. A feature of this North American Folsom culture were the skeletons of Ice Age giant buffaloes, whose tails had been cut off by their hunters. Does this mean that there were men in America in the Ice Age?

One must at least antedate the migration somewhat, for the Folsom culture seems—on a conservative estimate—to be ten to thirteen thousand years old. And when in 1946 Helmut de Terra discovered in the Mexican lagoon of Tepexpan an eleven thousand-year-old aboriginal Mexican, it was apparent that the settlement of America must have already begun in the Ice Age.

The 'Minnesota Girl' seems to be even older; this is a young girl of primitive-Mongolian aspect whose skeleton came to light when a road was being drained. A commission of American scholars put her age at twenty-two thousand years. In the Sandin cave in New Mexico there were found cultural deposits which after micro-chemical analysis are also seen to be about twenty thousand years old. Finally in 1958, on the island of Santa Rosa off the Californian coast, mussel-shells and elephant bones were dug up which show traces of fire and human workmanship, and these are alleged to be thirty to thirty-seven thousand years old. If all these indications are correct, then early Americans existed as long as forty thousand years ago, while the settlement of the New World by aboriginal Mongolian, European and Melanesian races extends over a

colossal period of about thirty-five thousand years—time enough for the same hunting, agricultural and urban cultures to develop as they did in Europe, Asia and Africa.

How did these civilizations come into being? Over a hundred years ago, all over North America the so-called 'Mounds' came to the attention of archaeologists. These were walls and hills of earth and stones, of circular, oval and four-square patterns, others, more complex, resembled the outlines of animals. The American Samuel Havens finally proved that these are Indian structures. As late as 1800 the Omaha Indians were still erecting such mounds over the bodies of their chieftains.

The mounds are creations of the Neolithic Age, in which the North American forest and prairie Indians lived until their contact with the whites. William Howells, in his book *Back of History*, describes what the American Neolithic period looked like in the later Inca kingdom of Peru: 'About 2500 BC, simple peasants began to erect large rubbish-heaps along the coast of Peru. They ate gourds, beans and roots and cultivated cotton too. They were permanent settlers. They were fishermen, for their junk-heaps contain no bones of land-animals and no weapons for hunting. They were already weaving a little and used chiefly bast cloth. . . . After 1000 BC their civilization made great progress. They not only made pottery, but were also very fine craftsmen in this line, as can be seen from the beautiful pictorial pitchers of Peru. They already had the loom and practised various arts. . . . The great temple buildings of that period indicate the existence of a cult with enormous numbers of adherents, and of an upper class. . . . The sites indicate that besides their art and religion with temples and priests there were already other classes of society, large open structures, organized wars, human sacrifices, head-hunting and that well-defined deities were known over vast areas.' There was the same historical advance, therefore, as in southern Europe, in the orient, on the Nile and in East Asia, but here it began several millennia later. This highly-developed Neolithic culture, whose area reached from the Andes to Mexico, was the basis for the later civilizations of America.

Other civilizations were also formed in the vast forest and steppe regions of North and South America. The Brazilian forest-Indians not only knew how to cultivate crops, the use of hammocks, bows, arrows and blow-pipes; they also produced pottery and created an astonishing Amazon culture, as excavations on

the island of Marajó and in the city of Santarém have shown. In the graves on Marajó were found urns with ornaments and reliefs in splendid colours, which make quite a different impression from the art products of Central America and the Andes. Indeed, one speaks to-day of the 'mystery of Marajó' much as one would speak of the mysteries of Zimbabwe and Easter Island.

In North America there were also tribes who created great urban cultures. The present-day pueblos in modern towns still preserve a little of the glory of this former time. The Mississippi civilization seems to have been much more important. In the mounds along the Mississippi were discovered painted pots, almost Mexican-looking human portraits, fine textiles, ornaments of copper, pearls and mussels. The Mississippi civilization spread as far as Ohio and Wisconsin; it influenced in particular the warlike Iroquois tribes.

In the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes from the first millennium BC to the end of the first millennium AD there came to flower a breath-taking, almost fairytale-like civilization when the pre-Inca culture unfolded its glories, unprecedented in the history of mankind. The heirs of this civilization, the Incas, had no written traditions; their *quipus* contained only statistical accounts, and no historical data, or precise indications. Moreover, in 1583 the Spaniards burned all the *quipus* by order of the synod in Lima which condemned them as being 'snares of the devil'. So here research was confined to spade-work, to radio-carbon tests and above all to clever deductions. Many Inca cities had long ago fallen into decay, overgrown by the primeval forest; only in the present century has it become possible to seek them out with the aid of aeroplanes flying over the mountains and the jungles in which they lie concealed.

Yet one problem of cultural history was solved, though there were absolutely no historical data to go by, no hieroglyphs, cuneiform scripts, lists of the names of kings or anything in the nature of the clues afforded by other ancient civilizations—the problem of the cultural history of 'American Egypt'. Every river which flowed from the Andes to the Pacific was like a small Nile, an oasis of fertility among the barren mountains. And every Indian tribe which settled on the banks of such a 'little Nile' began in the same way as the ancient Egyptians began more than five thousand years ago.

Whether the Andes cultures were influenced by Central

America, or whether they arose independently of the Mayas, Toltecs and their predecessors, is still undecided. The only certain thing is that in the first millennium BC there arose along the rivers of the Andes great buildings and edifices, gigantic temples with terraces, flights of steps and galleries; masterly irrigation systems were installed, and massive reliefs of figures, half-human, half-animal and of deified beasts of prey soared up against the heavens. These mighty Chavín cultures, whose chief god was the jaguar, declined somewhat in the first centuries AD. Then in northern Peru a new civilization emerged—that of the Mochica. The pyramids, grave treasures, frescoes and vase-paintings, mountain temples, fortresses and canals of the Mochica Indians are of the same perfection as the corresponding creations of the ancient orient; their troops, their courtly life, their forms of society, all handed down to us in unique pictures, indicate that here in northern Peru, long before the Incas, there already existed an almost over-civilized federation of warrior states which were presumably led by a single prince. Similar Indian civilizations, those of the Paracas and the Nazca, flourished at the same time in southern Peru, and even further south, the much-discussed wonder of the Andes, 'Tiahuanaco', arose on the present Peruvian-Bolivian border.

The cyclopean ruins of Tiahuanaco on Lake Titicaca have tempted researchers and speculative scholars to the wildest hypotheses. The city was said to be connected with megalithic structures, with Easter Island, and even with Atlantis; its age was given as eighteen thousand years, and according to this theory the Incas would be the oldest civilized race on earth. But in actuality Tiahuanaco was constructed only in the first century AD, and was not built by the Incas (who then had still not appeared upon the screen of history), but by the Indian race called the Aymará, who to-day are the people of Bolivia. The Aymará founded on the high plateaux round Lake Titicaca a great empire where they erected their megalithic capital city of the sun, became masters of astronomy and laid the cultural, artistic and sociological bases of the future empire of the Incas.

'We shall perhaps never find out,' writes Louis Baudin in his book *L'Empire socialiste des Inca*, 'what was the catastrophe that caused the downfall of this huge, powerful state; the one memorial it has left us, the Gate of the Sun, is carved with incomprehensible symbols, and rears above the ruins and debris, giving on to empty

space.' Just as mysterious to us to-day is a megalithic culture further to the north, in Colombia, the relics of which came to light near the village of San Augustin. Enormous stone figures of beasts and men were found standing over graves or in semi-underground ceremonial halls; on springs and wells there were gigantic rock-sculptures of snakes, salamanders and tadpoles. Their creators could have been the Chibcha Indians of present-day Colombia, but they might also have been the megalithic builders of Peru and Bolivia. There must also have existed in Colombia, at a date still undetermined, a great and highly-developed civilization.

Not till the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did the small kingdom of the Incas, one of the many minor states under the authority of Tiahuanaco, rise to its amazing and all-too-brief flowering. The Incas, originally the Chimú, subjugated the Quechua Indian tribes, built in southern Peru their capital Cuzco and in 1445 systematically undertook the subjugation of all the tribes and states of the Peruvian Andes. They created the one great empire based on a strictly planned economy that has been known in the history of man, an empire that was both socialistic and aristocratic, closely resembling the utopian ideal states of Plato, Sir Thomas More and Karl Marx. The Incas invented the totalitarian state; each inhabitant of the empire had his appointed place of work in an appointed group of workers, was fed according to certain regulations, had to accept a prescribed marriage-partner and enjoyed a fixed, unalterable position in society. It was thanks to this totalitarian planning and organization that the Incas were able to encompass their great cultural achievements, the building of enormous edifices and of long roads across the Andes, and obtained a security whose peace was unbroken for about a century, until the arrival of the Spanish.

The Conquistadores themselves had to acknowledge, even after their barbaric devastation of this most interesting civilization in America, the tremendous achievements of the Inca organization, though of course most of the comparisons they made with the Spanish government were heavily in favour of their own nation. It is a matter of the deepest regret that the Incas' brief political experiment came to so abrupt an end. From the high valleys of the Andes the Inca kingdom might have shown the western world a shining example of a planned totalitarian economy that really

worked. 'In comparison with the Inca way of life,' asserts Count Keyserling, 'the Bolshevik state seems almost irrational.'

In Central America, whose civilizations are far better known, more easily explored and more amenable, through archaeological and written sources, to exact scientific interpretation, the pattern of development was similar, except at the very end. For at the end Mexico was not, like the Inca state, the expression of a bold, intelligent and modern political system but was revealed as an imperialistic power-state. The Aztecs were not, like the Incas, the heirs and representatives of previous cultures, they were mere imitators, occupation forces, and indeed destroyers. It has been known for over a hundred years that there were early Aztec kingdoms and civilizations in Central America. These were ascribed to the Mayas or to the mysterious Toltecs about which the Indian author Ixtlilxochitl wrote. But to-day studies have revealed that even before the Mayas and the Toltecs there was a civilization now lost in the mists of antiquity—that of 'the people from the rubber country', the Olmecs.

The Olmecs of ancient Mexico are described as the legendary inhabitants of 'a southern land of flowers, riches, precious metals and stones'. They lived in southern Mexico, were presumably related to the Mayas and among many other things discovered, about 500 BC, the use of tobacco, cotton and rubber. At countless sites in Mexico small terracotta figures were found, naked human figures, flute-players, fertility-symbols which recall the Ice Age 'Venus of Willendorf', some quite flat, others well modelled in the round. In the same places were found gaily-coloured pottery, remains of baskets, articles of clothing, lance tips, knives and all kinds of ornaments, all from two to three thousand years old. There were large edifices too; in the lava fields south of Mexico City rises the oldest pyramid in Central America—the sacred mound of Cuicuilco.

The archaeologist George C. Vaillant describes it as follows: 'On the edge of the volcanic range of Ajusco, in the south-west of the valley, a federation of tribes raised a massive, oval mound, nearly one hundred and twenty five metres across, and fifteen metres in height. A wide ramp leads to the top of the mound. The builders did not set up any magnificent temple at the top, but a simple altar open to the heavens and out of sight of the common people. . . . To the modern beholder's eye the sacred mound seems to be almost like a spontaneous expression of the religious spirit

of the population. The altar is a complete contrast. Here the bevelling of the right-angled walls and the flight of steps flanked by low balustrades are fore-runners of the complicated architecture of later days.'

How old was Cuicuilco? Here, as elsewhere, the most fantastic claims were made: geological investigations attributed to the lava which appeared to have flowed up to the foot of the artificial hill an age of eight thousand years. On closer examination it became apparent, however, that under this reputedly eight thousand-year-old lava lay figures and implements which unmistakably came from the first century BC. The pyramid of Cuicuilco must have been built at this time, perhaps on a mass of lava that had already existed there for a long time.

In the first century AD there arose in Mexico the counterpart to Tiahuanaco, the huge, rich, classical civilization of Teotihuacan with its gigantic temple complexes, monumental architecture, sacred frescoes and sculptures. It was that period in which the god Quetzalcoatl, 'the Plumed Serpent', was worshipped, in which the Central American hieroglyphic script came into being, and whose remaining evidences are the two most imposing pyramids in the heart of Mexico, the pyramids of the sun and the moon. It is still not certain whether the Teotihuacans were related to the Olmecs, the Mayas, the Toltecs or even to the later Aztecs. In Indian myths they appear as giants five metres in height; discoveries of prehistoric mastodon and bison bones in the vicinity of the temples have given rise to this legend. Most Americanists see in them an Indian race that came from southern Mexico and drove out the Olmecs. In Cholula, the city where Cortez in 1519 carried out such deplorable slaughter, remnants of the ancient Teotihuacan civilization were still in existence at the time of the Conquista.

Teotihuacan also was overwhelmed by some unknown disaster. And in the ninth century AD it was the Toltecs that worshipped Quetzalcoatl, created wonderful pottery and other works of art and built in Tollan, the present-day Tula, their temple city. The Toltecs belong probably to the Nahua group of dialects, so they would be related to the later Aztecs and Chichimecs. Perhaps warlike Nahua hordes from the north mingled with the Teotihuacans, took over their civilization and developed their theocratic government. In any case, the Toltecs prepared the ground for what the Spaniards were to encounter later in Mexico.

Yet another race came into prominence after the third century AD in the plains and jungles of Guatemala, Honduras, Yucatan and southern Mexico, a race that was to achieve the greatest mastery in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, script and architecture that has ever been known in Indian America—the Mayas. Their history scarcely touches those of the other Mexican peoples and empires, but runs parallel to them. The Mayas lived in relatively peaceful city states, and were in a sense the Greeks of America. They built, painted and sculpted for the sheer love of art and beauty and have been so be-garlanded with superlatives by those who studied their culture that they might have been the sole founders of all Indian American civilization.

'Tremendous, curious, remarkable . . .', these are the enthusiastic words of the first modern visitor to the Maya city of Palenque, the American diplomat and archaeologist John L. Stephens. 'The relics of a cultivated, refined race that suffered all the rises and falls of fortune common to all great nations. . . . Nothing in the great romance of world history has impressed me more deeply than the appearance of this once so magnificent and gracious city. . . .' Scholars and explorers expressed themselves with the same enthusiasm about Copán and other cities and memorials of the ancient Maya empire that existed from about AD 300 to 900 in Guatemala and which was suddenly for unknown reasons abandoned and fell into ruins. Why? Was the soil exhausted? Had the maize-growing peasants been led by famine to revolt against the city states? Was it because of earthquakes, epidemics or climatic deteriorations? Had there been invasions from Mexico? The most interesting fact is that Teotihuacan declined about the same time as the Maya empire.

The Mayas emigrated to Yucatan and there founded a new empire with similar temple cities and massive buildings. Metropoles like Chichén Itzá, Uxmal and Mapapán took the place of Palenque and Copán, but the new empire did not last long. The city states fought against each other, rebellions broke out, the Toltecs fell upon the land, and wandering merchants introduced smallpox from regions already overrun by the Spaniards. The last settlements of the Mayas fell without much resistance to the looting and plundering of white conquerors about the middle of the sixteenth century; Maya civilization disappeared almost at a single blow and the manuscripts left behind by this race were,

with few exceptions, burned as 'works of the devil' by Spanish priests in the ruins of the cities.

We know of still other Central American local cultures of astonishing refinement—that of the Zapotecs, of the Mixtecs, of the Totonacs, of the Tarascans. But none of these played any important part in history when, at the end of the eleventh century AD, the great invasion of the Nahua tribes from the north overwhelmed the ancient civilizations. Barbaric Chichimecs destroyed the Mexican theocracies and set up autocratic governments on the ruins—the Aztec empire of Tenochtitlan, the city states of Teztcoco and Tlaxcala. These were power states organized on strictly militaristic principles and financed by heavy taxes and tribute-monies. There developed a feudal society still showing much of the splendour of the Toltec era, but which was so hated by the subject races that Cortez found sufficient Indian allies to assist him in his conquest of Mexico.

The Aztecs were civilized descendants of the savage Chichimecs, but Aztec culture was a weak imitation of Toltec culture. When an Aztec was asked about his abilities as a warrior, he would hark back to his Chichimec ancestry; when he wished to display his culture, he would refer to the Toltecs. The well-known comparison of the Mayas with the Greeks, of the Toltecs with the Etruscans, and of the Aztecs with the Romans has much to be said in its favour. Like the Romans at the time of the Punic wars, the Aztecs in Montezuma's period were able to form out of the ruins and traditions of Olmec, Teotihuacan and Toltec epochs their own civilization. But the whole of Mexico was in a turmoil. And as William Howells writes, 'in this swamp of oppression, hatred, treachery and broken promises Cortez came with his small band of men in 1519' and decapitated, with the assistance of Indian allies, this 'American Rome' while she was still in the first stage of her historical development.

Shamans in the taiga

After we had prayed to God for his blessing, we fell upon great nomad camps of seventy to eighty souls. We captured the men and slaughtered many of them; we chopped them all up into little pieces, and took the women and cattle.

From Jerofej Chabarov's log-book,
c. 1650

AT FIRST Jermak Timofejevitch had worked as porter, then as salt-heaver and as sailor on river-boats. Because he no longer had any wish to slave for the rulers of the land of Perm, he became a bandit and robbed the merchants travelling down the Volga. He and his fellow-bandits called themselves Cossacks, but the Russian historian Juri Semjonov writes, 'it was difficult to distinguish between Cossacks and bandits'. It was only because they practised their banditry far to the east, between the Volga and the Urals, that they could not be exterminated.

About 1580 Jermak rose to be the Hetman of all Hetmans, to be head of the Cossacks. As Ivan the Terrible had sent a punitive expedition to restore the Cossacks to the paths of virtue, Jermak offered his services as general to the rulers of Perm, for whom he had once heaved salt. Now these rulers, the Stroganovs, were loyal subjects of the Tsar, but the Tsar was a long way off and the Khan of the Tartar kingdom of Sibir was desperately close. So the Stroganovs accepted Jermak's offer, 'talked him over', as the chroniclers report, 'into giving up his banditry as unworthy of a Christian hero, and into becoming from then on a warrior in the service of the White Tsars', or rather, a warrior in the service of the Stroganovs.

The Stroganov family had created its own private empire far to the east, in the Urals. From there the Stroganovs supplied Russia with salt and hides; they became multi-millionaires, the Rothschilds of their time. They built cities, harbours and fortifications, supported a whole army and ruled over uncountable numbers of subjects, who belonged chiefly to Permian, Mordovian, Cheremissic or other Finno-Ugrian tribes. Presumably the whole of northern and eastern Russia was at that time inhabited by Finno-Ugrians; simple hunters, fishermen and herdsmen who

more closely resembled the present-day Lapps and Samoyeds than the Finns. These Finno-Ugrians in prehistoric times formed the link between Indo-Europeans and northern Asiatics; in the writings of Tacitus and Ptolemy they were mentioned as excellent bowmen and skiers. It is possible that they were spread over a large area of Scandinavia, East Europe and western Siberia about two thousand years ago. To-day there exist only scattered remnants, all strongly Europeanized or Mongolized: the Scandinavian Lapps, the Russian Mordovians, Cheremissians and Permians, the north Siberian Samoyeds and the west Siberian Voguls and Ostyaks. Only the Finns, the Estonians and the Magyars achieved self-government—the first two under northern European, the last under Hunnish-Tartar influence.

The Stroganovs were not scholars, but men who had made their millions from salt; therefore they did not distinguish in a scientific manner between the wild forest and steppe inhabitants, but only regarded them from an economic standpoint. It happened in this way; they took away the hunting grounds and cattle pastures from the Ugrians and then incorporated them into their economy as cheap labour. And it was no exception that among the Russian settlers in the Urals, suffering from a constant shortage of women, the most attractive country girls sooner or later went over into Russian hands. It was the same story later in Siberia where, even at the end of the eighteenth century, there was a brisk trade in Yakut, Tungus, Buriat and Kirghiz women and girls. A few prices are known: an average Siberian woman cost ten roubles, a better one twenty roubles, a chief's or prince's daughter was worth as much as ten sable and ten fox skins. In this manner in a fairly short space of time one sixth of the earth was Russified—though at the cost of Finno-Ugrian, Tartar, Mongolian or aboriginal Siberian admixtures of blood in the majority of Russian veins. Perhaps this fact accounts for the vigour, the intellectual breadth and all the other most un-European qualities of the Russian peoples.

In 1580 the land of Sibir still lay east of the Urals as a remnant of the great Mongol empire, ruled by the Usbek Khan Kutchum, who would hear no good of the Stroganovs. It especially displeased him that the Russian salt-kings had subjected whole races to their service. Vogul and Tartar chiefs in Perm travelled across the Urals and brought Kutchum all kinds of complaints. The consequence was that Kutchum at regular intervals sent Usbek

and Tartar warriors westwards to attack the border towns and carry off numberless settlers into captivity. Then the Stroganov economy and the Russians' eastern frontier on the Urals were in danger of collapse unless they attacked Sibir. Maxim and Nikita Stroganov had chosen the one-time porter and bandit Jermak Timofejevitch for this very task.

A full year went by before Hetman Jermak set off with his Cossacks. It was a difficult year for the Stroganovs, because the Cossacks caused almost more damage in Perm than did Kutchum's Tartars. Finally Jermak's troops set off, splendidly equipped by the brothers Stroganov, who presumably heaved a great sigh of relief when the expedition vanished into the forests and mountains of the Urals. Then the miracle occurred; Jermak Timofejevitch turned out to be a general of the first order. From 1581 to 1584 he overcame the Siberian kingdom and opened the doors of Asia to the Russian fatherland. He was drowned, crossing a river, on August 5th, 1584, but the way to the east was now free for the Russians. Sibir became a Stroganov colony. Fourteen years later, Nogaic Tartars murdered old Khan Kutchum, who had at last capitulated to the Russians, somewhere in the taiga.

All kinds of adventurers and prospectors now began streaming into the immeasurable vastnesses of northern Asia, which from then on was called Siberia, after the original Tartar kingdom in the Urals. They fought against Voguls, Ostyaks and Ioanessians. They built ostrogs, small fortified towns from which later grew the great cities of Siberia. Every enterprising Russian wanted to be a free man and enjoy his existence as far as possible from the knout of the Tsars beyond the Urals. Cossacks and adventurers built boats and sailed up the Siberian rivers; they built themselves blockhouses in the taiga and the tundra, hunted fur-bearing animals and looked for the bones of mammoths. They demanded tribute from the inhabitants, and themselves paid tribute-monies to the Tsars or the Stroganovs whenever there was a tax-gatherer in the land. Sixty years after Jermak's great achievements the Cossack Hetman Jerofej Chabarov, after a bloody war of extermination against the Manchurian-Tungusian tribes on the Amur, reached the Chinese frontier. At the same time Russian trappers caught their first sight of the Arctic at the mouth of the Kolyma, and of the Pacific at the mouths of the Anadyr, the Peschina and the Ochota rivers.

The advance into the unknown went further. About 1640 three

Cossacks called Michail Staduchin, Fjodor Alexejev and Semjon Ivanov Deshnev were living in their ostrog on the Kolyma near the Arctic Ocean. There they were gathering furs, walrus tusks and mammoth ivory. They heard from the natives about a legendary river Pogisha far away in the East, on whose banks 'one-legged, one-armed and long-tailed men' were said to dwell. Pogisha is presumably the river now called the Pogatch which flows northwards from the Kamchatka into the Bering Sea, and the legends about the strange long-tailed monsters can be traced back to vague rumours about Chukchi, or other Eskimo-like inhabitants of the remotest Asiatic north-west. The three Cossacks attempted to reach the mysterious Pogisha, going separately by different routes. Alexejev went overland to the Anadyr and the Bering Sea. Staduchin, also by land, reached the Kamchatka peninsula. The third, Deshnev, travelled in a fragile coracle along the coast to the eastern Asiatic cape that now bears his name. In the years 1697 to 1710 the fur-dealer and Cossack Hetman, Vladimir Atlassov, conquered the warlike, savage Kamchatka, battled for a decade with rebellious natives and finally, like so many Russian conquerors, was murdered. But the Kamchatka has remained to this day a Russian colony.

These conquerors and adventurers, explorers and bandits all had very vague ideas about the peoples of Siberia. Most of the pioneers could neither read nor write and could at first make no correct geographical observations. They had only one thing in mind, booty—furs, cattle, women and slaves. The conquerors of Africa, India and America, that is, men of Latin or Germanic origin, acted in exactly the same way, and there is morally no distinction possible between a Pizarro and a Chabarov. Towards the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century there did indeed appear in Russia a work entitled *On the unknown peoples in the east lands and their various languages*, but this is full of purely imaginary details. Only the Samoyeds are described with any accuracy: 'They feed on reindeer flesh and fish, are unsightly, of small stature and have small noses; but they are very agile and are right skilful bowmen. Their sledges are drawn by reindeer or dogs; they wear sable and reindeer skins and deal in sable furs.'

Deshnev, the discoverer of the East Cape, who was the first white man to see Chukchi, or Asiatic Eskimos, reports only briefly that they were 'people whom one calls "toothed", because

they shove two bigger teeth or bones through holes bored in their lips'. It did not occur to anyone to investigate more closely the shamanistic beliefs of the Siberians. They ranked, just as the Negroes and Indians did, as barbarians and heathens in the eyes of their rulers, as creatures at the lowest level of civilization, fit only to be fought against, made subject and 'chopped to pieces', as Chabarov so drastically expressed it. The Siberians had to pay tribute and serve as slaves, and the Cossacks tried to turn them as quickly as possible into caricatures of Russians. But they were not so successful at this as the Spaniards in their efforts to 'Europeanize' the American Indians.

But for the Siberians the consequences were the same as for the Negroes, American Indians and other sacrifices of this great age of exploration. At first these savages were as naïve as children, though somewhat defiant and self-seeking, which was natural considering their way of life. Under the knout of the Cossacks and the fur-trappers they lost their culture and all self-respect; they degenerated into fawning vassals of the Russians, succumbed to strong drink and other vices, were killed off by diseases from which until then—thanks to their natural existence and their astonishingly highly developed knowledge of medicine—they had never or hardly ever suffered. They adopted the achievements of European civilization, without understanding them. They learnt the lure of money with the compulsion to work for it, and to sell for filthy lucre their furs, mammoth-tusks and daughters. Their former wise codes of behaviour were abandoned for European morals, or rather lack of morals, and they became much worse than the Cossacks, who, strong as horses and bursting with health, had fled from Europe precisely because in the taiga of Siberia they hoped to escape from Popes, officials, tax-gatherers and all other forms of control.

In 1750, the state of contemporary knowledge about northern Asia was summed up in this way by the German student of Siberia, Gerhard Friedrich Müller: 'The men who went there wished to become famous through warlike deeds, but not through written descriptions of those deeds. Besides, they had little education and knew nothing of the art of writing, and so could not have left posterity any notes on their observations even if they had wanted to. And so we know almost nothing factually precise about this land.' Müller was a member of an exploratory venture which was to go down in history under the name of the Great Nordic Ex-

pedition, which supplied the first real information about northern Asia and its peoples. This was instigated by the German philosopher Leibniz, was planned by Peter the Great and provided with the necessary collaborators by the Petersburg Academy of Sciences, which Catherine I had founded after Peter's death. Among the expedition were a staff of research scholars sent out to explore the unknown: they included the Dane Vitus Bering, the Frenchman Louis Delisle de la Croyère, the Swede Martin Spangberg, the Germans Georg Wilhelm Steller, Gerhard Friedrich Müller and Johann Georg Gmelin, the Russians Alexej Chirikov and Stepan Krasheninnikov. The instructions which Tsar Peter had given these men shortly before his death were short and to the point: 'Discover everything that has not already been discovered!'

Since Jermak's times the spiritual temper of Russia had quite considerably altered. Swedish officers who had been taken prisoner during the Nordic War and sent to Siberia used the opportunity to explore North and East Asia and to make maps—an activity which the authorities in St Petersburg encouraged. The Swedes presented to the Russian Academy vocabularies of the Tartar, Kalmuck and Tungus languages, sketches of rivers and coasts and reports of 'some thirty-two kinds of Tartar peoples'. When in 1728 Vitus Bering went on his first journey to northern Asia which led to the discovery of the Bering Straits, he was able to observe these peoples more closely.

'A small part of these tribes,' wrote Bering, 'still worship idols. But the remainder have no religion at all and are very uncultivated. Of domestic animals they have only the dog, which is used to drag carts and sledges, and from whose skins clothes are made. The natives live on fish, roots, berries, wild birds and sea-creatures. The inhabitants of the Kamchatka have many horrible customs. If a woman gives birth to twins, one of the new-born babies is killed at once. It is considered a great sin if this deed is not carried out. People who are mortally sick, even if it is the mother or the father of a family, are carried out into the forests, given enough food to last a week, and are left to their fate. In consequence most of these unfortunate sufferers die. Houses in which people have died are never used again, and the dead are never buried, but thrown into the forests, where they are torn to pieces by the dogs.'

This is still not an exact ethnological description, but the academic experts whom Bering took with him on the Great Nordic

Expedition and who from 1733 to 1749 explored the whole of Siberia, and went as far as the North Cape of Asia, to Lake Baikal, Korea, Japan and Alaska, brought about achievements unique in the history of geography and ethnology. Most of them were young men who quickly rose to leading positions in the newly-founded St Petersburg Academy and seized with both hands the opportunity Russia offered them.

The historian Müller in his *Description of the Siberian Kingdom* made the first stock-taking of northern Asiatic tribes and languages. The natural scientist Stellar, who accompanied Bering on his journey to Alaska, depicted the north-west American Eskimo tribe of the Konjag as 'people dressed in thick skins, their faces painted blue, and with bones stuck through the wings of their noses'; he wrote an outstanding account of the Kamchatka and entered settlements of the 'savage creatures'—one of the first researchers to do so besides Müller—where he lived their life and observed their customs with scientific detachment. Stellar's highly-gifted co-worker, Stepan Petrovitch Krasheninnikov, also devoted himself to a study of the Kamchatka region, and while visiting the Kuriles even learnt something about the Ainu, the bearded aboriginal inhabitants of Sakhalin and northern Japan.

Stellar, Müller, Krasheninnikov and their colleagues brought so much light to bear on the racial history of northern Asia that whole generations of investigators were able to profit by the results of their studies. Their special interest was in the aboriginal inhabitants of Siberia—the Arktiers, Hyperboreans or Palaeosiberians, as they are called by present-day ethnologists. These are tribal offshoots scattered among the Mongolian-Turkish peoples of Siberia, the Ioanessians in western Siberia, the Itälmen in the Kamchatka, the Koryaks, Yukagirs and Chukchi in the remotest north-east, the Gilyaks on the Amur, the Ainu on the islands between the Kamchatka and Japan. Their languages are isolated and cannot be compared with each other or with any other languages; in appearance they resemble partly Eskimos, partly Mongolians, Indians and Europeans. They are considered to be the real aboriginal inhabitants of northern Eurasia, the preservers of Stone Age culture and of archaic shamanistic beliefs. As the Neanderthals did, they still worship the bear, which—in the words of the ethnologist Hans Findeisen—'they hold to be the forefather of man and which is everywhere regarded as a guest to whom one pays honour and gives hospitality'. The ancient Siberians did in

fact eat bear's flesh, but chiefly on ritual grounds. 'The actual slaying of the bear,' writes Findeisen, 'is believed by them to be quite immaterial in its bearing upon the animal's fate, for indeed the soul, which lives on, cannot be destroyed. The slaughtered beasts are regarded as "guests" whom one can call back to life by magical means.'

It had struck Stellar and Müller that there was something unusual about one of these ancient Siberian tribes, the Ioanessians or Ketó. They lived in West Siberia, among Finno-Ugrian, Turko-Tartar and Mongolian peoples, but employed a completely unknown tongue which—it is now assumed—had some affinity with Indo-China. Perhaps these Ketó are the final remaining offshoot of that wave of racial migrations which long ago spread from Asia to America. Their masks, their sacred images, their rites all remind ethnologists astonishingly of North America. Stellar found this primitive folk to be not at all uncultivated, and the girls even very pretty and attractive. The Ketó could weave, making shirts of nettle fibres and warm underclothes of furs. 'If they were well fed,' Stellar remarks, 'they could become as strong as Russians . . . And they are so mild-tempered that even if they tried to they could not treat anyone badly, not even their own wives.'

A similarly strange and mysterious impression was given the explorers by the Koryaks and Itälmen, the inhabitants of the Kamchatka. Stellar compared them with Greenland Eskimos, about whom he had heard something, and with the Konjags, whom he had encountered in Alaska. Krasheninnikov was of the opinion that they had earlier formed part of the Mongolian race. Some modern ethnographers consider them to be related to the Ioanessians, others that they are immigrants from the Lake Baikal region, while yet others take them to be South Sea Islanders who had come to settle in the Kamchatka from Northern Japan or some other Pacific islands. Krasheninnikov discovered with amazement that the Kamchatkans were still living in the Stone Age: 'I am amazed how they are able to make everything without the use of iron tools; they build, hoe, carve, make clothes, sew, light fires, all without the use of metal; and they even cook in wooden pots.'

Stellar, the rationalist, was concerned first of all with their living habits, and Krasheninnikov, a devout churchgoer, with the mythology of the Kamchatkans. According to Stellar, among the Kamchatkans virginity was considered to be a disgrace: 'Therefore

girls are taught the trade from their earliest youth,' as he expresses it. 'The womenfolk have small round breasts, which remain fairly firm even among forty-year-old females, and do not begin to hang down at an early age.' A true fore-runner of Freud and Kinsey, he realized the connection between sexual intercourse and religious-totemistic taboos: 'Whoever performs the sexual act by lying on top of the other partner commits a great sin. A truly orthodox Itälmen must always do it on his side, the reason being that this is how it is done by fish, which are their main source of nourishment.' He even attends a birth: 'the woman left her hut as if she were just going about some daily task, and after a quarter of an hour came back with her new-born child without my having remarked the slightest change of colour in her face.'

The Kamchatkans were very gifted dancers. Stellar describes one of their religious dances thus: 'Ten men and women form a circle and lift their feet according to the rhythm. Each person has to speak a few words, a kind of slogan, while one half of the dancers has to repeat the first, the other half the last word of the phrase. In this manner they dance out a phrase for an hour, while the circle becomes bigger and bigger, because no one can leave the dance. Even the oldest greybeards take part. This form of pleasure lasts from evening until dawn.' Another dance was performed only by women: 'Women and girls sit in a circle. Suddenly one of them leaps up, with long braids made from soft grasses hanging from the middle fingers, and sings a song. She turns and twists, so that her whole body seems to be shaking with fever, all the time moving her limbs with the most wonderful agility. When they sing the women imitate all sorts of animal voices and utter queer sounds from their throats.'

Women played a special role among the Kamchatkans, as well as among the Chukchi and other ancient Siberians. They were not looked down upon—as the Samoyed females, for example—as unclean, but were the dominant force in daily life. When they grew old, they often became female shamans, sorceresses similar to those of the ancient Germanic tribes; the tribe had to obey these old women who had 'become changed into men'. Beating on a drum and wearing an extraordinary head-dress they would call up the tribe to ceremonial exorcisms; they were the last representatives of a northern Stone Age matriarchal society that was slowly dying out.

The religion of the Kamchatkans was archaic, yet it reminds us

of the redemptive religions of the great civilizations. 'Their god is called Kutchu,' Krasheninnikov relates, 'and they do not believe him to be the cause of either their good or their bad fortune; they believe that everything depends on man. They consider the earth to be eternal and that souls are immortal; the soul unites with the body, experiences a resurrection and lives on eternally, enjoying the same kind of life as it did on earth, only with this difference, that in the Beyond there will be plenty of everything and no one need ever go hungry. All creatures, down to the smallest fly, will rise again after death and live on under the earth. There the poor of this world will be rich, and the rich will be poor. They are of the opinion that God does not necessarily punish sins, for they say that whoever does evil will have to pay for it.' Other races also who are still at the Stone Age level have a like conception of God and a similar belief in paradise to come. Some scholars of comparative religion are therefore of the opinion that the very first religion of all men was pure monotheism.

Krasheninnikov has also described how the Beyond appeared to a Kamchatkan: 'The god Kutchu takes all dead Kamchatkans. Whoever arrives in paradise wearing a new and richly made garment of dogskin is given by Kutchu wretched clothing and poor dogs; and whoever arrives wearing wretched clothes and with bad dogs is given splendid clothes and good dogs and is led to a beautiful dwelling-place. Then the dead begin to make themselves tents and roofs to keep out the weather, go hunting for wild game and birds, and go fishing; they drink and eat and are as happy as they were before on earth—with the difference that in the Beyond they do not have to suffer anything unpleasant as they do on earth, because there are fewer storms there, less rain and snow; and there is a profusion of every good thing, in the Beyond.'

Pious Krasheninnikov, who considered this belief 'a totally mistaken idea', misunderstood many things and projected his own notions into the religion of the Itälmen. Nevertheless he did not refuse to crawl into the Kamchatkans' earth huts, to eat their half-cooked meat, to marvel over their weaving and plaiting, and to learn their language. Thus, about 1740, real ethnologists were at work, at a period when Europeans considered the native inhabitants of their colonies to be savages, fit only for slavery or to be hounded down on barbaric man-hunts.

Much blood was spilt in the Kamchatka also. Cossacks murdered their guides, Yukagir and Koryak allies rebelled against the

Cossacks and finally the aboriginal inhabitants, the Itälmen, fought against everybody and were gradually almost wiped out. Krasheninnikov's account tells us something of the tragedy of this primitive tribe over which the Cossacks rode in a storm of murderous hooves: 'After their subjection, there was such a wave of suicides among them that a special message was sent from St Petersburg to the Russians, commanding them to stop the Kamchatkans from putting themselves to death.'

Stellar and Krasheninnikov became acquainted with an even stranger race, the Ainu, who to-day live in scattered communities on a few of the Kuriles, in the south of Sakhalin and on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. These people have thick hair and beards, the colour of their skin is matt white, their faces are broad, with flat noses and level eyes, even the women have moustaches—at any rate, their upper lips have blue tattooings. In appearance the Ainu resemble the aborigines of Australia, but also the Polynesians and even the east Europeans. Tolstoy, for example, is said by ethnographers to be an Ainu-type. Their language is said to have similarities with that of the Eskimos, their tattooing recalls that of the Maoris in Oceania, their lake-dwellings make a south-east Asiatic impression, but the giant barrows found in their areas point towards northern Europe. Even to-day the Ainu remain a complete mystery to anthropologists. Some scholars claim that they are relics of an aboriginal European-like population of Japan, Korea or even the whole of north-east Asia; others class them with ancient Siberians; still others call them aboriginal Mongols, aboriginal Polynesians or even relatives of the Australians.

Probably this race is a relic of that period when the individual races of humanity were still not clearly distinguishable from one another. The ancient Siberians, the Veddas, the Australian aborigines, the Ainu—all these white- to brown-skinned Stone Age peoples are similar in appearance, culture and forms of society to the aboriginal Europeans and Asiatics of the Late Ice Age. They are also 'living fossils', the last remains of earliest mankind. If a modern East European, an Australian bushman, a Polynesian or even Tolstoy has Ainu characteristics that does not mean that his recent ancestors were Ainus. Even to-day some traces of Neanderthal man can be seen in people who are in no way directly descended from Neanderthal ancestors. The biologists call this 'parallel evolution', and speak of complicated processes in heredity

which cause members of widely different races to exhibit distinct characteristics of early man. These characteristics in the Ainu, as in the Ioanessians, Australians and Veddas point to the fact that once in the Palaeolithic Age light-skinned races spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific—races whose western representatives were the Cro-Magnon men of Europe and whose eastern representatives were Ice Age forefathers of the Ainu.

On the Kuriles Stellar found the Ainu to be valiant seal and otter hunters who would even venture out on to drifting ice to club their prey. 'Usually there are such high waves and such gales of snow that one can barely stand upright. But the hunters run and leap without a thought of danger from one ice-floe to another, out into the open sea . . . Each man holds a knife in his hand, on his feet long skis provided with hooks made of bone which prevent them from slipping on the ice . . . But sometimes, when the floe is driven far from the land, they have to abandon their prey and try to save their own lives. Then a man ties himself by a long rope to his dog who faithfully hauls him back to land.'

Krashennikov also had the greatest respect for the hairy inhabitants of the Kuriles: 'They speak softly, fluently and pleasantly. The words of their language are of medium length: vowels and consonants are of the same duration . . . Among all the savage folk of this region, the Ainu are the best-natured, wisest, most honourable, upright, amenable and respectable.' Later scholars, particularly Russian and Japanese ethnologists, established that monotheism, shamanistic practises, belief in the next world and bear-worship were just as common among the Ainu as among the ancient Siberians and Kamchatkans. A modern palaeontologist, Othenio Abel, has described one of the ceremonies connected with the bear:

'The unique ceremonies which are still carried out by the Ainu and the Gilyaks on the occasions of ritual killings of bears give us insights into the practises of Ice Age man. These races believe even to-day that the skull of a dead bear can be used—after prayers to the almighty deity—to bring a live bear into existence . . . At the great Bear Festival the Ainu gather together from all parts of the island. The bear, usually one captured while still young and carefully looked after, is brought out of his cage after a man has made him a ceremonial address, requesting him, when he returns to his forefathers, to look after the interests of those who have looked after him. Then a rope is put round his neck, and another round

his legs, he is dragged to the place of sacrifice and there is tormented into savage rage by being shot at with blunted arrows, until he is exhausted. Next a pole is thrust between his jaws; one is also placed across the back of his neck, and another on his throat, and . . . he is almost strangled. Finally his torture comes to an end with an arrow shot to the heart. Next his skin is removed, together with the entire head; it is laid on a mat, the head is decorated with rings and pearls, and food and drink is placed before it; among the food is a piece of the bear's own flesh. Finally the skull is removed from the skin and set up on a stick near the poles on which the skulls of his forefathers have been placed before.'

Next to James Cook's voyages round the world the Nordic Expedition was the greatest scientific expedition of the eighteenth century. It revealed that Siberia, long before the Cossack invasions, had behind it a very chequered history. Even in the far north civilization went on developing, and survived invasions by foreign races. But all these Finnish, Turkish and Mongolian bandit races and warrior tribes degenerated, in the raw climate of the tundra and the taiga, to the level of Hyperboreans, hunted and fed as they did, used the same tools and had the same shamanistic religion. Northern Asiatic states and empires, migrations and conquests came and went; there remained always the icy winds howling over the taiga, the human creatures conditioned by their natural environment to a life of eternal snow, accompanied by dogs and reindeer and clouds of insects—until the day came when here, too, Europe carried out the final mortal invasion of this vast, silent land between the Arctic Ocean and the steppe.

The Frozen North

There are to-day many people so full of the greatness of our times that they think the inventions and the progress of our daily lives place the gifted white race far above all others. These many people would do well to first consider the development of the Eskimos, to study it really deeply and to take a look at the implements and inventions which this race has created in order to gain a living from the grudging and unfriendly wastes of ice.

Fridtjof Nansen

CAPTAIN DAVIS CALLED the shore he stepped upon on July 29th, 1585, the 'Land of Desolation'. John Davis, who for his time was unusually cultivated and humane, and been sent by an English business firm to find a North-West Passage, a sea route from Europe across the Arctic Ocean to India and China. He was to investigate rumours of goldfields which his colleague Martin Frobisher thought he had discovered on a *Meta Incognita* or unknown peninsula. Now the so-called gold, as was later made clear, was only pyrites, and Davis did not reach the *Meta Incognita*, to-day known as Baffin Land, but he did re-discover Greenland and the Eskimos.

For centuries the world had heard nothing about the Viking settlements in Greenland. Scandinavian mariners who in the sixteenth century occasionally touched the coasts of Erik the Red's 'Green Land' found there only empty harbours and ruined houses, sheep and cattle that had reverted to a wild state, and roving Eskimos. In the years 1497 to 1498 John Cabot reached the coast of Labrador; twenty years later his son Sebastian discovered the Hudson Bay and as early as 1500 the Portuguese brothers Gaspar and Miguel Cortereal sailed between Greenland, Labrador and Newfoundland. A few explorers had brief contacts with the Eskimos. But Davis was the first to correct the inexact geographical data of his predecessors. He set foot in Greenland, bartered utensils for furs with the Eskimos who came to meet his ship, and so made a link with Norman times. On two further Arctic voyages Davis explored the North American coast and was the first to discover that the north of the American continent was composed of innumerable islands. The end of this great explorer was tragic;

on a voyage to India, going to the rescue of a damaged Malayan pirate vessel, the Malayan crew attacked him and murdered him with his crew.

The further history of the discovery of the Eskimos stands in close relationship to the discovery of the North-West Passage. Henry Hudson who murdered his own crew in Hudson's Bay, William Baffin after whom America's second-largest island is named, and the Arctic adventurers of the nineteenth century, Ross, Parry, Franklin and McClure, who tried to grope their way through the North-West Passage and finally found it impracticable—they all came into contact with Eskimos. Through Eskimos we know of the fate of Sir John Franklin and his hundred and thirty companions who from 1847 to 1848 died of frostbite, hunger and fatigue in the north of King William's Land. Eskimos of the Netsilik tribe saw the last survivors of the Franklin Expedition—stumbling, bewildered white men who could not speak for hunger and could only employ weak gestures demanding food. But the Netsilik could not help them; they themselves had nothing to eat.

Ross and Parry's encounter with the Eskimos was a fateful one. When the two British polar explorers were trying to find a way round the north of Greenland in 1818, their ship was caught in ice-floes in Smith Sound. Ross and Parry had never expected to find human beings living near latitude 78. But 'tracks of human feet were to be seen on a deserted island'. Soon the Eskimos came into sight. 'At first they fled as fast as they could run; but we succeeded in gaining their confidence through an Eskimo named Sacheuse whom we had taken with us.' Sacheuse and the Smith Sound Eskimos greeted each other 'by rubbing their noses together'. They were the northernmost inhabitants of the earth, the Eskimos of the present-day Thule region in Greenland. They taught the Englishmen to live through an Arctic winter and how to get free of the ice-floes. After that many famous explorers lived through the polar winter in Eskimo fashion—John Rae, David Hanbury, Robert Edwin Peary, Vilhjamur Stefansson and Knud Rasmussen.

The Arctic travellers found the fur-clad polar race everywhere they went. James Clarke Ross encountered them in Boothia Felix, saw their villages, their fox snares and graves. 'Cautiously they approached the ship; they were thirty-one in number. When we shouted their native greeting "Aja, Aja!" they became less fearful. At a distance of sixty paces we laid aside our guns, and they laid their knives and spears on the ice and replied "Aja!" We went

up to them, stroked their clothes and embraced them, which put them beside themselves with joy. Like children they laughed, shouted and jumped about among themselves . . . All were dressed in reindeer-skin; the trousers had the fur turned inwards, but the fur of the jackets was turned outwards. On their heads they wore a cap of the same material. As decoration they wore on their chests ermine, wolverine and grey seal-skins. The tips of their spears were made of horn, the shaft of firmly and beautifully jointed bone. Their knives, too, were made of horn or bone.' Ross was especially impressed by the healthy appearance of these Netsilingmiut Eskimos and by their good nature. 'As we were cutting and combing the hair of an Eskimo woman, they all begged to have the same attentions. They stood speechless before the paintings, mirrors and lanterns in our cabins. They were so delighted with everything; they showed no desire to possess our things, which shows obviously a certain level of civilization.'

James Clarke Ross also describes an Eskimo community typical of polar America. He visited a village consisting of twelve snow houses, noted that each house had the shape of a beehive, and that a snow tunnel, in which the dogs lived, served as an entrance hall, so that the cold did not penetrate directly into the igloos, in which there were fur-covered benches of snow, blubber-lamps and stoneware kettles; a faint light came through a window made of ice. The explorers were astonished not only by the construction of the snow houses, but also by the Eskimos' great skill in hunting; they marvelled to watch them catching seals from their kayaks, to see them waiting over holes they had dug in the ice and tracking reindeer: 'They clothe themselves in a reindeer-skin, including the head and antlers, creep among the unsuspecting herds, suddenly throw off their disguise and kill as many beasts as they can with their spears.' Ice Age cave-paintings show that the hunters of the Palaeolithic Age did exactly the same.

The white visitors brought the Eskimos ironware and other utensils; in return they allowed the Eskimos to present them with bone needles, stone and horn knives, scrapers, thread made from animal gut and sinew, clothes made of fur and fish-skins, wooden snow-glasses with narrow slits for the eyes and all kinds of ornaments. Harpoons with long lines attached, floats for fishing made of inflated bladders, technically perfect spear-catapults, many-headed arrows, bolas for catching birds, traps for small animals, wooden, bone and leather containers, drills for fire-making, blub-

ber lamps of steatite with a piece of moss as wick—all these astonishingly well-made testimonials to polar civilization found their way to Europe and North America, and showed the world that man had used the meagre materials of the Arctic with genius, in order to carry on his existence under the severest conditions imaginable. The Eskimos—of this every polar explorer was quite certain—did not belong to the primitive races; they were a highly intelligent, inventive race with 'a unique and marvellous civilization', as the Russian ethnologist Bogoras, who studied the Juit Eskimos of eastern Siberia, expressed himself.

Marvellous were the kayaks and umiaks, the boats for men and the boats for women, which the Eskimos constructed out of driftwood and covered with seal-skins. The polar peoples had their own dance festivals and singing contests. They had ritual ceremonies in which their shamans appeared wearing masks of wood or leather. They decorated their weapons and utensils with elegant scratched drawings, made small works of art, leather mosaics and ornaments. They had a highly organized religion with a heaven and a hell, with weather and animal gods, guardian spirits and the most varied taboos. It was a civilization that, to quote the words of the Austrian folklorist Karl Anton Nowotny, 'had affinities with ancient Asiatic cultures, but also with that of the Lapps and that of the Palaeolithic Age Magdalenians of Europe, the civilization of Cro-Magnon Man'.

Through the Eskimos the polar explorers first learnt how to live in the Arctic, how to travel there and make oneself as comfortable as possible. On their advances to the North Pole, Europeans employed dog-sleds as well as the kayaks and snow-shoes of the Eskimos, adopted their trapping and hunting methods, spent the winters as they did in igloos and ate their foods, in order to avoid deficiency diseases. Some Eskimo personalities became as familiar to the explorers as old friends. The Norwegian Otto Sverdrup had such an encounter in the north of Greenland. An Eskimo who drove up to him in a dog-sled greeted him in European fashion, was invited on board his ship and to Sverdrup's amazement could use knives and forks. Gradually Sverdrup learnt that he was the same Eskimo youth, named Kolotengva, with whom Nansen had already become friendly. Moreover: 'Kolotengva was on the way to meet Peary: the Eskimos of Smith Sound had heard of the arrival of the *Fram* as well as of Peary's *Windward* and had seized this favourable opportunity to visit the white strangers who

possessed so many extraordinary things.' So swiftly did news spread in the wastes of the Arctic.

Sverdrup also recounted many an Eskimo tragedy. 'A remarkable people!' he exclaimed, on entering an abandoned, defunct Eskimo settlement. 'Over what vast distances the Eskimos have spread in these inhospitable regions—and in a climate which to our way of thinking is inimical to all existence! Here, too, there once was heard the carefree laughter of these people of nature and the happy cries of their children. But where are they now? Did they carry on a hopeless struggle against darkness and cold, until finally the winter stocks of provisions ran out and gradually every human voice was silenced?' Whole groups and tribes of Eskimos were wiped out by famine. The thoughtless extermination of seals and wild reindeer by the Europeans has made life more difficult for the Eskimo in modern times than it was in the old days. In other ways, too, their contact with the west, despite all the sympathy shown them by the polar explorers, has not been good for them.

Innuits, 'people', is what the inhabitants of the American-Arctic archipelago call themselves. The Algonquin Indians, whose territory touches theirs in Labrador and in the Hudson Bay region, rather derogatorily named them Eskimwhan, 'eaters of raw flesh'. The first European who had an opportunity to observe them more closely was called Hans Egede and came from the island of Trondenae in northern Norway. He was a clergyman and in 1721 journeyed on a commission from the Danish king to Greenland, to see if there were any remains of Erik the Red's Vikings. He found nothing; the Vikings had vanished, but everywhere in the former Norman settlements he met Eskimos. He bartered goods with them, won their confidence and became the 'Apostle of the Eskimos'. His work *The Exploration of Greenland* contains the first worth-while accounts of the habits and customs of the natives of Greenland.

The Eskimos in Greenland continued to be objects of missionary zeal. Egede's son Poul and other missionaries built churches, schools and town-halls. When Greenland became Danish sovereign territory, the Danes mixed with the natives, and in the southern part of the country there arose a unique new human type, the 'Greenlanders', who to-day comprise the majority of the twenty-five thousand or so inhabitants of Greenland.

With the Danes, however, there came also the whale- and seal-

hunters, alcohol and the common cold, catarrh and other allied ailments. 'A slight head-cold can kill an Eskimo,' a polar explorer once said. The peoples of the polar regions lived in an atmosphere completely free from bacteria, and had discarded the necessity of resistance to the most harmless of infections, therefore they died like flies of colds in the head, bronchitis and tuberculosis. The well-meaning missionaries, who did not understand the first thing about Arctic hygiene, compelled the Eskimos to alter their style of dress and to wear European underclothes. The result was a disastrous plague of vermin. Whale-hunters and seal-trappers brought venereal diseases with them. The Eskimos were instructed how to make schnapps; they were given European weapons, with whose aid they decimated the wild life that was the basis of their existence. The enthusiasm with which the Eskimos embraced western European civilization had yet another result: the number of Etah, or Greenland natives, dwindled year by year.

Even gloomier was the picture in the American Arctic. The fur-trappers and whalers in the far north of Canada and Alaska had recognized the Eskimos as being remarkably peaceful and contented people, and of a harmless simplicity that was in itself disarming. They were also extraordinarily hospitable, and the rough seamen and adventurers who came to the Arctic with guns, traps and harpoons took advantage of this hospitality. In the first encounter between Eskimos and whalers in 1877 at Prince of Wales Cape in Alaska, the seamen brought rum ashore, made the Eskimos drunk, then stole their furs, raped their women and killed thirteen men. On the Aleutians, Russian trappers exterminated the majority of the Eskimos in a 'holy war'. In northern Canada, famine caused by the extermination of wild life resulted in regular battles between starving Indians and Eskimos.

About 1890 a number of men in Alaska realized that the dying-out of the native race was above all due to the decimation of the caribou, the wild American reindeer. One day a certain Captain Healey told the Reverend Sheldon Jackson he thought it would be wiser and more reasonable to provide the hungry Eskimos with reindeer instead of with churches and schools. Jackson agreed with him. They introduced the first Siberian reindeer to Alaska. An Eskimo teacher, Tom Lopp, organized the distribution, engaged Lapp reindeer herdsman from Scandinavia who were to teach the Eskimos how to rear their reindeer, and even set up schools for the instruction of reindeer herdsman. This example in

Alaska was followed elsewhere, until in 1928 three thousand head of reindeer were driven in a now almost legendary 'Great March' from Alaska to the Eskimo territory in northern Canada, so that here, too, famine could be overcome.

Meanwhile the proper study of Eskimo life had begun. At first the anthropologists considered the Eskimos to be related to the Lapps, then to be descendants of North American Indians. But according to more modern views they come from Asia, and as Juit, still live in north-east Siberia. Presumably they took part in one of the many racial migrations which passed over the Bering Straits into the New World, where they must have been driven northwards by stronger tribes. But this is not quite certain. There were Eskimo types also among European Ice Age men, the Chancelade race for example, and Ice Age bone tools are often strikingly like corresponding Eskimo implements. The anthropologist Hermann Klaatsch writes: 'It is not unlikely that the Eskimos are a relic of European Ice Age men who since the end of the last Ice Age migrated with their reindeer herds from Europe, across northern Asia and so to North America.' For Klaatsch goes on to say the Eskimos can be distinguished from all Mongoloid peoples 'by their extremely long skulls, a parallel for which can only be found among Ice Age Europeans'.

In more recent times the Eskimos have had two great friends and representatives; the Icelandic Canadian Vilhjamur Stefansson and the Greenlander and half-caste Eskimo Knud Rasmussen. Stefansson lived in the snowy wildernesses of the north like an Eskimo, mastered the Eskimo language, and undertook long journeys into the American Arctic, in the course of which he studied the Eskimo tribes at the mouth of the Mackenzie River and discovered a particularly light-skinned, blue-eyed, very tall tribe of Eskimos. These blue-eyed polar inhabitants, whom Stefansson described in his book *The Secret of the Eskimos*, are still a mystery. 'In isolated cases,' Stefansson reports, 'they have blond hairs in their moustaches; some moustaches are dark brown, while face and bodily proportions resemble those of sunburnt Scandinavians.' The tireless polar fanatic explored about two and a quarter million square miles from 1906, travelling on dog sleds and living on seal-meat and wild birds. His greatest achievement is perhaps the sympathy he won in America for the polar inhabitants and their fate.

Knud Rasmussen from 1902 to 1932 journeyed seven times over

the unexplored regions of Greenland and the American Arctic. In 1910 he founded in north-west Greenland the Eskimo colony of Thule, to be the starting-point for his future ethnographical expeditions. He encountered at 83 degrees of latitude on the north-east coast the most northerly human community on earth. He could look more deeply into the Eskimo soul because he, unlike Stefansson, was a half-caste Eskimo who was considered by them as one of their own. Upon Rasmussen's linguistic and archaeological researches is based the theory, still valid to-day, that the Eskimos are descended from a highly civilized race which spread from north-east Asia over the northern part of North America and the Canadian-Arctic archipelago to Greenland.

Rasmussen writes especially well about the Netsilingmiut, the seal-hunting Eskimos of Boothia Felix: 'Here from September to the middle of July there reigns a winter with a temperature between 35 and 50 degrees of frost; and the one and a half months of summer have scarcely more than two or three fine days. One might therefore imagine that this tribe must be spiritually depressed and unable to enjoy life. But the contrary is the case. The seal-Eskimos are extremely contented, always happy and healthy. In my own opinion there is no happier race on earth than these Netsilingmiut.'

In the last decades on the Asiatic coast of the Bering Sea the remains of an age-old seal-hunting civilization were excavated, which seem to undermine Rasmussen's theory about the north-east Asiatic origin of the Eskimos. This Uele culture, as it is called, is, according to the judgement of the Russian archaeologist Okladnikov, 'in many respects even higher and richer than later Eskimo civilization'. Bows and arrows were found, also javelins, barbed hooks, fish-spears, angling gear and complicatedly-constructed harpoons with bone tips. The Bering Sea community built their earth huts over a framework of whale bones, they made blubber lamps from hollowed stones and clay bowls. Thousands of years ago there were already kayaks and umiaks on the Bering Sea; there, too, ornaments, masks and animal sculptures were discovered which recall the art of Polynesia and ancient China.

Here the forefathers of the Eskimos must have stayed a long time on their migration to America, creating a north-east Asiatic branch of European Ice Age civilization. Whether they came from East Asia, from the region of the Amur, from the Siberian interior

or from the distant Palaeolithic cultures of Europe has not yet been made clear by the archaeological investigations on the coasts of the Bering Sea. Now, as then, the Eskimos are still an 'unsolved mystery of the Arctic', as Vilhjamur Stefansson once described them.

Part Three

TOTEM AND TABOO

CHAPTER VII BACK TO NATURE

CHAPTER VIII STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

CHAPTER IX THE CUSTOMS OF THE PEOPLES

CHAPTER VII

BACK TO NATURE

The lost paradise: Manitu and firewater: The Isles of the Blest: The riddle of Easter Island: In the land of the lemurs

The lost paradise

Does not human nature deserve at least that exact observation which is devoted to plants and animals?

Johann Gottfried Herder

IN 1624 A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD youth named John Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge; he was a brilliant student of puritanical severity and girlish prettiness, whom his fellow-students mockingly called 'the Lady of Christ's'. Thirty-eight years later Milton completed an epic in twelve cantos, entitled *Paradise Lost*. Milton was then completely blind and relied on the help of his daughters in his writing, perhaps that was why he sought so longingly after vanished happiness. His widow sold the copyright of *Paradise Lost* for the princely sum of eight pounds. It was not until the eighteenth century that literary critics recognized the importance of the work, and when that happened, a Frenchman was already telling the world about the paradise which humanity had really lost; that man was Jean Jacques Rousseau.

The first literary-philosophical works of this man who opposed the moral and spiritual degeneration of the eighteenth century with the challenging cry 'Back to Nature!' were concerned with 'savages', with natural men. In 1750 the Academy of Dijon had set two questions in a philosophical contest. In the first they asked 'if the arts and sciences can have any effect on the bettering of morals?' and in the second 'what is the cause of inequality among men and whether it conforms to the laws of natural history?' Rousseau, who was then fourteen, carried off both prizes, although his replies were most unconventional. He claimed that science, the arts and indeed the whole of modern civilization had con-

tributed not to the betterment but to the corruption of public morality; and that inequality among men was not a law of nature but had arisen from the idea of property, from the despotism of rulers and from the general degeneracy induced by civilization. Therefore mankind must return to a state of nature, to that of the savages and indeed of the wild animals. This ideal Rousseau saw incorporated in the Red Indians of North America who had been so graphically and convincingly described by French forest rangers, fur-trappers and adventurers that they seemed to be the perfect embodiment of Rousseau's phrase 'Man is born free'.

Rousseau brought about a great revolution in the study of racial history. Until then it had been accepted—with very few exceptions—that the savage races were degenerate forms of humanity, servants of the devil whose extermination was as justified as that of destructive pests. They were, as we have already seen, systematically slaughtered or led into slavery, their civilizations destroyed and all kinds of horrible deeds were attributed to them, in order to justify this vandalism.

Yet Rousseau had some fore-runners in this field. There were the Dominican Father Gregorio Gracia, who in the sixteenth century made ethnological comparisons between the Old and the New World, and the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún, who wrote in Aztec and Spanish a gigantic work on ancient Mexican civilization. There was Magellan's chronicler, Antonio Pigafetta, who composed intelligent descriptions of Indian, Melanesian and Malayan tribes on the first journey round the world. There was the nun Juana Inez de la Cruz, who wrote about American Indian rites in her Mexican cloister and gave up all she possessed in order to help the persecuted Indians. There were the Jesuits in Paraguay, who from 1608 to 1768 created among the Guaraní Indians an almost communist 'kingdom of Christian humanity and justice' and who, from well-considered motives, allowed neither Spaniards nor any other Europeans to enter their settlements. And there was the Jesuit Father Lafiteau who about 1724 had boldly attempted to draw parallels between the customs of the American Indians and those of the ancient Greeks, Romans, Celts and Germanic tribes.

But these were exceptions. In Europe no attention was paid to the few scholars and humanists who were hoping for ethnologically objective studies of the natives; instead people were taken in by scientific charlatans like the Leipzig professor Hans Schultze, who wrote under the name of Johannes Prätorius and who was

still, in 1670, fabricating sensational tales about monsters, witches, demons and fabulous beasts in his work *Concerning all kinds of Wonderful Peoples*.

It was Rousseau who for the first time expressed the fascinating idea that man was by nature not savage and barbaric, but good and mild-tempered. In his *Discourse on the Inequality of Men* he claimed that originally all human races were equal and had led lives of contented happiness in a natural state. But this paradisaical condition had been lost through forced labour and specialization, by the accumulation of private property and the setting-up of feudalistic forms of society. The new society of the future must take this lesson to heart and re-educate man to natural ways of thought and behaviour. Rousseau's disciples from then on regarded nature and natural men with quite different eyes.

Very shortly after the publication of the *Discourse* one of Rousseau's followers, Steebs, postulated the *Description of the Greenlanders, the Hottentots and the American races, to be compared with the Scythians, Sarmatians and ancient Germans* so that the foundation might be laid for a *History of the Civilizations of Humanity*. France's greatest natural historian, Buffon, attempted in his *Varieties of the Human Species* to determine the appearance, bodily structure, customs and geographical distribution of foreign races. The concepts of anthropology, ethnology and ethnography entered scientific vocabularies for the first time. Countless explorers set out to look for the 'noble savage' and to study him in his paradisaical natural state—Bougainville, Cummerson and Levaillant, Cook and Banks, the two Forsters.

The folklorist Adolf Bastian, one of the most distinguished of the pioneers of ethnological science, compiled a memoir in 1881 which indicated the change that had come about since Rousseau. He divides the history of exploration and ethnography into two periods—pre- and post-Rousseau. 'The first period,' he wrote, 'ended with savage battles, bloody conquests, barbaric slavery . . . Moreover, people completely misunderstood these new races, and only left room to doubt whether these creatures could really be considered as human beings. People could not get over their astonishment; and after the initial curiosity had been satisfied, the surfeited appetite, spoilt by too many exotic stimulants, craved ever cruder, grosser abnormalities. The curious was all that interested them—the savages with their anthropophagical festivals, with their

heathen horrors in the grim decorations of feathers and leaves. Such was the ethnological science of those times.'

But then came the second period, distinguished by Rousseau, Bougainville and Cook: 'Quite different was the sympathy for the children of nature, now adored almost like gods; quite different, too, the spirit in which expeditions were undertaken. It was at this period that the words "ethnology" and "ethnography" came into their own, and new ideas were in the air, ideas about the history of mankind . . . Now, at last, there was firm ground under the scientists' feet, and from then on the development of the new science was only a matter of time.'

A sound basis for ethnologists to work on was also given by the rise of natural science. The division of the races of man into the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japhet, into whites and barbarians, into Christians and heathens was followed by the first systematic classification of human facial groups. This was done by the real founder of the biological sciences, the Swedish natural philosopher Carl von Linné. He distinguished two kinds of men: a *Homo sapiens*, to whom he accorded the fine motto, 'Know thyself!' and a *Homo troglodytes*, whom he did not apostrophize in any such resounding way. Indeed by *troglodytes* Linné did not mean men in our sense of the word, but 'satyrs and Guinean bush-men' or, as we would say to-day, orang-outangs and chimpanzees. The great systematist placed the king of creation with the apes in the order of the *Primates*.

Linné divided mankind into four races—Americans, Europeans, Asiatics and Africans, in the following manner:

The American: reddish, choleric, straight-limbed, with black, straight, thick hair, wide nostrils, his face covered with freckles, his chin almost beardless. *His character:* stubborn, contented, free. *His body-covering:* painted with labyrinthine lines. *His form of society:* ruled by custom and habit.

The European: white, sanguine, fleshy, with yellow, curly hair, blue eyes. *His character:* easily moved, sharp-witted, inventive. *His body-covering:* dressed in tight-fitting garments. *His form of society:* ruled by laws.

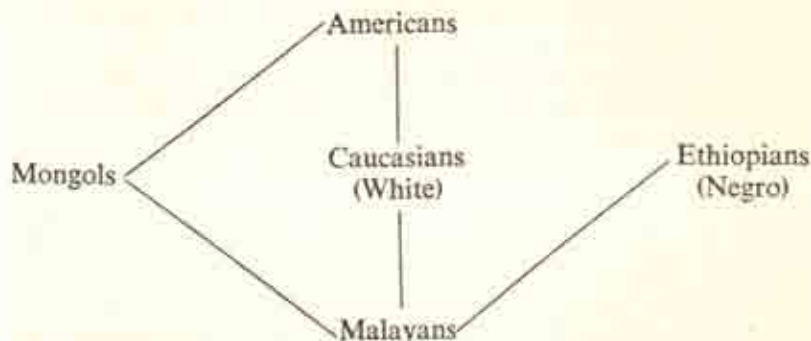
The Asiatic: yellow, melancholic, sinewy, with black hair, brown eyes. *His character:* cruel, loving finery, greedy. *His body-covering:* enveloped in flowing cloths. *His form of society:* ruled by opinions.

The African: black, phlegmatic, flabby, with coal-black,

tangled hair, velvety, smooth skin, flat nose, swollen lips, the women with Hottentot aprons and during the suckling of infants with hanging breasts. *His character*: sly, lazy, careless. *His body-covering*: smeared with fat. *His form of society*: ruled by despotic power.

These rigid, pedantic pigeon-holings are to us not without a certain comic element. Yet the first step forward had been made in the science of ethnology. *Homo sapiens* had his appointed place in the natural system, and future scholars were able to use Carolus Linnaeus' (Linné's) hidebound schematization as a starting-point for more liberal definitions.

This happened already in Linné's and Rousseau's lifetime in the tiny German university town of Göttingen, and the man who wrote the first work of anthropology was called Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Germany's highest scientific authority. Blumenbach examined human skulls from all known regions of the earth, and published in 1776 a work entitled *De generis humani varietate nativa* in which he added a fifth variety to Linné's four: the chestnut-brown Malayan race. Above all he asserted that the five races of man are not rigidly self-contained, but linked to one another. His 'Human family-tree' was a table of relationships which looked somewhat as follows:



Blumenbach included in the Caucasian race—in complete accord with modern ethnographical ideas—not only the Europeans, but also the Hither Asiatics and North Africans. He placed the Lapps and the Eskimos with the Mongolian race. His Ethiopian race was formed of Negroes and Hottentots, and his American race of various Indian tribes and peoples. His Malayan race

embraced, besides the Malaysians, the inhabitants of Oceania. Blumenbach still knew nothing about Australian aborigines, Veddars, Negritos, Papuans and pygmies. 'However great the differences in skull formations in various individuals of a single race,' he explained, 'as a general rule one can always find in each race some peculiarity of skull formation which is characteristic of that race only. These characteristic peculiarities of the skull can be found to fit whole groups and races of people.'

This opened up quite a new field of research—craniology, or the division of the human species according to the form of the skull. The Dutchman Peter Camper analysed the angles of the face and divided humanity according to the construction of the jaw into vertical- and oblique-toothed people. The Swedish zoologist and anatomist Anders Adolf Retzius classified the peoples of Europe into long-heads and short-heads, or 'Dolichocephals' and 'Brachycephals', as he termed them, and came to the conclusion that several races had contributed to the formation of the European race. From then on, the craniologists based racial classifications on Retzius' method, using a length-breadth index in the measurement of skulls. This confirmed what Rousseau and Blumenbach had already asserted; in the words of the anthropologist Johannes Ranke: 'humanity, craniologically speaking, is an integral whole whose extremest forms are linked by very finely-graded intermediate shapes'. One race can be distinguished from another 'only by more or less arbitrarily-drawn dividing-lines'.

Language research also made great advances. The first scholar who tried to sort out the babel of languages was a Spanish priest named Don Lorenzo Hervás, about 1800. The German poet Friedrich Schlegel recognized the affinities of European languages with Persian and Sanskrit. Now for the first time the 'Indo-Germanic' concept was formulated, a purely philological concept that does not coincide with the concept of the Caucasian Race. But people did not know that then. The anthropologists were casting around everywhere for aboriginal races and primordial languages from which modern races and languages might have derived. Finally in 1820 Friedrich von Adelung, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences, published his *Survey of all known languages and their dialects* and classified the peoples of the earth according to their various tongues.

But France was the real birthplace of ethnology. French seafarers and forest rangers, colonial officials, zoologists, missionaries

and world travellers had always made it a hobby to collect the utensils, weapons and ornaments of the children of nature. And when Paris, through the French Revolution and the advent of Napoleon, became the Mecca of natural philosophers and archaeologists, the first attempts began to be made to study these relics of foreign civilizations in a methodical way.

A whole staff of scholars took part in Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, and one of them, the man of the world, draughtsman and author of pornographic works Dominique Vivant Denon, founded the science of Egyptology and became the Director-in-Chief of all archaeological and ethnological collections. In Napoleon's Paris lived Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, France's first circumnavigator of the globe, who had reported on the Islands of the Blest in the Pacific and on their friendly brown-skinned inhabitants well before Captain Cook. François Levaillant, the most popular of all travellers writing then, was composing his works on natural history and on his experiences in Africa, telling of gorgeous exotic birds, of lions and giraffes, of Kaffirs, Hottentots and Bushmen. It was in Paris that Alexander von Humboldt published the results of his study-trips to Central and South America, in French, under the title *Voyage to the Equinoctial regions of the New Continent*.

Frenchmen, too, were the first to play with the fascinating idea that the peoples and races of the earth were not created in their present form, but were the result of long development. Lamarck and Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire were the first to enunciate the theory of man's descent from the animal kingdom, and although the greatest French natural philosopher of that time, Georges Cuvier, denied for decades the existence of 'human fossils', and semi-animal aboriginal races, French students of pre-history did not abandon this idea. It was in France that, long before Darwin's appearance, the first bones, tools, scratched drawings and ornaments of primeval man came to light. The human race was not five thousand years old, as had been assumed until then from the Old Testament, it must be several hundred thousand years old. And the bones and cultural residue of pre-historic man recalled strikingly those of certain primitive races still in existence.

All this was so new, and so disturbing that orthodox scholars fought long against drawing the obvious conclusions. Were the savages, as Rousseau claimed, really better men? Had non-European races really built up great civilizations? Did the highly-

developed races of modern times really come from primitive forest hunters and riders of the steppe, from the Australian aborigines, the Veddas, the Bushmen, Botocudos and Chukchi now living in remote parts of the earth? While the members of learned academies remained sceptical, the intellectuals in the salons were eagerly reading books which, inspired by Rousseau's teachings, celebrated natural man. Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's novel *Paul et Virginie*, which depicted the happiness of two children of nature on a paradisaical island and their unhappiness when brought into contact with modern civilization, was one of the greatest best-sellers of those days.

Finally in 1839 a natural philosopher broke the silence. He was called Henri Milne-Edwards and was a professor of zoology in Paris. Deeply stirred by all these new hypotheses and discoveries, he wrote an important letter to France's most celebrated historian, Thierry, urging him to found an Ethnological Society, pointing out that in future the study of the human races must be indissolubly bound up with research into pre-history. Thierry agreed with him and founded the Ethnographical Society. Four years later a second epoch-making letter was written, this time from a German natural philosopher working in Holland, Philipp Franz von Siebold. As Health Officer for the Dutch government, Siebold had got to know the Dutch East Indies; he had been attached to the Dutch embassy in Japan, where he had instructed native doctors and gathered all kinds of interesting natural historical and ethnological objects which he had come across in the Tenno's then still unknown kingdom. Siebold was of the opinion that such treasures should not be allowed to moulder away in curiosity cabinets, they must be made available to science and to the general public. And the man to whom he wrote this letter was the Nestor of all archaeologists—Esmé François Jomard.

Jomard, who had taken part in Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, had published several works on the ancient Egyptian, Indian and Ethiopian civilizations and had also issued Denon's celebrated *Description of Egypt*—the work that called Egyptology into being and indirectly contributed to the excavation and examination of the Pyramids and the royal burial-chambers, to the salvaging of the mummies and golden shrines, to the decipherment of the hieroglyphic script and to the solving of many mysteries in Egyptian civilization. He was now working as General Director of Libraries in Paris and was just the right person to realize Siebold's

dreams. Because he had a lively interest in the new study of pre-history, he also knew exactly how the future ethnological museum should be constituted and arranged.

Sixteen years later the leading surgeon of the Paris Hôpital de Saint-Antoine et la Pitié, Professor Paul Broca, began to devote himself to ethnology. He set up schools and laboratories for those desirous of becoming anthropologists and ethnologists, invented new apparatus and methods for measuring skulls and discovered the speech-centre in the human brain. He also established that the African Negroes were by no means, as had hitherto been supposed, the embodiment of a lower, human type, but on the contrary—given their slender bodies, their long legs and long skulls—belonged to those races which had developed furthest from the primordial human form, which was still then hypothetical. Broca founded the Anthropological Society of France, helped Jomard to gather the contents of private curiosity cabinets and made the sister sciences of ethnology and anthropology the most popular fields of study in his century.

Now that man had finally become the object of scientific research, world travellers set out with quite different aims in mind in order to study the 'lost paradises' of the children of nature and to find out what they could about the origin of the human race, its development and its relationship with natural environment. The customs of the noble savage were no longer held to be savage, bloodthirsty and heathen; for the first time, men were observing other races with true ethnological detachment. And the children of nature in whom Rousseau had already roused great interest and who were quickly to achieve an undreamed-of popularity were the bison hunters of the prairie—the North American Indians.

Manitu and firewater

If you do not abuse the Redskin, but deal with him honourably, then you will win him to your side, for there is in him a great ability to distinguish between good and evil.

William Penn

IT BEGAN WITH GREED for gold and slave-hunting, just as it had in the Antilles, in Mexico and South America. The Spanish explorers and conquerors who landed between 1520 and 1542 in

Florida and pressed on to Carolina, the Mississippi, Arkansas and Arizona, were looking for fairytale treasures such as Cortez and Pizarro had plundered, and for mysterious civilizations in the interior, ripe for invasion and devastation. All of them—Poncede León, Ayllón, Narváez, Cabeza de Vaca, de Soto and de Coronado—suffered sharp disappointment. For there were no Tenochtitlans and Cuzcos in North America, but only 'uncultivated land of extraordinary vastness, covered with forests, lakes and marshes'.

The inhabitants of this wilderness were, according to the words of Narváez, 'a poor and wretched people'. Nevertheless they possessed bows 'as thick as the forearm and from eleven to twelve spans long; they shot their arrows two hundred paces with such accuracy and force that they never missed their targets and even a stout breastplate was not protection enough'. This annoyed the one-eyed, red-bearded Pánfilo de Narváez. He was happy only when he met friendly tribes who did not at once shoot their arrows at him. Then he would sit calmly on his horse and watch how his troops rode down these harmless natives and, 'simply for a joke', slaughtered them left and right. His follower Hernando de Soto hunted the Indians with bloodhounds, and used them as beasts of burden. It was no wonder that the redskins became unfriendly. Yet they were generous enough to welcome into their communities various Spaniards who had been sickened by de Soto's deceits, and to allow these men to marry native girls.

It was Cabeza de Vaca who suffered the greatest surprise and Francisco Vázquez de Coronado the greatest disappointment. Cabeza de Vaca had fallen prisoner to the Indians for whom he had to dig the fields and do other manual labour; he only just managed to escape in time. For eight years he wandered with three companions in the wildernesses of the south until he was finally rescued by a Spanish slave-dealer and brought back to Mexico. De Coronado, who had heard that in the American far west there was a state 'richer than Peru, whose inhabitants had vessels and ear-rings and sweat-wipers of gold', saw the pueblo communities and had to admit that these were 'just tiny villages' without an ounce of gold in them. The inhabitants threw stones at the Spaniards, other tribes attacked them without warning, and finally de Coronado and his followers were lost for weeks on end among herds of bison.

'There was not one day on which we were not surrounded by buffaloes,' ran de Coronado's report to the Spanish viceroy. 'Our

horses broke away. . . . The buffaloes stampeded down a narrow gorge and swept our riders with them. . . . The horses vanished, saddles, bridles and everything, under the hooves of the buffaloes and were never found again. . . . 'In short, everywhere in North America—according to de Soto—'were vast steppes or great, dense forests in which the enemy Indians could conceal themselves so that it was quite impossible to find them. It is absolutely impossible to ride through these forests on horseback'. Therefore the Spanish adventurers had no more desire to continue with 'this savage way of life, far from the comforts of the Mass and removed from all rational intercourse'. From then on they avoided the inhospitable plains of North America, and only a few bold spirits still dreamed secretly of discovering 'that better land that we never caught sight of because we lost a fine opportunity by not pressing on further'.

The one ethnologically interesting account worth mentioning from the Spanish period comes from a Franciscan who first worked in Peru and whom the viceroy of Mexico had then sent to the Colorado River. Father Marcos was no gold- and slave-hunter, and the Indians respected him for that. They named him 'Hayota, the one come from Heaven', and told him much about their land. Father Marcos learnt that there were 'seven great cities with fine stone houses, many of which are two-storeyed, others three- and four-storeyed'; he saw one of these cities in the distance: 'The houses are all in fact of stone, have several storeys and flat roofs. A beautiful city, as far as I could make out, and even bigger than Mexico'. It was this report that led Francisco Vázquez de Coronado to seek for the mysterious Golden Land in the west of North America. Because he was disappointed in his hopes, Father Marcos was considered to be a shameless liar and humbug, but to-day we know that these cities did exist, and still do exist in part, though they are not as large as those of Mexico.

Father Marcos was no Spaniard, but a Frenchman from Nice, and it was Frenchmen who now seized the initiative in North America. As early as 1500 Bretons from St Malo had fished the Newfoundland Banks; about 1524 a French expedition explored the Hudson Bay and in 1534 Jacques Cartier, also a Breton from St Malo, voyaged on a royal commission 'to the New Lands, in which there is said to be much gold and other valuable things'. Cartier sailed up the St Lawrence into Canada, heard of the Great Lakes and was of the opinion that he had happened upon

'the most fertile land that I ever did see'. Together with the nobleman Sieur de Roberval he led the first French settlers to Canada, most of them being prostitutes and convicts who were unable to make good in the wilderness. Although his plans for colonization fell through he laid the foundations for what was later to become French Canada.

Jacques Cartier was a man of quite different stamp from that of the Spanish conquerors. He stood throughout on good terms with the natives. He was the first Frenchman to make contact with the Huron tribes who later were to be France's most faithful allies in the war against the British and the Iroquois. 'These people can with justice be called savages,' he wrote, 'for they are the most wretched on earth. Apart from their canoes and nets, the whole tribe possessed not a single object worth more than five sous.' Nevertheless he did not slaughter these 'savages', but healed their sick and found out from them a cure for scurvy, a pine extract which the Hurons used to drink regularly.

Cartier took the chieftain Donnacona back to Paris with him, he was a Red Indian Münchhausen, who told François I all kinds of fabrications about gold and silver mines, rubies, spices, dwarfs, one-legged and winged men in the land he had come from. The friendly Donnacona did not want to spoil the fun for the Frenchmen, who were hoping to find in Canada a second Mexico. But the chieftain died in Paris before a second expedition could get started; and when Roberval and his previously-convicted colonists encountered in the land depicted as an earthly paradise not gold but pyrites and instead of perpetual summer really severe winters, the French king's interest in the 'American France' was soon extinguished.

But Jacques Cartier has gone down forever in ethnological history as the first exact chronicler of the Redskins, the Indians of North America. He tried their tobacco 'that tastes of ground pepper', and visited their settlements. 'It is circular in shape and surrounded on all sides by high palisades,' he wrote of one of their villages which later was to become the Canadian city of Montreal, 'The village has only one entrance, which can be closed. Over the gate and at various other parts of the fortifications there is a kind of gallery, reached by ladders from the interior. Inside the stockade there are about fifty houses, fifty paces long by twelve to fifteen paces wide, each with many rooms. In the centre is a large open space. There the fire is lighted and the people live

there together. At night the men, women and children retire to the rooms afore-mentioned. Above the living-quarters there are also granaries where they keep the maize for baking into bread.'

Not until half a century later did France take up Cartier's plans again. Samuel de Champlain voyaged to Canada, founded Quebec and reached the Great Lakes. In the course of the seventeenth century French travellers and forest rangers wandered over half of North America. The fur-dealer Jolliet and Father Marquette explored the Mississippi in Indian canoes. The Franciscan monk Hennepin gazed in wonder at the Niagara Falls, 'the most beautiful and at the same time most terrifying sight in the world', as he said. The most outstanding of all French explorers of that time, Robert Chevalier de la Salle, got to know the Mississippi area from its source to its mouth, and founded Louisiana. La Salle also was unlucky with his colonists; disappointed compatriots who did not like Louisiana murdered him in 1687. But other Frenchmen liked North America; the trappers and merchants who travelled between Canada and the mouth of the Mississippi had long ago realized that the woods and prairies of the American north concealed more precious treasures than gold and jewels—wild game and costly furs. In order to get one's hands on these, one must be on good terms with the natives and know how to deal with them.

So from the very beginning the French forest-rangers established good relationships with the Red Indians, and it was soon evident that the 'bloodthirsty Redskins' of Spanish and English reports were in reality hospitable people, honourable dealers and faithful friends. The French wandered with them over the plains and through the woods and forests, sat round their camp-fires and often became Indians themselves. Many allowed themselves to be adopted by Indian tribes, danced Indian war-dances, wore Indian mocassins, painted their faces in Red Indian fashion and married Indian girls. On the other hand, the Indians—as a Chippewa chief once said—'felt the French were members of the family'. The adaptability of the French was so great that General Frontenac did not hesitate to dance round totem-poles and camp-fires dressed in all his martial regalia, in front of other pioneers and Indian spectators.

The French episode, despite some friction and skirmishes, was a romantic interlude in the otherwise bloody history of the conquest of America. It is full of amusing and moving anecdotes.

Samuel de Champlain for example interfered in a civil strife between Hurons and Iroquois—coming in on the side of the Hurons, according to French tradition. He tried hard to explain to the Redskin braves how to storm an Iroquois palisade according to French military rules—in vain. 'But one must forgive them', he wrote to his king, 'for they are no soldiers; there is something in them that defies all discipline'. Champlain, who mastered the Hurons' language, roared orders at the Redskins 'till I nearly shouted my head off'. He was wounded by an Iroquois arrow. He was shattered to see that the battle, instead of running true to military rules, degenerated into a stream of angry words directed at him by both sides. Finally both the Hurons and the Iroquois pleaded with the 'Flenchi', the French, to keep out of Indian quarrels in the future; it was the French, they said, who did not respect the rules. . . . These very Hurons told a French missionary, eager for converts: 'You want to talk to us about the soul, and you don't even know how to catch a beaver!'

The French also had trouble with the Iroquois in certain cases. A Canadian forest ranger, Pierre Esprit Radisson, fell into Iroquois hands and was tortured. 'They tore four nails from my fingers', he said later, 'and would have me sing, though I did not feel at all inclined to do so. When night came they brought me, still naked, to a strange hut and bound me to a stake'. The intervention of an Iroquois family saved him from further tortures.

The French Captain Pierre Gualtier Varennes de la Vérendrye had to take part in a great feast of brotherhood with the Assiniboins. Each Redskin brave wanted to be adopted by the French Captain, one after the other they laid a hand on his head, 'and wept copiously'—not because they were sad, but on ritual grounds. The same Vérendrye was the man who discovered the Mandan tribe who appear in literature about America as the 'white Indians'. But the Frenchman realized that they were true Indians who simply had lighter skins than their neighbours: 'They look no different from the other natives and go naked, except for a casually-worn buffalo hide, under which they wear no trousers'.

Jolliet and Marquette saw on the east bank of the Mississippi in present-day Illinois the first Indian rock-drawings, two hundred years before their Ice Age European counterparts were discovered in France and Spain: 'There were painted on a rock two monsters which at first terrified us and which even the bravest Indians dared not look at for too long. They were as big as a calf, with

horns on their heads like a wapiti stag and with fearful expressions, red eyes, and bearded like a tiger. The face resembled that of a man. The body was covered with scales and the tail so long that it went twice round the body, over the head, and back through the legs to end in a fish-tail. . . . In fact these figures were so well painted, and so remarkable, that we could hardly believe that the artists could have been Indians.'

But the Indians had indeed painted these mythological beasts. Later in the regions of the Mississippi and Illinois, countless more rock-paintings were discovered, and French travellers stated that the Indians were still bringing sacrifices to these painted beasts well into the seventeenth century. Then for the first time the scholarly world got an inkling about Indian totemism, about the representation and worship of animal-like protective deities. The word 'Totem' itself comes from the Chippewa language, and was introduced into the scientific vocabulary in 1791 by the English explorer Long, who in his work *Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter*, has the following to say about it:

'Part of the religious superstition of the savage consists in the fact that each one of them possesses his own "totem" or spirit which is well-disposed towards him, and which, he believes, protects him. They believe that the "totem" takes on the form of this or that animal, and therefore they never kill, hunt or eat the animal which they believe to be their "totem".' Long could not guess that totemistic representations would be discovered all over the earth, among both savage and civilized races, and that Europeans as long as ten to twenty thousand years before had practised a similar cult. Nor could he know that the great psycho-analyst Sigmund Freud one hundred and twenty years later would choose the totem to demonstrate some of his theories.

The forest rangers, 'the prodigal sons of France', did not always behave like angels in Indian territory. They were often a thorn in the flesh to missionaries. A chaplain once lashed his flock of fur-dealers, trappers and half-caste Indians with the following words: 'With the permission of his Excellency the Governor I hereby admonish you, that you are all whores, heathens, gluttons, yea, avaricious, covetous and unscrupulous blasphemers, rolling in the filthy troughs of hideous vice!' But what did they care? They lived in 'the most beautiful country in the world', as La Salle called it; they hunted and laughed, loved and danced with the Indians, and the tribes of the Shawnee, Miami, Creek and Delaware were

their best friends. All this came to an end after the Seven Years' War. At the Peace of Versailles in 1763 France had to hand over her American possessions to England, and the Redskins wept for the departed Flenshi and never quite recovered from the shock of meeting the puritanical English colonists who took the place of their adored and faithful trappers.

The English first knew the North American coast as pirates, then as slave-traders. In the years 1584 to 1587 Sir Walter Raleigh tried to found a colony in Virginia. But the colonists disappeared without a trace in the forests. Later attempts were finally successful, and John Smith, who in 1606 founded the first English town in Virginia, was a good friend of that seafarer to whom we owe the discovery of that part of the earth where New York stands now. His name was Henry Hudson. December 3rd, 1609, the date on which Hudson's ship reached the island of Manhattan, impressed itself so deeply upon the Indian mind that one hundred years later they were still talking about it. Hudson, who was in the service of the Dutch, had shipped all kinds of alcoholic beverages, and kindly invited the Indians to partake of them. In a few hours the whole island tribe was roaring drunk. This memorable occasion is said—at least according to an Indian tradition—to have given the name to Manhattan; Manna-hata, 'Place of Drunkenness'.

Soon after that English settlers appeared in New England and Pennsylvania. Their leader, the Quaker William Penn, had a concern for the fair treatment of the Iroquois and the Delawares, though after his death the Indians were done out of their land in Pennsylvania by crafty 'frontier wardens'. In the far north the fur-traders and trappers of the Hudson Bay Company tramped through the snowy wildernesses, skirmished with French trappers and roused the Iroquois against the French. The Scots trader Alexander Mackenzie was the first to cross the North American continent—it took him from 1789 to 1793—reach the Canadian Arctic coast and have highly interesting encounters with the northern Indian tribes.

They were very civilized people. One tribe on the Bella-Coola River lived in pile-dwellings made of cedarwood, with steps leading up to the door and having inside several hearths, living and sleeping quarters, store-rooms and smoking-chambers. 'The hair of the women,' writes Mackenzie in his rescription of these Athabaskans, 'is tied over the ears in broad, loose knots and plaited with great

care. Some decorated their braids with pearls, which made a very pretty effect. The men are clothed with leather, their hair is clean and neatly combed and their skin is lighter in colour than that of other Indians. Their eyes, though penetrating and bold, are not of the dark colour which one observes in most Indians, but are grey-blue with a streak of red in them.'

Such descriptions of Indians were heard very seldom from British lips. There were, to be sure, English pioneers who had much understanding of the natives and handled them in a spirit of human kindness—Daniel Boone, for example, who opened up Kentucky and was the model for Cooper's 'leather-stocking'. Boone also saw to it that the negotiations with the Cherokee which led to the colonization of Kentucky ended with a formal trade agreement, the Cherokee receiving ten thousand pounds worth of goods for the vast lands of Kentucky. Chief Oconostota was speaking prophetically when he said: 'This is only the beginning. The white man has come in ships over the great sea; the great rivers have not stopped him, and now he is going into the wild places and has walked over the inhospitable mountains. He will not stop even there. He will always drive the red man before him, even across the Mississippi he will drive him, and drive him ever further west, till the red man no longer runs in the forests and hunts the wild creatures.'

What the Cherokee chieftain said in 1775 was fulfilled to the letter. When the United States had gained their independence, the conquest of the Wild West began, with broken treaties, gold-rushes, annexation of land, exterminatory campaigns and a driving of the Indians into the most deserted and infertile regions of the land. Now began the era of the great Indian tragic heroes whose deeds fill so many youthful tales of adventure: Pontiac, Gach-ga-wa-china, Tecumseh, Sitting Bull and Red Cloud. The Indians realized that the Mecanchikan, the frontiersmen, were much more dangerous than the Agalashimi, the colonial settlers from England; in the War of Independence they all, practically without exception, fought on the British side. Later they suffered bitterly for that. For the victorious colonists, the Yankees, as they were referred to now in Indian circles, the Redskins through their partisanship of the British cause were now anybody's pigeon. 'The only good Indian is a dead Indian', a Yankee general once said.

An American historian has called the hundred years of Indian

extermination 'the Century of Shame'. What was it that caused these English-speaking settlers to act so differently from the French? The cause is not far to seek when one compares the happy-go-lucky Jacques Cartier with those sour-faced bigots, the Pilgrim Fathers. The *coureurs de bois* were glad to escape from European customs in the forests and prairies, they had no racial or religious prejudices and found that it was as easy to get on with Indian men and women as it was with the men and women at home. The puritanical settlers from England considered themselves a 'chosen people'; they compared their voyage westwards to the conquest of the Promised Land by the Jews, saw themselves as 'Soldiers of God' and looked down upon the Indians as Philistines, Moabites and Amalechites. Whenever they murdered Indians, they piously pointed to the deeds of Samson, David and to the Book of Joshua, and wished to build a 'New Zion' on earth soaked in Indian blood.

The conquest of the Wild West began in 1804 with an expedition by Meriwether Lewis and William Clarke. Lewis and Clarke crossed the prairies, pressed on to the Rocky Mountains and behaved very well towards the Indians. But a few years later countless covered wagons began rolling across the prairies towards the west, leading to the rebellion of the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh. As early as 1810 a visitor to the present-day state of Indiana, the Frenchman Marquis Voiney, was horrified to see what the traders, farmers and frontiersmen had meanwhile done to the Indians: 'Men and women start wandering the streets early in the morning solely in order to get hold of some brandy. They give up their furs, their jewellery, their clothes, in order to procure this firewater which they pour down their gullets until they completely lose their senses. . . . At all times of the day one can see a dozen or so Indians, sacrifices to brandy, lying around grunting and snoring in the streets and lanes.'

The Puritans saw the Indians ruined by modern civilization and by firewater. But in 1832 two painters and a natural philosopher, George Catlin, Karl Bodmer and the Prince of Wied found that in reality they were quite different. They re-discovered the Noble Savage in the Wild West, the ideal being for whom Rousseau had had such enthusiasm and who was remembered with so much nostalgia and regret in France. Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied, one of the most important zoologists and collectors of that time, travelled with the Swiss painter Karl Bodmer from

1832 to 1834 in the region of the Upper Missouri and on his return home issued a splendid travel book, illustrated by Bodmer, which showed Europeans for the first time Indian tribes in their natural state. And George Catlin, a painter from Pennsylvania, spent eight years living among the Indians and published a book with three hundred steel engravings under the title of *Letters and notes on the manners, customs and conditions of the North American Indians*. This was the first of a long series of works in sympathy with the Indians which were to effect a great change in popular feeling.

Catlin unmasked as lies the propaganda about the bestiality of the Redskins. He visited forty-eight different tribes, painted and drew fifteen hundred pictures of their lives, their habits and rites, learned the buffalo dances, practised the hunting magic, studied taboos, medicine and attended the Indian festivals. He came to this conclusion: 'I have for a long time observed with critical eyes the faces of these sons of the prairies, that no cares have ever clouded . . . these good-hearted and generous people are still untouched by the vices of the so-called civilized world: the honour of our country, the honour of every member of the Republic, the claims of humanity demand that our government act firmly, now, to prevent the remains of the Indian race from falling victims to the plagues of modern society which are rapidly encroaching upon them.' One of these plagues was the advance of the white man west across the prairies. Yet because the American government was extremely desirous of winning the vast hinterlands, it disregarded the appeal and took not the slightest preventive action.

The number of Indians in North America before its discovery by Columbus has been reckoned, perhaps optimistically, at about sixteen million. Other statistics speak of only one and a half to five million. Whatever the number, after the conquest of the Wild West there existed in the United States barely more than two hundred thousand pure-blooded Redskins. At last the conscience of those responsible was moved, and the unprecedented destruction of the Indians was followed by an equally unprecedented veneration. Indians became the heroes of books and films, relics of Indian tribes to-day receive millions for the land that was stolen from them, and proof of Indian blood in his family tree has long been considered by the American as a kind of diploma of nobility. The number of Indians still living in reservations and tribal com-

munities is said to have risen to three hundred and fifty thousand—too few indeed to give the Indian race a decent chance of survival. The red man became a much-admired, hero-worshipped, tragic museum-piece, so long as he did not disappear in the grey anonymity and conformity of modern civilization.

The descendants of his one-time destroyers to-day dream over books and in the cinema sigh over films about the 'lost paradise' for which Rousseau longed. The tendency to represent the life of the native as an existence of paradisaical innocence dominates the literature, the cinema and the thoughts of the vast majority of people. This is the voice of civilized man's bad conscience speaking. 'We take our hats off to the Indians,' as the old frontier poet Joseph Dodridge said over a hundred years ago, 'we honour them because of their resistance . . . I do not believe that any race has the right to civilize another.'

The Isles of the Blest

That we in our European languages should call these people savages is pig-headed, totally unjustified folly. What barbarians we are! We have taken away all this people's sense of modesty and inoculated them with greed and rapacity.

*Adelbert von Chamisso on the
Polynesians*

SOMETHING ASTONISHING had come to pass—something that had never happened since the white man had begun to make other human races his subjects. A new race had been discovered, but the white man had not turned up his nose and called them heathen barbarians; instead he had greeted them enthusiastically as the ideal race—'people without vices, class prejudices, material desires or dissensions'. The 'Isles of the Blest' had been discovered—the dreamland of the South Seas.

It was the example of Rousseau's way of thinking that led to this estimate of the Polynesians, and it was Frenchmen whose experiences and impressions seemed to confirm the teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In 1766, when Rousseau's cry 'Back to Nature!' had become the doctrine of salvation for all revolutionary spirits in France, Louis Antoine de Bougainville began

the first French voyage round the world with two ships, *La Boudeuse* and *L'Etoile*, and a staff of experts. He was looking for Easter Island, reached Tahiti, sailed past innumerable atolls and coral reefs and discovered the mysterious 'Islands of Solomon' reported by the Spaniards—the Solomon Islands. The black population of the Solomon Islands were hardly what he had been looking for, and therefore he waxed all the more enthusiastic over the light-brown Polynesians of Tahiti, which he called 'La Nouvelle Cythère', comparing it with classical Cytherea, the birthplace of Aphrodite. One of his scientific staff, a pupil of Buffon, Philibert Commerson wrote: 'They know of only one God—Love! Every day is devoted to this god; the whole island of Tahiti is a temple, all women there are his altars, and all men his serving priests. And what women! They are the rivals of our great beauties, sisters of the Graces—and all of them completely naked!'

The South Sea descriptions of Bougainville and Commerson became world best-sellers. Later explorers also fell under the spell completely. 'The whole landscape,' as Captain Cook, otherwise so reserved, wrote about Tahiti, 'gives the impression of belonging to one of those poetic fairytales we read about Arcadia.' The German poet Adelbert von Chamisso, who as a natural scientist took part in the Russian voyage round the world under Otto von Kotzebue, covered many pages with enraptured descriptions of the free-living habits and natural aristocracy of the South Sea Islanders.

What was it that so strongly impressed these European travellers in the South Seas? It amounted to the hope that here they had found Rousseau's earthly paradise, a natural civilization in which the natives were friendly and hospitable, where the women and girls were insatiable for love, where there were frequent feasts of music, dance and singing, and a carefree life among the scenic splendours of Polynesian coral islands and atolls. 'Although these little islands lie in the equatorial regions,' enthused Domény de Rienzi, 'they are constantly caressed by cooling winds and therefore have the same temperature as the ocean from which their considerable charms emerge. They rejoice in perpetual Spring, which is disturbed but seldom by storms, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes; everywhere they afford enchanting sights.'

Countless enthusiasts sought out the 'Isles of the Blest', stayed there, and married Polynesian women. Painters like Gauguin and Pechstein found there their most beautiful subjects. But the happy

inhabitants of the islands had a dark side to their lives; on several islands cannibalism, child-murder and other customs were practised. All this was overlooked, repressed or at least favourably explained away by the enthusiasts.

Polynesia belongs to the most remarkable region in which man has ever settled. It reaches from the Palau Islands to Easter Island and from New Zealand to Hawaii, covering over a hundred and twenty degrees of longitude and eighty degrees of latitude. The greater part of this area is sea. There is only one land complex of any size, the two islands of New Zealand; the rest of the land consists of countless island groups and tiny atolls. So the Polynesians became children of the sea, the very best fishermen, swimmers and sailors that human history has ever known.

None of the explorers who visited the South Seas doubted for a moment that the Polynesians, despite their nakedness, their Stone Age weapons and implements and their primitive community dwellings belonged to a civilized race. When the former German Chancellor von Bülow once referred to the Samoans as 'a pack of savages', there was a storm of protest in the Reichstag. The West owed every respect to a race which built perfect outrigger boats and covered distances in them which even the frigates of Cook's time and the nineteenth-century fast clippers could not always equal.

Cook has described such outrigger canoes—pirogues as they were called—in detail. He saw at Tahiti 'a fleet of one hundred and sixty double-pirogues fifty to sixty feet in length, well equipped and armed. Besides these ships of war there were also one hundred and sixty smaller double-pirogues, all of them with tiny huts on their decks and provided with sails. . . . In this flotilla there must have been approximately no less than seven thousand six hundred men.' The truly Polynesian invention which was found nowhere else in the world was the outrigger, a balancing device whose weight prevented the boat from overturning. If two pirogues were joined together and made into a prahik or double-pirogue, then the vessel was practically unsinkable. Moreover, the outrigger doubled the speed of the boat. According to a reckoning by Admiral Anson Polynesian pirogues ten metres long could, thanks to their gigantic sails, attain a speed of twenty knots.

The most remarkable vessel invented by the Polynesians was the prau, a South Sea racing-yacht. The French nautical expert Jean de la Varenne in his book *La navigation sentimentale*

describes it as follows, 'this vessel consists of a spindle-shaped float made of light but solid wood, on which ship's-sides of bark are sewn. Its outrigger, also of solid wood, is always on the lee side. The cross-beams which join the vessel to the outrigger, are covered with planks on which a hut or a protective canopy can be built. A gigantic sail, whose surface is easily three hundred times as big as a cross-section of the boat, spreads over the prow and gives the vessel incomparable speed. The most remarkable thing is that when tacking it is never necessary to turn into the wind. The lee-side of the ship is almost completely flat and prevents drifting. When the manoeuvre is over, the prow becomes the stern and it goes on in the new direction, by which much time is gained. . . . The prau is the most sporting and the fastest, as well as the simplest vessel in existence'.

The greatest period of South Sea exploration and enthusiasm was between 1768 and 1779, during which years Captain Cook undertook his three voyages. The son of a working-class man, James Cook was the first explorer in a new, more humane era in which the idealists hoped that the conqueror's sword would be replaced by the scientist's pen. 'I command you,' Cook clearly told his crew, 'to strive to win the friendship of the natives in every decent way and to treat them with all kindness.' Before landing on Tahiti, he gave precise instructions about the proper ordering of barter and handling of the coloured female population. He even took the trouble to assure the Tahitians that he had come to Tahiti simply in order to observe the transit of the planet Venus and to make some astronomical calculations.

The fulfilment of scientific tasks—the observation of Venus, the search for the Antarctic 'Southland', the geographical measurements and cartographical research—was at first more important to Cook than any attempt at colonization. He took outstanding scholars with him—Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander on the first voyage, Johann Reinhold Forster, his seventeen-year-old son Georg and the Swede Anders Sparrman on the second, and William Anderson on the third—he was personally deeply interested in geographical, zoological and ethnological questions and became gradually a man of science himself. And if he had his difficulties with the professorial members of the crew, who found their bunks too narrow, the meals too lacking in variety and the routes too unacademic, yet there was an atmosphere of serious scientific purpose on his ships the *Endeavour*,

the *Resolution*, the *Adventure* and the *Discovery*. It is a bitter irony of fate that most of the tyrants of the Conquista came scatheless out of their adventures, while the finest of all British explorers, because of a stupid misunderstanding connected with the laws of taboo, was killed by the otherwise friendly Hawaiians.

Europeans have never fully understood the Polynesian taboo (or 'ta-pu', as it is really called). Almost every religion has a belief in something irrational, mysterious and strange that possesses power from which good or evil forces come. 'It can be situated in men, in animals and in lifeless objects,' writes the ethnologist Hans Findeisen; 'It gives its fetish its magical power, exists in magical incantations, in libations, in shamans and medicine-men as well as in the relics of the saints and in faith-healing. . . . It is usually indifferent to morality, can destroy or bless—but one thing it does demand: veneration, the respect of the taboo.' In Polynesia the respect for the irrational dominated the whole religion: the gods of the South Seas were not holy, they were taboo. And everything was taboo which was connected with religious rites, with the supernatural and with religious ceremonial.

According to Hans Nevermann, a South Sea explorer, 'the mats, articles of clothing and implements belonging to a chief were held to be taboo and might not be touched by the common people. Tortoise-flesh was for everyone but chiefs and priests a forbidden food, taboo. The priests themselves were taboo, and even the shadow of their houses was taboo, so that no one dared step on them. . . . During fishing expeditions those who remained at home were placed under a rigid taboo and had to do nothing. If a man were slain in a fight, he and his weapons were taboo for ten days; no one dared touch them. There were special taboos concerning birth, sickness and death, the planting of crops, fishing-grounds and boat-building yards. Taboos were especially numerous in everything that touched religion—the places where religious ceremonies were held, the representations of the gods, implements used in the rites, priests and god-like chieftains, and the animals that certain tribes considered to be incarnations of their deities.'

There were also material taboos. When certain foods were taboo during a bad harvest, the imposition of a taboo was rational economics; if persecuted people could seek right of asylum on ground that was taboo, this belonged to Polynesian systems of jurisdiction. But only priests or chiefs could proclaim such taboos. Even to-day this is not quite clear to colonial settlers. For example,

Hans Nevermann reports that on Tahiti there are traffic signs with the word 'Taboo' on them, meaning 'No Entry'. The Tahitians nearly die of laughing over this, for the white can set up a 'No Entry' sign, but only the gods can proclaim something 'taboo'.

Another misunderstanding which was to dog Cook continually on the South Sea Islands concerned the apparently all-too-willing attitude of the women towards his men. The first British seamen in Polynesia, John Byron, Philip Carteret and Samuel Wallis, had recounted their experiences in this respect with great gusto and relish. Wherever Cook went, the Polynesian nymphs offered themselves to his crew in exchange for a piece of iron, an article of clothing, a few glass beads. Cook was no puritan, but he had one great objection to this indiscriminate love-making, he feared the spread of venereal diseases. On the one hand the Spanish and French had already infected various Polynesians, and on the other his own crew was not above suspicion in this matter of health; the inhabitants had indeed given the name 'British sickness' to the disease of syphilis. . . . 'I wanted the European visitors to have no part in the crime of infecting this unlucky race with such a frightful scourge; it is already all too common here.'

Cook's attempts to prevent the exchange of weapons and shirts for feminine favours, to reduce opportunities for making secret rendezvous and to curtail the amorous visits of his men to the islands stir our sympathies. He introduced the 'Saturday-night's drink' on board ship, so that the sailors 'might drink to the health of their female friends in England and not utterly forget them in the midst of Tahitian charms'. He ordered the closest watch to be kept on the ship, but in vain. He might just as well have tried to guard a sackful of fleas. In the end he became resigned. 'I allow consorting with women, because I cannot prevent it; but I shall never condone it, because I always fear the consequences.'

What actually happened on the islands? Were the Polynesian ladies particularly amorous, the Polynesian morals particularly lax, and the dream-islands no better than brothels? At the time of Cook and Bougainville the great anthropologists were still not born—scholars like Ploss, Buschan, Reitzenstein, Malinowski and Margaret Mead, who later were to describe the custom of 'guest-prostitution'. As we know, such a lending-out of women was common in many races, for example among the Canaanites, the Babylonians, the Lydians and Etruscans, among several African tribes, the American Indians, the Eskimos, the Chukchi, on Borneo,

on Timor and, says Marco Polo, even among the Tibetans: 'Foreigners are here received in a very friendly way, and while the menfolk leave them alone with their wives and daughters, the latter make themselves willingly available to the guests. The acceptance of this sign of hospitality is considered to be a great honour, and they believe that in this way they partake of heavenly blessings.'

'Guest prostitution' has nothing at all to do with prostitution as such. It is, as Kaj Birket-Smith declares in his *History of Civilization*, perhaps 'a survival of the ancient matriarchal cultures', but in any case it is based on ritual and religion. The guest is for primitive peoples and for many civilized peoples something unusual. He comes from another world, can bring danger with him, but he may also be a messenger from the gods bringing good fortune. One must treat him carefully, and do homage, and the greatest homage that can be done him is to offer him the women of the family or the tribe. In Polynesian society this guest ritual—at least according to western notions—took on a licentious character because the young South Sea maidens enjoyed complete freedom in their choice of lovers and nobody gave a fig for virginity.

The first European traveller in the South Seas who tried to leave his western conceptions of morality at home and understand the fundamental nature of Polynesian 'guest prostitution' was Adelbert von Chamisso. In his *Journey round the World*, he writes: 'Modesty is a virtue laid down by European laws. In a state closer to nature than ours the wife is bound only to the man whose possession she becomes. The man lives from hunting; the wife looks after his weapons and cooks what he catches; she is a servant. The husband has no duty towards a foreigner or a stranger; he may kill him and take his possessions. But if he grants the stranger his life, then he also owes him the other good things of life. The meal is prepared for everyone, and the guest needs a woman. On a higher level of civilization, hospitality becomes a virtue, and the man of the house waylays the stranger and draws him under his tent or roof, so that he may bring the highest blessing to his home. Then he willingly, as a happy duty, offers the guest his wife; it would be an insult to refuse such an offer. This is pure, unspoilt morality.'

After the colonization of the South Seas there was soon no more pure, unspoilt morality. In many places guest prostitution became real prostitution. The contact with whites brought about such a

complete abandonment of all moral restraint that it is to-day difficult for a scholar to reconstruct and determine what kinds of moral conduct and society once existed there.

In Cook's time, the natives were feasted and given presents, 'in order to give them the loftiest notions about the might and generosity of the British nation; tools, cattle and seeds were brought in, to show them our good will'. But Cook was so far in advance of his time that he was able to guess the future results of this 'good will'. 'The metal tools which they have received from us will be worn out, and then the day will come when the Polynesians will have lost all knowledge of the use of their native tools. A stone axe is now a strange object to them, as was an iron axe only eight years ago.' Already within a few years European junk began to replace the beautiful Polynesian hand-made objects, and the naïve islanders, each one an enthusiast for anything new, practically committed cultural *hara-kiri*. In the twenty years between 1777 and 1797 the number of Polynesians dwindled by eighty per cent; on Hawaii it sank within the century from four hundred thousand to twenty thousand. . . .

Other undertakings followed James Cook's expeditions, but their leaders were not so humane, their scientists were not so scrupulous and their crews knew no restraint whatsoever. There came whalers, Puritan missionaries, warships that led to the taking of the islands by force. 'They did immeasurable damage,' as one of Cook's biographers, the natural scientist Edwin Hennig writes. 'They introduced alcohol, with all its disorders and abuses, venereal diseases, money-grabbing; they destroyed the natives' careless health, honesty, original stamina and spiritual harmony which in the South Seas had developed such astonishingly poetic forms of society and created such wonderful dances, ornaments and architecture.'

England and France, Spain, the Netherlands, Russia, the United States and finally also Germany and Japan announced their claims on the South Seas. But Tahiti was to have the strangest history of all the islands under their various dominations. Cook had already raised the British flag there. In 1824 a young English missionary named Pritchard appeared there in order to convert Queen Pomare IV and her people to Anglican Christianity. Pritchard was an energetic, logical person; he told the Queen that he alone had the monopoly in conversions and that any French priest who might put in an appearance should be sent packing. Queen Pomare fully

agreed to this, for the Reverend Pritchard made a good impression on her. But four years later—Pritchard meanwhile had acquired a farm in the interior where he baptized, planted sugar-cane and had a nice little business—the first Frenchman appeared, a Captain Dupetit-Thouars. Queen Pomare liked him very much better than the Anglican cleric; besides, his frigate, as Pritchard later furiously declared, 'bore the name *Venus*', and the Captain and the Queen lived up to this charming name. Finally, the Frenchman parted from the island's ruler with the promise that Tahiti would become Catholic and French.

Meanwhile Pritchard had kept quiet on his farm, for the *Venus* was armed with cannon. When the Captain had left, he came to see the Queen, thumped with his fist on the treaty, was rewarded with a sweet smile and given a written promise that Tahiti was British. But he would not trust the Queen's sweet reasonableness, and with the charter of the new British Protectorate in his pocket he sailed back to England, where, to his fury, he learnt that Pomare, shortly before his departure, had signed a similar agreement with the French. Meanwhile Dupetit-Thouars had returned. . . . Pritchard, too, returned post haste to Tahiti, this time also taking cannon along with him. Pomare folded him rapturously in her arms, once more signed an agreement that Tahiti should be a British Protectorate, and went on smiling radiantly. Then Dupetit-Thouars turned up, declared himself to be the legal husband of Pomare, had the Reverend Gentleman arrested and deported to England, while Pomare looked on with sunny smiles. And thus, because a French captain knew better how to handle women than a British missionary, the island of Tahiti became not an English but a French colony.

When foreign flags had been hoisted, foreign officials appointed and foreign customs introduced on all the islands, the scholarly world at last began to wonder who the Polynesians were, and where they came from. Some ethnologists classed them with the Malaysians as Malayan-Polynesians. Now in fact the Polynesian language is related to the Indonesian, but in appearance the South Sea Islanders recall Europeans rather than south-east Asians. There were other mysterious elements which Cook and his companions, the two Forsters, had found very puzzling, and the greatest mystery concerned an island on which the Dutch merchant and seaman Jacob Roggeveen had landed in 1722, on Easter Day.

The riddle of Easter Island

We were struck with amazement when we saw these standing figures. For we could not understand how it was possible for people without ropes and pulleys to have erected such statues. *Jacob Roggeveen, 1722*

THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY was not quite satisfied with Captain Roggeveen. They had sent him to the South Seas so that he might discover the mythical riches of Davisland, but instead he brought back a report of a few unimportant islands. One of them which he had reached on Easter Day and had therefore called Easter Island—its real name was *Te Pito o te Henua*—had especially impressed him because there he had seen 'stone images of gods easily thirty feet high' before which the natives crouched, raising their arms up and down. The business men were not in the least interested in stone statues, and from then on Jacob Roggeveen had to spend the rest of his days in his native Middelburg without ever seeing the South Seas and Easter Island again.

This fabulous Davisland was later thought to be Easter Island and to-day is identified as the island of Mangareva. The English pirate Edward Davis, who about 1697 roamed the seas between South America and Polynesia in search of Spanish treasure-ships, had cast a fleeting glance at the formidable cliffs of an island in the East Pacific. He thought it must be a cape belonging to a southern continent, and this was the report he brought back to England. This continent was provisionally named Davis' land. That no such continent exists, excepting the Antarctic, was not made clear until Cook's voyages.

We would have known practically nothing about Roggeveen and the existence of Easter Island had there not been aboard the Dutch ship a soldier from Mecklenburg who was also a writer. His name was Carl Friedrich Behrens and in 1737 and 1738 he published two books about his Pacific experiences: *Voyages through the Southlands and Around the World* and *The Sorely-tempted Southerner*. Behrens found Easter Island extremely interesting. The natives crowded round the ship, as they did everywhere in the South Seas, but as Roggeveen was no Captain Cook, he ordered his soldiers to open fire on them. 'The confusion,' writes Behrens, 'was simply frightful; many people were shot. Yes, their children and grandchildren will have some fine tales to tell

about us!' The natives were described by Behrens as brown, gay, friendly and good-looking people, though somewhat timid, which was scarcely to be wondered at, considering what had happened. There were no weapons on Te Pito o te Henua, the inhabitants 'relied entirely upon their idols or stone figures'.

These 'graven images' are the subjects of interesting passages in Behren's writings; 'The figures were carved from stone and had the shape of a man, with long ears and on the head a crown. Everything was beautifully made, and this caused us to wonder greatly.' Roggeveen and Behrens must have seen what was still the ancient Easter Island civilization, for they tell of 'very skilfully arranged' plantations, of all kinds of domestic animals and fruits of the earth, and estimate the number of inhabitants at several thousand. Their data must be correct, if one ignores the fact that the statues—at least according to later testimonies—had no crowns on their heads. The Spanish Captain Felipe González y Haedo, who re-discovered the 'forgotten island' forty-eight years after Roggeveen's visit and took possession of it for Spain, saw nothing of this highly-developed agricultural civilization. And neither González nor any later visitor found the slightest trace of 'bearded giants' which Behrens said he had seen on Te Pito o te Henua.

Then Captain Cook appeared on Easter Island with his staff of scientists, and Johann Reinhold Forster and his youthful son Georg, who had been trying to solve the mysteries of Polynesia, now had another muddle to puzzle their brains. Cook encountered about six to seven hundred people on the island. But they no longer prayed to the colossal stone statues, that lay overturned and broken on the shore. Cook and his helpers did see villages, stone houses, paved streets and harbours, but also numerous ruins.

Among them were gigantic statues over twenty metres high, weighing more than fifty tons. According to Cook they were 'roughly, but not badly made, the features, particularly the nose and chin, being fairly well defined, but the ears are quite disproportionately large'. He assumed that they were grave monuments of great antiquity: 'The labour of making and erecting them must have taken immense time and goes to prove the artistry and patience of the inhabitants who lived here then; for the present inhabitants have certainly had nothing to do with them.' Cook did not know that the statues had been worshipped fifty years before. He only saw that the islanders barely seemed to bother about the statues and did nothing to prevent them falling into ruin.

The two Forsters cudgelled their brains over the astounding fact that here—eleven hundred sea-miles from the nearest South Sea island, on a remote, stony, almost treeless island, two thousand miles from the coast of South America—a civilization could have come into being. 'There is no safe anchorage, no firewood, no fresh water; the land appears barren, with scarcely any trees.' Then how did the islanders, lacking wood, build their canoes? How could they erect such gigantic stone images? How could they transport them and drag them up cliffs and hills, often to almost inaccessible places? The islanders employed a Polynesian language, their numerals were the same as those of Tahiti. Were they the creators of this megalithic culture? Or was Captain Cook right when he said these colossal monuments belonged to an archaic past? The Forsters could make nothing of it all.

The next visitor to the island was a Frenchman, Jean François de Lapérouse. He too saw plantations and stone houses, and made the first exact plans of the island buildings. But in 1805 an American seal-trapper who was lacking in able-bodied helpers decided to take some slaves from the island. A bloody fight ensued, during which many natives were slain by American guns. The seamen took twelve men and ten women captive, but they preferred death to captivity, and jumped into the sea. The captain sent a boat out to rescue them, but it returned without success, for the natives deliberately submerged at the boat's approach, and the ocean took them to its bosom. From then on the Easter Islanders preserved the utmost scepticism when they saw foreign ships lying off their shores.

Until 1862 the mysterious island—called Rapa-nui since the middle of the nineteenth century—again remained undisturbed. Then disaster came to Rapa-nui; Peruvian bandits overran the island, whose population meanwhile had grown to three to four thousand, and dragged away nine hundred islanders to the guano islands on the coast of Peru, where they had to work as slaves and died like flies. One year later only fifteen of them remained on the guano islands, all of them suffering from smallpox. The Peruvians brought these fifteen—less for humanitarian than for sanitary reasons—back to Rapa-nui, the smallpox spread there rapidly and the population shrank to six hundred and fifty. In the next two decades numerous Easter Islanders emigrated to Tahiti and the Gambier Islands, probably because they feared fresh attacks by the Peruvians. The last hundred and fifty of the original

inhabitants later mixed with Tahitians and Chileans who had come to the island. To-day Rapa-nui belongs to Chile. Of eight hundred or so inhabitants about twenty per cent have the blood of the ancient civilization flowing in their veins.

When Peru's barbaric attack took place, the population was divided into eight to twelve tribes or clans. The nobles were called Miru, and the priestly singers of this tribe were called Maori-Rongo-rongo. They still knew about the greatest riddle of Easter Island, the hieroglyphic script. One of the island kings was then a man named Ariki Ngaara; he claimed direct descent from Hotu Matua, the legendary father of the Rapa-nui people, who, so tradition has it, had come to the then deserted island many hundred years before and settled there with six hundred subjects from the distant island of Marae-ranga. Hotu Matua is said to have brought sixty-seven sacred inscribed tablets to Easter Island—the Rongo-rongo or speaking wooden tablets. In Ariki Ngaara's time the island priests could read these tablets. There were even schools in which descendants of the priests were taught the script, and Ariki Ngaara is said to have possessed a whole Rongo-rongo library himself. The ruler was however very unlucky; first he had to fight with the enemy tribes of the Ngaure and Tupahotu and hide the tablets in caves; then shortly before his death the Peruvians decimated his people and dragged his successor Maurata away to the guano islands, where he died of smallpox.

The only European who since then has known anything about the Easter Island script was Felipe González y Haedo. The chiefs signed the treaty he drew up for them with hieroglyphic signs. This did not strike González or his contemporaries as of any importance, although it was known that the Polynesians did not know how to write. Only the Chilean missionaries who lived on the island from 1863 and tried to convert the remainder of the population to Catholicism wondered about the Rongo-rongo tablets and about the astonishing reading and writing abilities of the native priests. The sacred tablets were up to two metres in length, and covered on both sides with stylised drawings of men, animals, plants, stones and other objects scratched into the wood with the help of pointed stones or sharks' teeth. The missionaries did not know that these mysterious signs and symbols were perhaps hieroglyphs. All they thought was that it must be some heathen abomination.

The mystery of Easter Island might to-day have been no longer

a mystery if the missionary Eugène Eyraud had shown some zeal for research as well as zeal to convert the natives. At that time people could still read the Rongo-rongo tablets, and it is almost certain that their contents have been handed down from the distant past, which might have helped scholars to guess the secret of the stone images and perhaps even of the Polynesian sea-migrations. Countless books, from Scoresby Routledge's *The Mystery of Easter Island* to Thor Heyerdahl's *Aku-Aku* would not have had to be written, countless hypotheses, from that of a sunken Pacific continent to a colonizing of the island by Incas or pre-Incas need not have been discussed, had Father Eyraud not been a fanatic—like his Spanish predecessors, who burnt the Maya scripts and the Inca quipus and other things as 'works of the devil'.

Eyraud did not burn the Rongo-rongos himself, but he compelled the converted islanders to put a light to them. And as the Maori-Rongo-rongo, the priestly scribes, had died on the guano islands, all knowledge of the script was lost. We do not know how Eyraud managed to break the taboo. Presumably the people of Rapa-nui were so intimidated and demoralized by the Peruvian attack and the plague of smallpox that they became dependent on the missionary.

Two of Eyraud's colleagues were careful to save a few portions of the tablets from the flames. These two, Father Roussel and Father Zumbohm, brought the fragments to Tahiti and there laid them before Bishop Tepano Jaussen. The Bishop, member of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart, had a Tahitian Easter Islander brought to decipher the hieroglyphs. But this plantation worker apparently could not read. He mumbled all kinds of confused stories that Tepano Jaussen took to be purely imaginary.

Nor did things go any better for the American ship's paymaster Thomson, who in 1886 stumbled across further script-tablets by a fantastic accident. An Easter Islander, Ure-vaeiko, had felt that Eyraud's action in burning the tablets was silly, and thought that the precious wood could be much more profitably used to build a canoe. So Ure-vaeiko concealed about twenty-five tablets from Eyraud's sharp eyes and made a fishing-boat out of them. But he had bad luck, the boat fell to pieces, and a second canoe, built from the remains, fared no better. The boat-builder was going to destroy the wood when Thomson appeared on the island and saved the broken canoe. But then he wanted to know what the text said. Ure-vaeiko was shaking with terror and did not even

dare look at the hieroglyphs. Finally Thomson dosed the islander with alcohol until he began to read, but the dosage seems to have been too strong, for Ure-vaeiko also muttered all kinds of fantastic tales.

But both Jaussen and Thomson thought they had found out the meaning of a few signs at least from their stammering interpreters. Later scholars, however, expressed doubts about these meanings. Yet most of the experts agreed that the various hieroglyphs did not represent letters, syllables or words, but only 'catchwords' which helped the Rongo-rongo men in the reciting of long religious or historical texts. It was a mnemotechnic script, which served the same purpose as the catch phrases and verses which were once employed in teaching.

In 1914 an English archaeologist, Scoresby Routledge, tried once more to decipher the script with the help of natives. She photographed fragments of the tablets which were in a Belgian monastery belonging to the Congregation of the Sacred Heart and in the United States National Museum in Washington, and showed the photographs to an old man named Tomenika who had lived in the days of King Ariki Ngaara when people could read the scripts. From Tomenika Scoresby Routledge with some difficulty gathered that two different scripts had been used on Easter Island—one for describing the story of the creation and for religious texts, the other for the compiling of heroic tales, battle accounts, lists of the dead and so on. Unfortunately Tomenika was extremely old, did not have all his faculties and was in addition suffering from leprosy. He could no longer remember the significance of individual symbols, and could only recall the general meaning. Tomenika died in the scholar's presence of old age, bent over the fragments of the tablets—the very last of the Easter Islanders who had any idea about what they meant.

But other mysteries also raised excited speculation. The buildings on the 'forgotten island' were examined, the caves and craters were explored, and excavations were made to find cultural deposits. The remains were found of three roads along which the giant figures were once placed. In the south-west of the island were found the ruins of long windowless stone houses built over pits in the earth in which were fabulous creatures made of stone, wooden images of gods, figures with long ear-lobes, paintings of faces, birds and sailing ships. In the marine paintings there were representations of obviously European ships—perhaps those of Rogge-

veen, González or Cook. The greatest sensation was the discovery of a 'giant workshop' in the crater of the extinct Rano-raraku volcano. Here lay more than a hundred and fifty half-finished stone figures, some of them already hewn out of the rock, in long horizontal rows. All kinds of tools were found among them: pointed obsidian knives, stone chisels, polishing implements, stone cylinders for transportation. 'Everything gave the impression', as one report has it, 'that the sculptors suddenly and hastily had to abandon the half-finished figures'. But what was the reason?

One of the most fruitful expeditions was undertaken in 1934 by the Swiss Alfred Métraux and the Belgian Lavachery. The Easter Islanders, the ethnologists asserted, were undoubtedly Polynesians, their appearance, their language and their rituals all go to prove this. In the island legends a recurring tale is that of a great battle between the 'long ears' and the 'short ears'. The 'long-eared' people could possibly be people from the Marquesas, very highly-civilized Polynesians who for ritual reasons distend and lengthen their earlobes. The 'short-eared' people on the other hand came presumably from the Mangareva Islands or from the island of Pitcairn, lying to the east of the Mangareva Archipelago, on which Europeans found no inhabitants when they discovered it in 1790, though they discovered rock-paintings and stone statues similar to those on Easter Island. Strife may have broken out between these two immigrant groups, which finally about 1750—that is, after Roggeveen's and Cook's voyages—resulted in the sudden overthrow of the ancient island civilization. It was not clear who had founded this civilization. The Marquesans and the Mangarevans also erected large stone figures and had well-watered plantations and wooden carvings of a high artistic level, though they had no script.

This rough sketch of the history of Easter Island was accepted willingly by the majority of ethnologists. Alfred Métraux did further work on the Easter Island problems in the Bernice-Bishop Museum in Honolulu and gathered numerous arguments to prove that the island's civilization belonged, despite its isolation, to Polynesian culture.

In the meantime great stone platforms had been discovered everywhere in the Polynesian region. They served as altars, were taboo, could only be approached by priests and sometimes also bore the remains of chieftains and other prominent personages. These platforms were called *Ahus*, and on them were enthroned

the Polynesians' images of gods and ancestors. On an island so lacking in wood as Rapa-nui these images naturally had to be cut from stone. Probably the Polynesians had brought this megalithic culture from their original home; remains of huge monoliths were in fact found on many islands. Whenever the sea-nomads found forests, they gradually returned to a wood culture, but wherever wood was lacking they preserved their ancient skills in the cutting of giant stones. It was on Rapa-nui that there was preserved, until 1750, the oldest and original form of Polynesian ritual and stone carving.

The mysterious script of the Easter Islanders must also have come from Polynesian sources of culture. There were Rongorongo men on various islands, on Mangareva for example; they recited and sang at ritual festivals the texts of the old legends and traditional tales. A Polynesian ethnologist from New Zealand, Te-Rangi-Hiroa, who under the name of Peter H. Buck wrote an interesting book, *Vikings of the Sunrise*, was of the opinion that the Rongorongo men on Rapa-nui must originally have held carved figures in their hands while reciting and used them as mnemotechnic aids in the delivery of lengthy texts. Later these figures were flattened and gradually they developed into a 'mnemotechnic script'.

When it was accepted as indisputable that Easter Island belonged to Polynesian civilization, people began to wonder whether the current ideas about the origins of the South Sea Islanders were altogether correct. Were the Polynesians really Austronesians, related to the sea-roving Malaysians, who once had sailed from Indonesia and discovered the island world of the Pacific? Or did they come from quite another race, from a highly-developed civilization where people knew how to write and read and were familiar with the construction of colossal monuments?

It had already struck Captain Cook and the two Forsters that the whole of Polynesia from New Zealand to Hawaii formed a single linguistic unity. The various island dialects differed from one another so little that a chieftain from Tahiti whom Cook had taken along as his guest, could carry on a conversation without the slightest difficulty with the Maoris of New Zealand, more than three thousand miles away. The settlement of the South Sea Islands could not therefore have taken place in remotest antiquity, only one race had taken part in it and the inhabitants of the various islands were presumably still in contact with one another

before the advent of Europeans. The people of Easter Island, Hawaii, Samoa, Tahiti and New Zealand all belonged to the same race, had the same form of civilization, the same traditions. And in their myths they all told of how they had once come from a distant land named Hawaiki that lay somewhere in the west or north-west.

To-day ethnologists conjecture that the Polynesian migration began about AD 400. From the seventh to the fourteenth century, at the time of their great maritime splendour, the Polynesians occupied the most important islands. Not until the fourteenth century did they appear on Easter Island. They had already made their appearance in New Zealand in the previous century, where as Moriori they hunted the giant ostrich-like bird called the moa. These Moriori, who had come from the Chatham Islands, were attacked by new arrivals from Tahiti, Rarotonga, Raiatea and Manihiki about 1350. The newcomers called themselves Maori. They wiped out the Moriori, set up highly-disciplined tribal states and—alone among the Polynesian racial groups—gave the white colonists much trouble, for they did not want to abandon their cannibalistic habits. Both the Maori wars from 1845 to 1870 are bloody disfigurements in the otherwise peaceful and idyllic colonial history of the Pacific.

On other islands, too, the newcomers overran the original settlers. As early as about AD 450 Hawaii was reached by a wave of Polynesian colonists and then in the twelfth century was re-settled by the Ariki tribe from the Society Islands. Samoans conquered the Ellice Islands and parts of western Polynesia. Maoris were still sailing to the Chatham Islands as late as 1835. Mangarevans clashed with Marquesans on Easter Island. The mighty Tongan tribe in Central Polynesia repeatedly overthrew Samoa and the Fiji Islands where they created large stone structures similar to those of the Marquesans and of the Easter Islanders in East Polynesia.

So there was a constant to-ing and fro-ing, a wandering from one group of islands to another, from west to east and back again. Two main directions can be seen in these wanderings; a trend towards the east which falls in the period between the fifth and the fourteenth centuries and a trend back to the west, which led the inhabitants of the over-populated islands of East Polynesia back to New Zealand and the West Pacific.

Hawaiki, the ancestral home, was next looked for in Indonesia. The reasons for this were that Polynesians, like the Malaysians, be-

long to the Austronesian language group and that philological research shows that Polynesian seems to be an ancient Indonesian tongue which was employed in the south-east Asiatic archipelago at a time when the Malaysians were still uninfluenced by Indians and Mongolians. Polynesians and Malaysians are also obviously related to each other culturally; Indonesian houses, carvings, masks and maritime skills are astonishingly like those of Polynesia. Like the Polynesians, the Malaysians are also Orang-Melaju, 'wandering men'. The ethnologists therefore drew a logical historical picture; aboriginal Austronesians from the region of the Philippines or the Moluccas reached, in highly seaworthy outrigger boats, the Micronesian archipelago in the West Pacific, then moved on to the Ellice and Tokelau Islands, proceeding next to Tonga and Samoa and later settling in Tahiti and Hawaii and Easter Island, finally undertaking great sea-migrations back westwards, in the course of which New Zealand was colonized.

Now this theory has four weak points which its opponents attacked at once. First of all, the whole of the West Pacific archipelago—that is, the 'bridge' over which the Indonesian nomads would have had to cross on their way from south-east Asia to Polynesia—is inhabited not by Malayo-Polynesians but by black-skinned Melanesians and Papuans, about whom more later, and one had to ask how it was that the Polynesians had apparently made no attempt to settle on the 'black' islands of New Guinea, New Caledonia, the Admiralty Isles, the Solomons, the New Hebrides and the Loyalty group. Secondly, Indonesia in the last century before Christ was so strongly influenced by Indian colonists that even to-day the Malayan language still shows traces of Sanskrit; the Polynesians however, who according to the current theory at this time still lived in Indonesia, their ancestral home, did not know one word of Sanskrit. Thirdly, the Polynesians also cultivate, besides many Asiatic crops like sugar-cane, the banana and the yam, the sweet potato and cotton—that is, plants which derive from South America. And fourthly (the opponents of the theory consider this to be the clinching argument) the Polynesians' racial affinities seem to lie, not with south-east Asia, but with Europe.

This statement aroused the liveliest astonishment and was much misunderstood and misinterpreted. Georg Forster was struck by the 'European faces' of the South Sea Islanders, and countless later travellers have definitely asserted that in general appearance

and behaviour the Polynesians could only be representatives of highly-developed light-skinned peoples. More recent researches seem to have proved this; the South African anatomist and student of primeval times, Raymond Dart, established that the 'A' blood group predominates among white races, but among the 'yellow' races and the Malaysians the 'B' blood group is predominant. Yet the overwhelming majority of Polynesians belong to the 'A' blood group.

This caused great confusion in popular scientific literature; writers wanted to turn the 'Europaeoid' Polynesians into real Europeans. But that was not what the anthropologists meant. The inhabitants of the Near East, the light-skinned Indians, the North Africans, and, according to Lester and Millot, even the Lapps, the Ainu and the ancient Malaysians all belong to the European race. The French anthropologist Montandon qualifies for example the Dyaks of Borneo and the Bataks of Sumatra as 'good examples of Europaeoid types, who can be related to the Mediterranean races'. As the south-east Asiatic Veddas are in general held to be close relatives of European Ice Age men, the existence of 'Europaeoid' peoples on the fringes of the Pacific is really not so very extraordinary.

As for the question about the 'black islands' of the West Pacific, the answer was that the Polynesians did not miss out Melanesia but in fact influenced it considerably. Most Melanesians use Austronesian languages like the Malaysians and the Polynesians, and many of their islands reveal a strong Polynesian cultural influence. For example, the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands are Melanesians with Polynesian elements and Polynesian culture; on the Admiralty Isles besides dark-skinned there are also light-skinned racial groups; on the eastern Solomon Islands Polynesian tattooing is known; on various islands of the New Hebrides the black-skinned inhabitants speak pure Polynesian, and the Santa Cruz Islands are occupied by a mixed Melanesian-Polynesian race. Polynesian colonies have been discovered in the archipelago north of New Guinea, to the east of the Solomons and south of Santa Cruz. On the many small atolls in the west, the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, Palau, the Carolines and the Marianas which geographers and ethnologists group together under the name of Micronesia, the Melanesian, Indonesian and Polynesian race, culture and language elements are so closely mixed that one refers to this group as the Micronesian race. So it is quite possible and

indeed probable that sea-nomads from south-east Asia once stayed here in the Melanesian region and left their mark upon the black-skinned islanders. But the Melanesians were strong enough to assert themselves and compelled the light-skinned invaders to move on further east.

The fact that the Polynesian language was not influenced by Sanskrit compels ethnologists to hold the view that the ancestors of the Polynesians left Indonesian Hawaiki for the first time not in the period immediately after the birth of Christ, but long before the arrival of the Hindus. Then where were they during these five hundred years? Perhaps in Melanesia or Micronesia? And the sweet-potato and cotton crops could mean that daring scamen—despite the contrary winds and currents which would seem to militate against this—had already made flying visits to South America from the Pacific atolls. Black-skinned Melanesians must also, as the discovery of skeletons would seem to indicate, have reached the American continent long ago.

Meanwhile there were many authors who were not satisfied with these researches. They variously claimed that Hawaiki was in the Near East, in India, in Peru and even in Europe. The legendary land of Uru in Maori myths was thought to be the Sumerian Ur. Another land named Irihia was said to be 'India'. Because some Polynesian tribes use the word 'Ra' to indicate the sun, connections were sought with the Egyptian sun god Ammon-Ra. The New Zealand philologist Tregear, who in 1891 published a Polynesian dictionary, believed he had discovered 'Aryan' words in the Maori language. And the Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl believed that the Polynesians came from South America, had voyaged across the Pacific on balsa wood rafts and set up the ancient civilization of Peruvian Tiahuanaco on Easter Island.

Heyerdahl tried to support his theory not just by words but also by deeds. In 1947 he floated on a balsa wood raft for ninety-nine days for a distance of five thousand miles from the Peruvian coast across the Pacific Ocean. His undertaking was considered to be one of the greatest feats of adventure in the twentieth century; the book *Kon-tiki* in which he described this experiment was translated into twenty-three languages and sold over three million copies. In fact all that Heyerdahl was able to prove was that it was possible to float from Peru to Polynesia; his commentaries on the trip, ethnologists assert, remain pure theory. In them Heyerdahl brought together the most varied material from the various



48 It is not known whether the dark-skinned Madagascans are descendants of Africans or of Indo-Melanesians. A Hova woman.



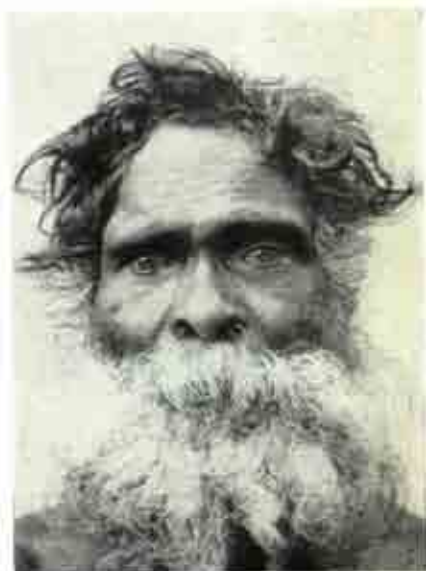
49 The Terra del Fuegians, who live farther south than any other people in the world, were studied by Darwin.



50 Natives of New Guinea lighting a fire.

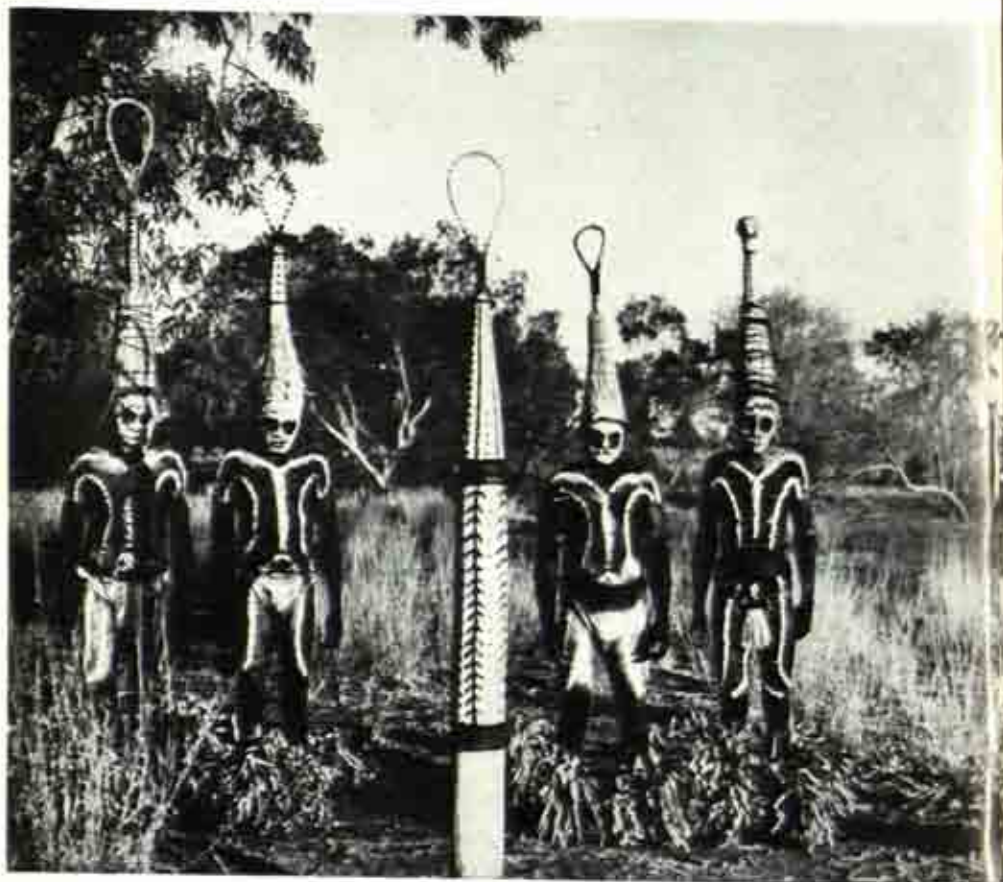


51 Australian aborigines carrying out a cult ceremony.



52 A South Australian aboriginal chieftain.

53 Aborigines from the Northern Territory dressed for a corroboree. They decorate themselves with ochre, blood and birds' down.





54 The black-skinned Melanesian peoples of the Pacific: a young girl from Owa Raha in the Solomon Islands.

55 A young man from the Solomon Islands.





56 The Watussi are masters between the Nile and the Zambesi. King Munsu entertained the explorer Schweinfurth in the nineteenth century.



57 The Queen Mother of the Watussi people of Ruanda.

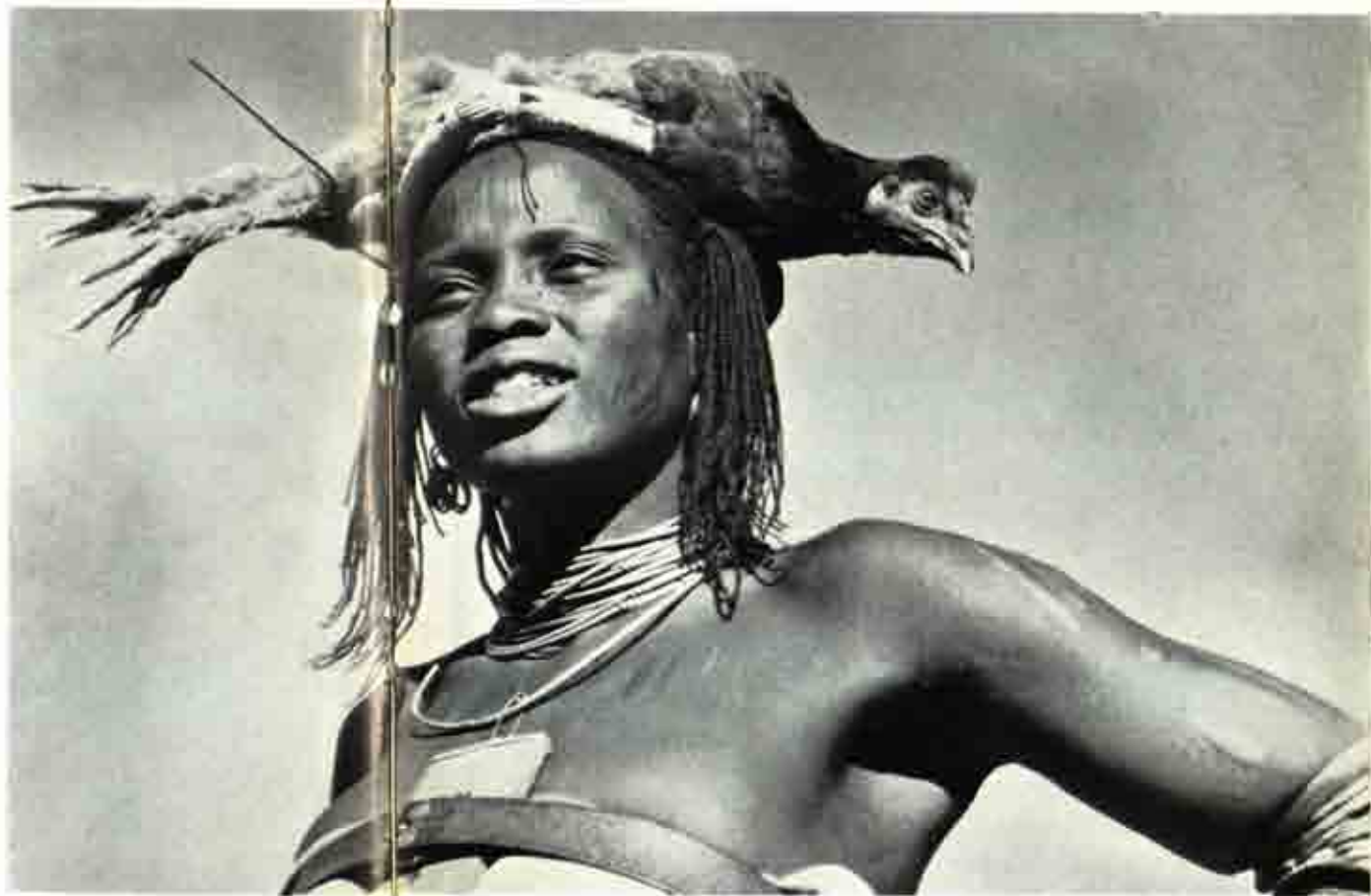


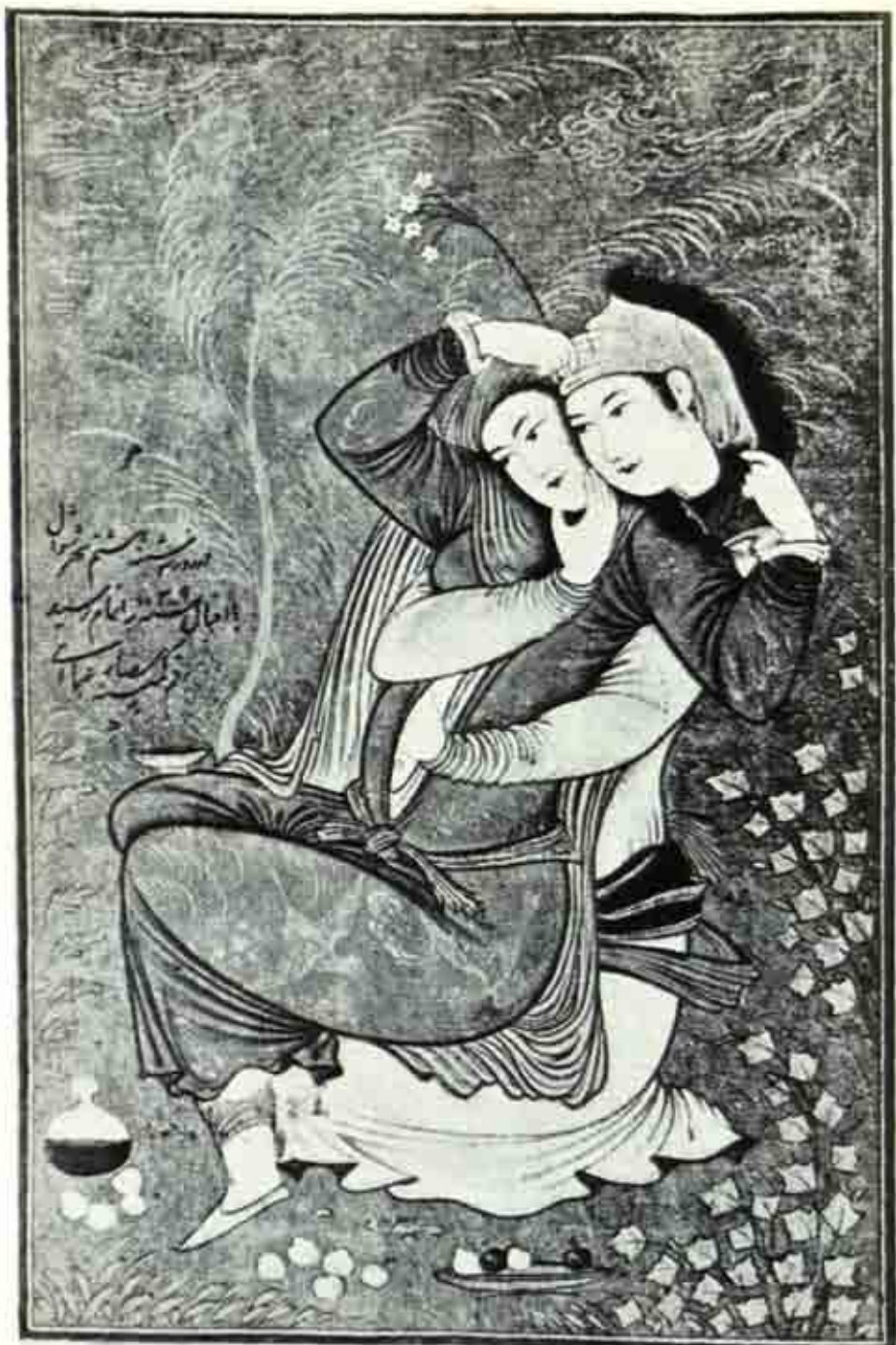
58 Africa is a vast conglomeration of cults, dances and costumes. A dance mask from the Ivory Coast.



59 These African dancers from Togoland wear dangling headdresses made of shells.

60 A Zulu woman from Natal.







61 and 62 Love, the eternal theme in every nation: in ancient India, and in ancient Persia (opposite page).



63 Love among the pygmies of the Congo forest lands.



64 Some of the rock-paintings in South Africa date from pre-historic times. Many depict Bushmen, but it is uncertain whether the artists were Bushmen themselves.



65 Legend and rumour put explorers on the track of the Bambuti of the Congo. They are the pygmies of ancient literature and the smallest known race on earth.



66 Pygmy hunters catching a crocodile.



67 The Gypsies, an old Indian people, famous in song and often maligned, are found all over the world.



68 A richly decorated Gypsy caravan in England.



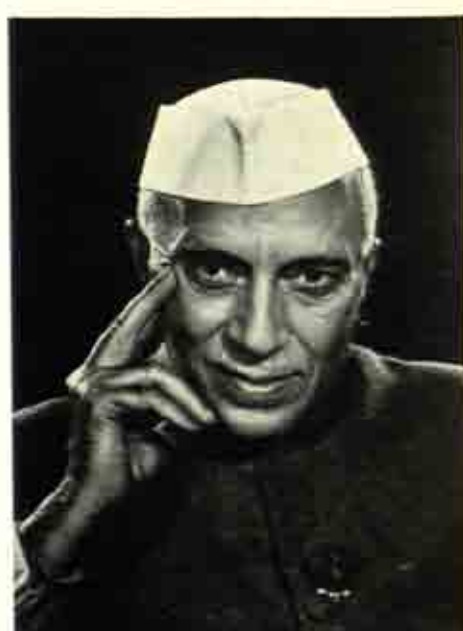
69 Mao Tse-tung from China.



70 Jomo Kenyatta from Kenya.



71 Abdul Gamal Nasser from Egypt.



72 Jawaharlal Nehru from India.

contexts of religion, culture and agricultural economy that seemed to support the hypothesis of ancient sea-routes between South America and Polynesia and the theory that Hawaiki was Peru and the Peruvian god Huiracocha the Polynesian ancestor Tiki. There is only one snag: the Polynesians might be Europeans or south-east Asiatics, but they are quite definitely not descendants of the American Indians. Their maritime civilization has nothing at all in common with the mountain civilization of the Peruvian Andes.

Then from November 6th, 1956, to May 26th, 1957, a supporter of a radically opposed theory, the French Captain Eric de Bisschop, floated in the other direction across the Pacific. He wanted to prove that the Polynesians had reached the coast of Peru from Tahiti and had then returned with South American plants and cultural elements to the South Seas. De Bisschop was not as fortunate as Heyerdahl, his balsa float was wrecked by a storm off the coast of Chile. Nevertheless the French captain believed that his principle had been proved.

These expeditions certainly showed that Heyerdahl and de Bisschop were courageous men, but they shifted sober ethnological research to the domain of sailing contests, won not necessarily by the man with the best theory, but by the man with the strongest nerves and by the best navigator. And this did little to help the cause of science. Great sea-voyages had always been made in the Pacific, ever since man set foot on the South Sea Islands. For example, in the seventh or eighth century a Polynesian from Rarotonga, Hui-te-Rangi-ora, even went as far as the Antarctic, and his achievements were preserved in the legends of Tonga. That balsa rafts actually floated from Peru or the Galapagos for long distances across the Pacific and that Polynesian outrigger boats sailed from the islands to Peru or Chile cannot be denied. But what do the ethnologists say?

'And of the chief objections to a connection between America, Polynesia and Asia,' writes Hans Disselhoff, 'is the demonstrably restricted development of Indian navigation. The reckless voyage of Heyerdahl and his companions does nothing to alter this. Their vessel was constructed according to raft-designs known since the days of the Conquista, but it was provided with radio and other modern comforts. Alexander von Humboldt saw similar rafts made of light balsa wood trunks with simple sails and bamboo cabins on the coast of Ecuador. They are certainly sea-worthy;

but they were used exclusively for coastal navigation and in only one place in Inca traditional accounts is there any mention of a longer journey by raft, the one made by the Inca Tupac Yupanqui. The islands he is said to have visited have never been identified with certainty.'

Heyerdahl counters this orthodox view with the assertion that climatic factors alone would have made the settlement of the South Sea islands possible from the east. He points to numerous cultural parallels between ancient Peru and Easter Island, and postulates the theory that perhaps white men from Europe once voyaged across the Atlantic, created the American civilizations and then voyaged on to Polynesia. So here again we have the 'white gods'. 'In reality,' Disselhoff comments on this, 'it was the Polynesians and not the American Indians who were great navigators, and so all migratory movements were from the west to the east. The similarities between the sculptures of Tiahuanaco and Easter Island, which Heyerdahl makes so much of, simply consist in the fact that they are both gigantic, and monolithic. Any closer stylistic comparison will not hold water. There is no longer any doubt in the modern scholarly world that Easter Island was colonized by Polynesians coming from the west.'

Less popular than Heyerdahl's hypothesis was the theory put forward by the American psychologist Werner Wolf. He too applied himself to the Rongo-rongo tablets from Easter Island and established that many symbols in the ancient hieroglyphic script resembled those belonging to the very earliest periods of Indian, Chinese, Egyptian and even Cretan history. Especially surprising are the similarities between the Easter Island script and the ancient Indian scripts of Mohenja-daro and Harappa. Wolf, contrary to Heyerdahl, insists that 'the cultural migrations of the very earliest times took place not across the Atlantic but through the enormous vastnesses of Southern Asia and the South Seas'. According to this view, the civilization of Easter Island was the most easterly and the latest offshoot of that great culture which once blossomed six thousand years ago between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates.

The romance of Easter Island is not yet at an end. The final chapter began in August 1956 at the Congress of Americanists in Copenhagen. In the presence of Heyerdahl a thirty-three-year-old ethnologist from the University of Hamburg, who had never yet been to Polynesia, read a paper on the Easter Island script. This

lecture of Thomas Barthel's caused a sensation. The youthful scholar asserted that he had solved the mystery of the Easter Island script. In the monastery of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart in Grossaferrata near Rome, Barthel had chanced upon an old account-book that no one had looked at for the past eighty years. It contained the notes of that Bishop Tepano Jaussen of Tahiti who once had asked the plantation-worker Metoro about the contents of the Rongo-rongo tablets. Contrary to Bishop Jaussen, however, and to the opinions of all later researchers Barthel considered Metoro's stammered legends to be not figments of the old man's imagination but a mixture of truth and poetry. Metoro, who perhaps was no longer able to read, must have recited the contents of the tablets from memory, and in doing so had made many mistakes. But in principle, Barthel declared, Metoro had given the contents more or less correctly.

What Metoro had told the bishop were religious legends current all over Polynesia. The tablets therefore must contain symbolic representations of the sun and the moon, of the Milky Way, the various deities and mythical animals. Barthel said he had been able to fix the meaning of most of the mnemonic signs. The conclusion he drew from this was that he was dealing with texts in the Polynesian language which describe Polynesian traditions. Therefore the civilization of Easter Island must—as the experts had already claimed—be closely connected with the other Polynesian island civilizations. American or ancient Indian influences could not be proved. And if this is so, then the original home of the Polynesians, Hawaiki, lay not in Peru, in India proper or in Europe, but in fact in south-east Asia.

Has *Finis* at last been written to the history of research on Easter Island? There will probably be many more hypotheses put forward about the Aku stones and the Rongo-rongo tablets, considering the great public interest in the island. But there is almost nothing left now in the South Seas of the beauty and richness of Polynesian culture. The twentieth century long ago laid its mark upon the atolls—perhaps more than in any other region of the world. For Bikini and Eniwetok also lie in the South Seas.

In the land of the lemurs

... the most unexpected event in the history of racial migrations.

Gabriel Ferrand on the Malayan-Polynesian settlement of Madagascar

FRENCH EXPLORERS SEEM to have a happy disposition. The contacts of Cartier and the *coureurs de bois* with the Red Indians, of Bougainville, Commerson and Dupetit-Thouars with the South Sea Islanders were romances. The Abbé Prévost, Chateaubriand, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Diderot, Rousseau and many other authors proclaimed that the coloured man is born free. But in Madagascar, the Malgaches or Madécasses, as the French called the inhabitants, did not care for European colonists, even when they brought with them the fine phrase 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'. They hunted, fought and killed the interlopers.

The first Europeans to report the existence of a large island east of Africa were Coutinho and Lopes, two Portuguese. Their compatriot Antão Gonçalves, like them a traveller to India, christened Madagascar two years later, in February, 1506, with the resounding name of *Isla de São Lourenço*. At the same time a Portuguese captain named Pedro Mascarenhas took possession of three lovely, fertile islands east of Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion and Rodriguez. These three islands became Portuguese outposts, then later went through the hands of the Dutch, the French and the English and now belong partly to England and partly to France, like the Comoro Islands, the Seychelles and the other island groups in the region of Madagascar. There, on the smaller islands, the Europeans were able to stay for four and half centuries. But on the large island of Madagascar things were very different, and for a very definite reason; the smaller islands were uninhabited when they were discovered, but Madagascar was not.

The Portuguese were not the first discoverers, and the French not the first colonizers of Madagascar. If we disregard a rather obscure passage in Marco Polo's works in which he refers to an island called 'Magastar', then the Portuguese were at least the first Europeans to make the acquaintance of the strange island. But before them many people from foreign parts set foot on Madagascar, Arabian and Indian travellers round the world, Malaysians from Java and the Celebes, perhaps even members of the Polynesian and Melanesian races. But more of them later. In any case,

the French in 1642 sent a ship to the south coast of Madagascar, set up a fort on the bay of Saint-Luce, installed about twenty colonists and took official possession of Dauphin Island, so called after the crown prince of France who later became Louis XIV. But the colonists starved, the natives ignored them completely, and so someone hit upon the idea of capturing Madagascans and selling them to the Dutch in exchange for food. The natives then abandoned their attitude of scornful reserve and retaliated by capturing some of the French. When six years later the first French governor, Admiral Gaston Etienne de Flacourt, arrived on the island with a hundred settlers, he found himself faced with a very confused situation.

The fond illusion that this fertile, ideally-situated tropical island could be turned into another France had long ago been lost. The Admiral did in fact make efforts to diminish the tensions between the colonists and natives; he also brought rice, tobacco and sugarcane to Madagascar, set going the mining of ore and the smelting of iron. But he had not been able to get on with the Madagascans. So in the end he interested himself only in zoology and sent back to France highly interesting reports on the Madagascan forests, the lemurs, and on the *aepyornis*, a giant ostrich-like bird which soon afterwards became extinct and is probably the original of the mythical roc. After de Flacourt had been murdered by Algerian pirates on a voyage to France, the colony soon went to pieces. The colonists were incensed against the new governor, many of them left the island, and finally in 1674 the Madagascans overthrew Fort Dauphin, slew the majority of the French and compelled the rest to beat a hasty retreat by boat to Africa.

A few attempts at colonization in the eighteenth century met with a similar fate. Nevertheless in 1768 several natural philosophers visited the island, chief among them being Philibert Commerçon, who had talked of Tahiti as the realm of Venus, and the ornithologist Pierre Sonnerat. But they, too, came into contact not so much with the natives as with the lemurs and birds of Madagascar. The only definite thing that was known about the population of Madagascar was the remarkable fact that there were two races, the black Sakalava and the light-skinned Hova. They used Malayan, not African languages. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the English and the French attempted to win over the light-skinned Hova. But the King of the Hova, Radama I, took advantage of English-French competition in order

to Europeanize his people and above all his army. He introduced the Latin script, obtained cannon and guns from the English, textiles and literature from the French, read the biography of Napoleon with great interest and learnt a great deal from it. Then he drove the Europeans out of his country.

The female successor to Radama, his wife Ranavalona I, gave the English and the French even more trouble. She broke off all trade relations with England and France, expelled all the missionaries, had all Madagascan converts to Christianity put to death and mobilized her troops against a Franco-British army which in 1845 was wiped out with the help of European cannon and guns skilfully deployed by Ravalona. The queen also vigorously berated the Europeans for calling her people Hova. When a naval officer sent her a letter addressed 'To Her Majesty the Queen of the Hova', she had the letter torn to pieces and ordered the officer's immediate departure on the grounds that he had insulted her country. She was right; Hova is not the name of a people, but of a caste belonging to the ruling tribe called the Merina. Although this has been well known since 1837, most of the books on Madagascar still refer to the light-skinned population of the island as Hova.

The two European powers heaved a sigh of relief in 1861 when Rakoto, the son of Radama and Ranavalona, came to the throne. This Merina king, who has gone down into history under the name of Radama II, was in fact infatuated with European civilization. He re-opened the land to the French and the English, but reigned for only twenty-one months. The conservative Merina organized a rebellion, and hanged him. There followed thirty-four years which are inscribed in the annals of history as the epoch of Madagascan matriarchal rule and in the course of which the island gradually fell under French influence.

The Merina 'regiment of women' is ethnologically interesting. According to Madagascan legends a woman from Sumatra or Java, the Malayan queen Raminia, came with a host of immigrants and conquered the island, driving the aboriginal inhabitants back into the forests. It is from Raminia's Indonesian conquerors that the Merina and other light-skinned Madagascan races are descended, the Hova of popular literature. Later, too, women often reigned in the highlands of Madagascar. These queens were always a sacrifice to court etiquette; for the Queen was always accompanied by the then Prime Minister who, according to

ancient law (whether the queen was married or not) had also to be her lover. Therefore France and England not only had to deal with three pretty, rather temperamental lady rulers but also with their Prime Ministers.

There was in fact only one, named Rainitaivivony. He had already been the favourite of Ranavalona I, then took on the widow and successor of Radama II, Rasoterina, who loved France and finery, and next enjoyed the favours of Ranavalona II, who favoured England. In 1883, finally, he became, when an old man, the prime favourite of the young and bewitchingly pretty Ranavalona III, who could not stand either France or England. The 'Grey Eminence' of Madagascar lived to see the French decision to attempt the conquest of Madagascar again by force. He became the arch-enemy of the French general Galliéni, drank to the lees the bitter cup of his country's defeat and had to spend the rest of his days as an exile in Algiers. After her defeat Ranavalona III had to accept a Prime Minister chosen by Galliéni, a Minister who would be as little trouble as possible to the French, the philosopher Rainandriamampandry, Madagascar's last Prime Minister.

Rainandriamampandry was an amazing man. He knew the works of Diodorus and Ptolemy, had read the writings of Clausewitz and the speeches of Palmerston and Gladstone, took the English Prime Minister Disraeli as his model, published scientific works and made efforts to ensure that Madagascans and French should be considered on an equal footing. But too much blood had been spilt on both sides for a proper reconciliation to become possible. Galliéni did not trust him, and in 1897 had him shot for alleged conspiracy, and despatched the last Ranavalona into exile with the aged Rainitaivivony in Algiers. Madagascar became a French colony, after a long struggle. The Madagascans have still not resigned themselves to their fate. The Hova rose in rebellion several times against colonial rule, the last time being just after the Second World War, and it does not require a prophet to predict that the 1947 rising will not be the last.

The Madagascans are a people that resisted the Portuguese, the British and the French for four hundred years, asserted its ancient civilization against the encroachments of Islam and Christianity right up to the middle of the nineteenth century and—a century and a half before the other African nations—absorbed so much of European knowledge and techniques that in the end it could produce an outstanding intellectual like Rainandriamampandry. Well

before the arrival of the Europeans in Madagascar, the inhabitants wore magnificent silken robes, built great cities, had a parliament, planted rice and sugar-cane, made filigree work of gold and silver and supported a standing army. They had systems of justice, tariff and education, a strictly-conducted government and an efficient administrative machine. Megalithic monuments in the highlands, columns decorated with reliefs and underground burial-chambers show that Madagascan culture goes back at least to the early Middle Ages.

For a long time ethnographers and ethnologists treated this interesting island in a very high-handed way. Until the end of the nineteenth century the black-skinned Sakalava were considered to be Africans, the Hova as Malaysians. When scientists began to look more closely into the matter, they found that Madagascar is full of riddles and unanswerable questions. Are the Sakalava really Negroes? The nomad Bantu reached the south-east coast of Africa only in the Middle Ages, therefore at a time when there had long been black tribes on Madagascar. The Bantu were never seafarers, and there is nothing to indicate that a potentate like Mono-Motapa ever sent colonizing expeditions across the Straits of Mozambique to the island. The light-skinned Madagascans are indeed of predominantly Indonesian blood, but in the course of time they mixed so freely with Sakalava, Arabs, Persians, Indians, Swahili, African slaves, Europeans and perhaps also with Chinese and Japanese that one can now estimate only with great difficulty what they must originally have looked like. The astounding conclusion is that Malaysians must have at some time undertaken with women and children, crops and domestic animals, household and farming implements, weapons and other cultural assets a sea voyage of four thousand miles across the tempestuous Indian Ocean and into the unknown. They must have been able to settle and cultivate Madagascar fairly quickly, and at a time when Europe possessed only an elementary knowledge of coastal navigation. How was it possible? When did the Malaysian invasion take place? In how many waves? What kind of ships were they on which the migrating Indonesians transported not only their families but also the humped zebu, fat-tailed sheep, Chinese porkers, Indian fowls and other animals that had never existed before on Madagascar across one of the most dangerous stretches of ocean in the world?

At first people were unwilling to credit the Indonesians with

such an achievement. All kinds of fantastic hypotheses were put forward. The British zoologist Philip Lutley Sclater asserted that there was also a sunken continent in the Indian Ocean which he claimed stretched from South Africa across Southern India to the Sunda Islands, and that Madagascar was the remains of this continent. Sclater hit on this idea because Madagascar has a very ancient fauna—lemurs and primitive insectivores—and because animals related to these are also found in Africa and southern Asia. He named the hypothetical continent Lemuria, after the lemurs. Now Sclater had already admitted, on zoological grounds, that Lemuria must have disappeared about fifty million years ago. But imaginative readers seem to have overlooked this fact; they turned Lemuria into a southern Atlantis and thought that the Malaysians must have strolled across dry land to Madagascar and remained there when the continent sank.

Scholars were soon able to wipe this dream continent from the map. In the Indian Ocean geologists found not the slightest indication of a submerged continent in historical times. At the beginning of the present century the director of the Ethnological Museum in Leipzig, Karl Weule, and the French historian of Islam, Gabriel Ferrand, devoted themselves to the Madagascan-Malayan problem. Weule pointed out the seamanship of the Polynesians and was of the opinion that one should credit the closely-related Malaysians with the same great ability. 'We possess quite undeniable proofs of the historical, linguistic and ethnographical origins of the Madagascan Malaysians from the Greater Sunda Isles,' he writes in his *Guides to Ethnology*. Ferrand compared the Malagasy dialect with the Malayan language and declared that 'Malagasy is a later development of the Malayan tongue, closely related to the Bata dialect of Sumatra'. But above all Ferrand concerned himself with the 'undeniable proofs of an historical nature' of which Weule had spoken. He was a scholar of Islam and so he consulted Arabic sources.

The Arabs had known Madagascar since the ninth or tenth century AD. In many Arab texts the island is referred to under the name of Jezirat el Komr. Arab settlements and trading posts lay along the coast of Madagascar, a part of the population along the coast was sympathetic to Islam and four of the nineteen island tribes had Arab chiefs. Nearly all the leading geographers of the Mohammedan world expressed opinions about the Komr, the people of Madagascar. Then something struck Ferrand; before the

eleventh century not one Arab author mentions anything about a Malayan colonization of the island, but between 1150 and 1250 three famous chroniclers describe how 'the people from Java on barques and great ships' came to Madagascar. All three Arabs, Idrisi, Ibn Sa'id and Ibn al Mujavir agree that the Komr had first dwelt in Further India, had been driven by Mongoloid races to the Sunda Islands and that a part of them had migrated from there to Madagascar. Idrisi added that in his own period—about the middle of the twelfth century—Javanese ships were still arriving in Madagascar. Javanese and Madagascans, he writes, 'understand each other's tongues and conduct trade with each other'.

These are fresh, living accounts, from which we can assume that in the years between AD 1000 and 1200 Madagascar had been colonized by Javanese Malaysians. In the sixteenth century, after the discovery of Madagascar by the Portuguese, bold seafarers from Celebes landed on the island, conquered the highlands and founded the Merina kingdom which was to dominate the land of the lemurs until 1897. These Buginese from Celebes gave their name to the island—their country of origin was called Macassar, which was deformed in the mouths of Europeans to 'Madagascar'. From this group were descended the Adriana, the aristocratic class of the Merina, and from the Javanese immigrants were descended the Hova.

When these facts became known, people assumed that the Madagascan civilization could be traced back only to the Javanese invasion in the eleventh century and the Buginese invasion in the sixteenth century. Then Ferrard came across proofs of an even earlier voyage about which the Arabian chroniclers knew nothing: as early as the ninth century African slaves began to appear in Indonesian markets. If about AD 800 Malaysians travelled in East Africa and transported slaves from there to Java, then in all probability they must also have been in Madagascar at this time. A Malayan scholar, Djamal Udin, after a thorough investigation of the archives, even found out the name of the man who led that migration in the ninth century; he was called Ramini, was the husband of the legendary Madagascan ancestral mother Raminia and came from Sumatra. Djamal Udin declared that it was certain that voyages had taken place between the Malayan islands and Madagascar as early as the first to the fourth century AD. At least four Malayan cultural deposits appear to have existed on the island of the lemurs—ancient Malayan, Sumatran, Javanese and

Buginese. The nineteen chief tribes of the island arose from the intermingling of these immigrants with the black-skinned Sakalava.

An ancient Greek author seems to prove there were light-skinned men on Madagascar at an even earlier period. In the fifty-fifth chapter of Diodorus' work on Asia he mentions a certain Jambulos who had travelled in Africa as a merchant and had ventured far out into the Indian Ocean in a tiny boat. Jambulos reached a large island, stayed there seven years with the native inhabitants, then after many wanderings returned home. One or two scholars have wondered if Diodorus meant by Jambulos' island Zanzibar, Ceylon, Sumatra or even Madagascar. Many things point to the possibility of its having been Madagascar: the description of the animals, 'who are extremely different from all known animals and are so wonderful, one would hardly believe it', the mention of a giant bird, the indication that 'the sea here has very strong currents'. One is persuaded to consider the strange animals as lemurs, the giant bird as the *Aepyornis* and the strong sea-currents as the in fact extremely rapid Mozambique Stream between Madagascar and East Africa.

Even more significant is what Diodorus says about the natives: 'They are of great beauty and perfectly formed, their bodies are almost hairless; they are extremely musical and the most hospitable race on earth. They produce clothes made from a kind of cotton, they are handworkers and farmers and on feast days sing hymns and songs of praise to the gods'. The people on Jambulos' island understood the art of bread-making, enjoyed the use of healing springs and were very skilful in astronomy and astrology. 'They also possess their own script,' writes Diodorus, 'and in fact they have twenty-eight sounds which they indicate by using only seven signs. Each sign can be written in four different ways. Their writing does not run from left to right as ours does, but vertically, from top to bottom.'

These sort of details cannot be contrived. A script with few characters, running from top to bottom, existed only in Further India and in ancient Indonesia before the Indian invasion in the first century BC; later the Malaysians adopted the Indian script, which runs across the page. Were these ancient Madagascans Indonesians who had reached Madagascar even in pre-Christian times? Were they related to the Khmer, the great Further Indian nation that later built Angkor-Wat? The Arabian historian Ibn Khaldun

assumes this and points to the resemblance in sound between the word *Komr* (the Arab term for the Madagascans) and the word *Khmer*. There is also another possibility; the beautiful, singing, hospitable and heaven-worshipping people of the island of *Jambulos** are remarkably like the Polynesians of the South Seas.

Comparisons between the Madagascans and the inhabitants of the South Seas forced themselves upon the attention of the Parisian natural scientist Alfred Grandidier in the years 1865 to 1870. During his five-year stay in Madagascar Grandidier had not only studied the lemurs and excavated the bones of giant ostriches, but had also examined and questioned the light-skinned as well as the black-skinned population. After his return to Paris he wrote a work in twenty-eight volumes on the zoology, botany, geology and history of the island, a monograph of gigantic proportions which until to-day has remained the standard work on Madagascar. In it he expresses the opinion that people closely related to the South Sea Islanders might have once settled on the island. The first wave of light-skinned migrants would have come from Polynesia, and the black-skinned *Sakalava* could have come from Melanesia.

This is a fascinating theory; it has so much to say for itself that to-day it is accepted or at least considered possible by most ethnologists. Why should the ancestors of the Polynesians not have sailed towards the west from their original Indonesian home in their splendidly seaworthy outrigger boats? In Madagascar there is an aristocratic caste as in Polynesia; Madagascans, like the Polynesians, take the same pleasure in singing and dancing, in art and artistic products, and on Madagascar there are taboos—here called *fady*—as in Polynesia. Some tribes like the *Mahafaly* in the south-west of the island represent a type which can hardly be distinguished from the average Polynesian. So Polynesian pirogues may have brought the first light-skinned immigrants to Madagascar at a very early period. The sea-route from Indonesia to Madagascar was opened in this way. Later the various Malayan waves of invasion took place, the last of which, from Celebes, was to dominate the island until 1897. Polynesian and Malayan tribes, customs and culture gradually melted into one another. Therefore one can with a good conscience call the light-skinned people of Madagascar Malayo-Polynesians.

We still know nothing certain about the dark-skinned *Sakalava*. Are they Bantu from south-east Africa, as was earlier believed, or Melanesians from the South Seas, as Grandidier thought? Are

they perhaps descended from immigrant 'black' Asiatics, from relatives of the dark-skinned inhabitants of southern India? Had Madagascar ever been inhabited by Negroes? (Apart from the Negro slaves brought in by the Arabs.) This ethnological riddle still awaits a solution. It is not the only ethnographical riddle on Madagascar. An even more mysterious and problematical racial group still lives in the western part of the island—the Vazimba.

In 1768 Philibert Commerson heard of a puzzling race of very small men who were said to live in the forests in the interior of southern Madagascar. These Madagascan pygmies appear as Quimos or Kimos in the reports of later travellers. Small, irregular mounds of stones and stone circles were found which were amazingly reminiscent of the burial-places of the South African Bushmen; these were called Vazimba graves by the Madagascans. Finally Grandidier and other scholars encountered several pygmy-like tribes—the Vazimba, the Beosi, the Mikea. They lived not in the southern part of the island, as Commerson had thought, but in the tropical jungles of the west, scattered among the black-skinned Sakalava. Their way of living can hardly be distinguished from that of the African and Asiatic dwarf races, the Congo pygmies, the Bushmen and the Negritos. They are nomadic hunters, fishers and collectors, live partly in caves and are alleged to have no form of society. In appearance, too, they strongly resemble the Congo pygmies and the south-east Asiatic Negritos. To-day they have a considerable admixture of Sakalava blood.

They do not speak Indonesian Malagasy, but a quite peculiar tongue that has so far gone uninvestigated. Some ethnologists consider them as Negritos from southern India, others as dwarf Melanesians, and yet others as being related to the African pygmies. It has even been wondered if the Sakalava are not a mixture of the Vazimba and the Malayo-Polynesian immigrants. The view has been generally expressed that the Vazimba are the aboriginal inhabitants of Madagascar. But 'aboriginal' is a term often misused. At some time or other these pygmies too must have come from somewhere. Could it have been from Africa, across the tremendous currents of the Mozambique Straits? From southern India, over three thousand miles of ocean? From Indonesia, a long sea voyage of over four thousand miles? Malaysians, Polynesians and even Melanesians were and still are outstanding navigators, but it is not known whether Pygmies and Negritos could even navigate small coastal vessels. Did members of more

highly-developed races capture the Vazimba dwarfs and take them to the island of the lemurs? That, too, is hardly likely.

In 1936 appeared the only writing about this mysterious race, by the French ethnologist Birkelli: *The Vazimba of the west coast of Madagascar*. Will it remain the only work on the subject? The Madagascan pygmies belong to those primitive races which to-day are condemned to slow extinction. They still exist—but how long will they survive? The Vazimba have been almost ignored by modern scholars. Perhaps this small, forgotten race could enlighten us, standing as it does at the crossways of two worlds, about the astounding fact that there are dwarf human beings in Africa as well as in the south-east Asian and Oceanic regions. The question about the origins of the light-skinned Madagascans has largely been answered; the problem of the black-skinned and pygmy Madagascans, however, which is no less interesting and perhaps even more important for our knowledge of pre-history, holds in store for science the same brain-racking puzzles as it presented to Grandidier and Commerson.

CHAPTER VIII

STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

The ape and primitive society: Ghostly hands on rock walls: Shooting party in Tasmania: The puritanical cannibals: Where did the Negroes come from?

The ape and primitive society

The history of the human race is everywhere marked by the same origins, the same experiences, the same progress.

Lewis H. Morgan, 1877

IN FEBRUARY 1830 a boat was stolen by natives from an exploratory expedition conducted by the British Navy in the waters of Tierra del Fuego, where a scientific survey was being made. The leader of the expedition, Robert Fitzroy, decided to teach the thieves a lesson and took four Tierra del Fuegians as hostages until the boat should be returned. But the thievish natives simply abandoned their compatriots to their fate, for they had not the slightest intention of returning the boat to His Majesty's fleet. Now Fitzroy had four Fuegians on board his ship the *Beagle*; they were now homeless and he did not want to put them off on some remote Tierra del Fuegian island. Fitzroy was therefore compelled to take the four savages back to England. He found it a splendid opportunity to acquaint them with civilized manners and to inculcate respect for other people's property, especially for the boats of His Britannic Majesty's Navy.

Robert Fitzroy was a very strange man, a puritanical Don Quixote. He was descended from the highly-respected family of the Dukes of Grafton, was a member of the Tory party, considered the Bible to be the fount of all wisdom and the British Empire to be the quintessence of all political virtues. So he tried an experiment: he dressed his Fuegians in English clothes, taught them the English language, instructed them in English customs and believed that in this way he could make good Christians of them

and useful members of the British community—a woeful error into which countless respectable persons have fallen—explorers, missionaries, colonial officials, sociologists and philosophers.

One of the Fuegians died as the result of a smallpox epidemic. The three others, the girl Fuegia Basket, the man York Minster and the boy Jemmy Button gradually changed, under Fitzroy's care, from animal-like creatures to apparently very civilized human beings. He did not realize that their civilization was only a very thin surface covering; Fuegia, York and Jemmy seized every opportunity to indulge in all kinds of vices (or rather, in practices which Fitzroy considered to be vicious). When he finally noticed that little Fuegia was turning not into a respectable young lady but was freely giving herself up to the joys of love, and that Jemmy and York were as thievish as magpies, his fond illusions were suddenly shattered. He never suspected that the fault lay in himself. He put the blame on the Fuegian character, and from then on believed it was impossible to turn savages into human beings. He was very glad when the government ordered him to put the Fuegians back where he had found them.

It was the Liberal Grey-Palmerston government which had given this order. At the time when Fitzroy was trying to carry out his experiment, the liberal Whigs had just announced the emancipation of all coloured slaves in British Crown colonies, and even a man like Fitzroy—whether for experimental or other reasons—was not to be allowed to hold the whip hand over any native. If one wanted to educate savages in the ways of civilization, then one would have to go to their native lands in order to acquaint them with the blessings of modern culture. Fitzroy's three objects of scientific experiment could in this respect, the government decided, be appropriate intermediaries. So Fitzroy, with a missionary, Richard Matthews, sailed back to Tierra del Fuego with his brown charges, in the hope that perhaps this second experiment might succeed. Fuegia, Jemmy and York had swallowed so much civilization that perhaps a little of it would rub off on the wild hordes who had stolen the boat.

Fitzroy's second voyage to Tierra del Fuego, part of a voyage round the world, has gone down in the history of the world. For he took with him a young medical and theological student who shortly before had changed to the study of natural sciences and who in the course of the five-year voyage was to develop into the greatest natural philosopher of his time, Charles Darwin. This

man saw how the three Fuegians, on arrival in their native land, rapidly degenerated from civilized human beings into savages, he saw how the missionary was thrashed and robbed and how the naked savages, the troglodytes from whom Fuegia, York and Jemmy had been taken, rejected with howls of derisive laughter all the commodities and all the rules that were sacred to western civilization.

Charles Darwin thought deeply about the matter. He thought he could see how mankind had developed—from animal to savage, from savage to barbarian, from barbarian to civilized human being. He suffered from no lost illusions as Fitzroy did. He guessed that it was not possible to turn a savage race into a civilized one in a short time with the help of a few modern gimmicks, but that it must develop slowly, according to its own laws, under the influence of its own environment in the struggle for existence. His studies of the savage Fuegians helped Darwin to draw the first sketchy outlines of a train of thought which three decades later was to make him the most celebrated biologist of modern times—the theory of descent, of the origin of species.

The Fuegian Indians were mistakenly regarded by Darwin and other scholars as primitive folk on the lowest level of human civilization. This was a mistaken judgement brought about by exaggerated reports about the savagery of their ways. Like all American Indians, the Fuegians belong to the descendants of those Late Ice Age people of Asiatic, European and Melanesian origin who once migrated over the Bering Straits into the New World. Anthropologically speaking they stand considerably higher than the Australian aborigines, the Veddas and other primitive peoples; from a cultural point of view they represent the level at which the Neolithic hordes stood at the time of their migration to America. They are at a rather lower level than the other American Indian tribes, but occupy a rather higher position than the Vedda and pygmy races.

As early as five to nine thousand years ago man was hunting in the region of the Magellan Straits with the aid of the stone balls later to be known as 'bolas', their quarry being guanacos and the now extinct American primitive horse and giant sloth. Skeletons which are dug up here are barely distinguishable from those of present-day Fuegians, their implements have remained practically unchanged for five thousand years. In this raw, cruel environment at the southernmost point of the inhabited earth man was still as

he had been at the end of the Ice Age—a hunter, a fisherman, a catcher of seals, a gatherer of mussels, a builder of simple boats made of wood and hides. As then, he still dressed in animal skins, slew his quarry with stone balls, with clubs and harpoons, constructed primitive huts of branches and animal hides, lived in large families, worshipped nature spirits and had a desperate struggle for a meagre existence. A development such as other American Indians experienced was here, owing to environmental conditions, impossible. If man, as is so often asserted, is driven even in the coldest climates towards cultural progress, then it is by no means true of the inhabitants of the cold regions of South America.

The tribe which Fitzroy encountered and Darwin studied is referred to by ethnologists as the Alakaluf tribe, or more correctly 'Halukwúlp'. Contact with Europeans had absolutely no civilizing effect upon these Antarctic creatures, but instead has hastened their extinction. Tuberculosis, measles and frightful persecution have reduced their numbers so drastically that to-day there are hardly more than a few hundred Halukwúlp. Almost extinct too are the Ona and Yaghan tribes, whose real names are Selknam and Yámana. A fourth tribe is now completely extinct, the Chono. The gradual extermination of these tribes becomes comprehensible when we consider what kind of men followed Fitzroy and Darwin to Tierra del Fuego: they were seal-hunters, prospectors, criminals who were deported to the penal settlements of South America. About 1880 white colonists, gold-prospectors and sheep-farmers began systematically to exterminate the Tierra del Fuegians, and even as late as the twentieth century there were 'hunting excursions' in which the brown fishermen and boatmen were shot at from foreign ships.

A number of explorers and scholars followed in the tracks of Fitzroy and Darwin. The only ones worth mentioning are the English missionary Bridges, who about 1879 compiled a dictionary of the Yámana tongue, and the ethnologist and Catholic priest Martin Gusinde, who from 1918 to 1924 studied the Fuegians on four consecutive journeys. But Gusinde, an authority on many primitive civilizations, who is now a professor in Washington, found only the last remnants of the native tribes; yet he thought they were so interesting that he devoted a three-volume work to them. This taught us that these apparently 'animal-like savages' worshipped besides their nature deities one omnipotent god, that they performed dramatic masked dances and knew a special

method of keeping their precious and life-giving fires alight; they had a hearth in every boat. The many fires which he saw in their boats when Magellan was passing through the Straits gave its name to the 'Land of Fire'. This is the sum of our knowledge about Jemmy Button's race.

In November 1859 appeared Darwin's work, *The Origin of Species*. If his theory was correct, then there were no set rules and moral laws, and no fixed differences between castes and races and civilizations. Darwin's world was one of constant change, constant development. The forms of life had fought their way from simple primitive cells and gradually by 'natural selection' in the 'struggle for existence' had evolved their present high level; one form flowed into another, everything was changeable, moving on to unknown destinations, altering shape according to the dictates of nature, the new goddess, who was trying to oust the ancient Lord of Hosts from his position. And what about man? He, too, had to obey natural laws, he, too, had not arrived inalterably set in his present state on earth, and his customs and morals were also in a constant state of flux. Indeed, one of Darwin's supporters, Herbert Spencer, wanted to write a series of works in which he would cover 'the development of matter and spirit from a nebula to man and from the savage to Shakespeare'.

So according to Darwin Jemmy Button's tribal companions were right if they stole British boats, it was part of their struggle for existence. Fuegia Basket was right when she offered her love without official or religious authorization, her conduct was part of the moral behaviour of primitive society. York Minster was right when he, on his return to the homeland fjords, reverted rapidly to the level of a troglodyte, the law of natural selection could not admit the presence of a gentleman in Tierra del Fuego. Fitzroy was deeply shaken by such a heretical theory, which overthrew the foundations of all existing notions. And when Darwin's friend, the biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, was explaining the theory of descent before a distinguished Oxford audience, the captain of the *Beagle* seized a Bible and threw it at the lecturer, shouting that the eternal truth was to be found in the book and not in the dubious investigations of a man whom he—regrettably, considering the results—had entertained upon his own ship.

Twelve years after the appearance of *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained more precisely what he thought was the history of man's development. He believed that primitive anthropoid apes

of high intelligence and of great adaptability had gradually learnt to walk upright, their brains had increased in size, they had evolved a language, invented tools and developed a social life. Every member of the primitive community strove to find a partner who would be best fitted to cope with the struggle for existence in the given environment. It was only those who were suitable, fit and intelligent who succeeded in establishing themselves in the still very crude and savage society of primitive man. In this way the physical and intellectual abilities of the species that was to be Man gradually increased from generation to generation. On a higher level, sexual selection gave the impetus to the development of human beauty; the able-bodied man preferred pretty females, who passed on their beauty to their descendants of both sexes, and 'the constant preference for the more attractive women who were chosen by the fittest men of the race led finally to a modification of all the individuals belonging to the race'.

Darwin's theory of descent revolutionized ethnology almost more than Rousseau's philosophy had done a century before. Human, racial and cultural genealogical tables were drawn up. Missing links were sought between the anthropoid apes and primitive men. More attention than ever was devoted to the primitive races who stood on the very lowest cultural levels, because it was hoped to discover in them characteristics and qualities of those creatures that had lived in the period of transition from beast to man. It was not now Rousseau's 'Noble Savage' who held the centre of the stage, the valiant Red Indian, the well-built Polynesian, but the Bushman, the representative of the childhood of the human race, the pygmy, the Australian aboriginal, the Vedda, the Papuan. One of the most zealous defenders of Darwin's teaching, Thomas Henry Huxley, overthrew all existing conceptions in his work *Evidence as to man's place in nature*, which appeared in 1863, and created an entirely new classification of the human species, based on biogenetic assumptions. According to Huxley, in contradistinction to an original primitive race, the Australides, there are three main races who have progressed far beyond their primal ancestors, the Negroid, the white and the mongoloid races. By Australides Huxley did not mean just the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia but also the dark-skinned Indians, the Veddass and other primitive peoples.

The Veddass in particular became favourites of Darwinian anthropologists. Their slight, almost childish physique, their

mane-like hair, deep-set eyes, broad noses, jutting chins, their broad, angular faces, their apparent lack of civilization—all these pre-destined them to be the number-one primitive race. When in France the first skulls and bones of European Ice Age men were excavated, the twenty- to fifty-thousand-year-old primitive Europeans were compared with the Veddas and related tribes, not altogether unjustly. The Veddas and related tribes have certainly preserved many of the physical characteristics of Palaeolithic man. Darwin's influence was seen in every line written by later travellers to Ceylon and Indonesia about these southern Asiatic primitive peoples. All of them had the conviction in their studies of the Veddas that they were penetrating far back into the pre-history of man.

'The life of the Kubu is almost identical with that of the anthropoid apes,' declared Wilhelm Volz, speaking of a small-statured Veddha tribe on Sumatra. 'Whole families of them roam through the primeval forest. They stop where nightfall finds them, build on the ground a shelter from the wind made of leaves and branches, or a nest in a tree. If one of them dies, the others wander on without paying any attention. Their whole life is devoted to the search for food . . . the gibbon in the trees above them leads a careless and therefore happier life; he can swing himself up to the topmost branches and bray out his song to the sun. But the Kubu, shyly picking their way through the thickets, are condemned to the gloom of the primeval forest's undergrowth.' The ethnologist Georg Buschan refers to the Veddas as 'primitive tribes on a very low cultural level, who have no domesticated animals and no crops and live only on the results of collecting or the hunting of small animals'. And when the Dutch anatomist Eugen Dubois in 1891 and 1892 excavated near Trinil in the Javanese volcanic mountain range the 'ape-man' *Pithecanthropus erectus*, numerous scholars raised their voices to express the opinion that the Indonesian jungle, in which Veddas still live, was the original home of the human race.

Ethnology made giant's strides in Darwin's era. Archaeologists excavated on the Nile, in Mesopotamia, in Cambodia and Central America the remains of long-vanished civilizations. Ethnologists and anthropologists studied with the sobriety of natural scientists the customs and forms of society of the Australian aborigines, Papuans, Bushmen and Amazon Indians. The tools and ornaments of Ice Age man came to light. Neanderthal, *Pithecanthropus*

and other types of primitive man were discovered, and there was much argument about whether these creatures were human beings, apes or missing links between apes and men. Gregor Mendel solved the mysteries of heredity. The Englishman John Lubbock said he recognized in the rituals of the apes the first beginnings of pre-human primitive society. Ethnologists began to specialize in comparative sciences, in linguistics and jurisprudence, in the economics, sociology and psychology of races.

In England the scientists were catching up with the lead the French had taken under the influence of Rousseau's doctrines. Indeed the cradle of British ethnology was represented by a philosopher holding quite different principles from those of Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes. This historian, mathematician and universal scholar had already been dead for two hundred years; but one of his guiding principles enjoyed a sudden resurrection in nineteenth century England. In the states of nature, Hobbes had once announced, there dominated a merciless *bellum omnium contra omnes*; the history of mankind showed how mankind gradually overcame this 'fight of all against all' and had conquered chaos with order, law and civilization.

The British ethnologists seized upon this thought and invented a scale of values which demonstrated that human civilization had risen from the animal level to barbarism and had then reached its highest stage in the perfection of European culture. After the animals came the savage primitive peoples, followed by the rather less savage Australian aborigines, Veddas and Tierra del Fuegians, who were succeeded by the barbaric Negroes, Indians and certain peoples of antiquity. After these came the half-barbarian Polynesians, some orientals and the more highly-developed peoples of antiquity. The culminating peak of perfection was reached with the white races of the west and, it had to be admitted, also with the Indians, Semites and East Asiatics. This was a dangerous theory, for the concepts of 'lower' and 'higher' races were not just statements of fact but also of values.

The nineteenth century was one which believed in progress. Man seemed to have conquered nature. He built machines, employed steam and electricity and secretly hoped that he would succeed in creating a paradise on earth. In this respect whoever got left behind fell a victim to the struggle for existence; the Darwinian phrase, 'survival of the fittest', now applied to human life. Therefore was not the white race the 'fittest' race of a higher

order of things, and justified in suppressing the 'lower' races? The nineteenth century was an era of unrestrained and unscrupulous colonial imperialism. In the thoughts and ideas which now began to be expressed lay the seeds of racial prejudice. The white race had been chosen to perform a historical task of the first importance, 'to save dying humanity from the claws of the eternal beast', as Houston Stewart Chamberlain expressed himself in 1899.

The British ethnologists of the Darwinian era were still completely free from this form of racial prejudice. 'The various races of man,' as the anthropologist James Cowles Pritchard wrote in 1842 in his *Natural History of Man*, 'are distinguished from one another not by strongly-marked, uniform and permanent characteristics, as is the case in the animal kingdom; all existing racial differences are subject to variation and are merged into one another in a series of imperceptible gradations.' Pritchard founded the Ethnological Society in London which soon began to urge colonial officials overseas to acquire a truer understanding of coloured races.

England had material interests in the case, which were also shared by Darwin; it was hoped to put an end to slavery, to avoid misunderstandings and to obtain more respect in the colonies for the mentality of the natives, in order to eliminate the possibilities of trouble with the coloured peoples. 'The authorities in India can no longer allow themselves to ignore the character, the conditions of life and the demands of the primitive forest tribes who exist here on every frontier,' as the Ethnological Society recommended in 1870. 'It is these very tribes who have contributed so much, ethnically speaking, to the development of the Indian population.' From similar motives the beginnings of ethnological research were made in the Dutch and German colonies.

These soberly practical men, who neither abhorred the 'savages' nor rhapsodized over them, soon outdistanced the romantic idealists of Rousseau's time. They recognized that primitive societies were not paradises on earth and not examples of human degeneration but perfectly natural periods in the development of man, 'each of which has its own more or less peculiar form of culture and way of life', as Lewis Morgan wrote. In 1871 the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor attempted, in his great work, *Primitive Culture*, to give a picture of the evolution of religion and of the human spirit.

Tylor, who later became president of the London Anthropological Society, invented the concept of *Animism*. He believed that for primitive man the whole of nature—sun, moon and stars, air, fire and water, animals, plants and stones—had a soul. The 'savage' apprehended in everything that concerned his natural environment a human presence similar to his own; he personified nature; all the elements and the phenomena of nature were gods. In this animism Tylor saw the primitive basis of religion, and in the personified natural forces the first human gods. If natural man could find no way out of a predicament then he chose an animal, a plant or an inanimate object in whose power he had particular faith, and made it his ally; his unorganized animism became totemism or fetishism. He offered up to his totem something of his own—his kill after hunting, or even people of his own or of a foreign tribe; he thought he could control destructive forces by the performance of special rites and ceremonies. The shaman, the tribal priest, played an ever more important role. Out of the personification of nature developed the heroic gods and out of the vague, ambiguous nature myths came cosmic-metaphysical systems.

According to Tylor speech developed in a similar way—from pure interjections to a stammering that resembled the language of Babel, to the refinements of modern civilized speech. Primeval society was compared with animal communities, primeval marriage with the 'free love' that some reformers were just then beginning to regard as a new scheme bringing salvation to the world. At that time there was a man who was interesting himself in the marriage problems of primitive peoples, and whose theses were to become the common property of all concerned with ethnological matters; he was Jacob Bachofen of Basle.

For twenty-five years Bachofen worked unobtrusively as judge in his home town. During this time his spirit was wandering through all the civilizations of man, and he read hosts of historical and ethnological works. Finally he published in 1861 his work *The matriachate: an investigation into the gynæcology of the ancient world with special reference to its religious and legal nature*. Behind this rebarbative title was concealed a work which to quote Bachofen 'would reveal the archaic myths of primeval times in all their great beauty'. Yet Bachofen's *Matriarchate* was not addressed to aesthetes, but led to a scientific and intellectual revolution.

The word 'matriarchate' made a place for itself in the history of ethnology. According to Bachofen men on the lowest levels of society once lived in unorganized family communities. Later they adopted the matriarchate, a form of society in which the woman occupies a privileged or even dominating position and which was characterized by female hereditary succession, moon-mythology and mother deities. The legends of the Amazons still recall this period. They were invented when man had climbed to the third stage, still in existence, the patriarchate.

Ethnology has meanwhile considerably modified this pattern of development, for it is by no means certain that all races originally mingled in a classless society and passed through a stage of matriarchal domination. Yet Bachofen had explained the remarkable fact that in many civilizations woman played a predominant part and to some extent still does so to-day. Since then, certain primitive hoeing civilizations in Africa, America and Oceania, in which the cultivation of crops is in the hands of women and in which the mother of the family enjoys special privileges are to-day referred to as matriarchal cultures.

In the same year, 1859, in which Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, there appeared in Leipzig a three-volume work under the title *Man in History*. Its author, Adolf Bastian, was the founder of ethnology in Germany. Bastian was an unusual man, perhaps the first ethnographer in the present accepted sense of the word. Eight years before the writing of his great work he had sailed as a ship's doctor to Australia and from there had embarked upon a voyage round the world with the one idea of studying foreign races. He reached New Zealand and South Sea islands, climbed the Peruvian Andes, studied the ancient Inca city of Cuzco, the pyramids of Mexico, the natives of the West Indies, of California and the Mississippi. From America he set out for China, passed through India proper and Further India and the Malayan archipelago, sailed four months in a small boat down the Ganges, pressed on to the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh. There followed caravan journeys through Arabia and safaris in Africa; he was the first European to set foot for two hundred years in the capital city of the Mani Kongo. Within eight years this man had travelled practically round the world with the exception of the Arctic and the Antarctic.

Adolf Bastian was not satisfied with this. Another round-the-world journey lasting five years took him through the whole of

Asia from India and Burma to China, Japan and Siberia. On a third journey he set up a research station in West Africa, on a fourth journey he studied the races of South America, and on a fifth the South Sea Islanders. And on his sixth voyage he once more visited all the continents of the Ancient World. In between his journeys, which covered twenty-two years, he still found time to write about forty scientific works. His themes covered a wide field, from Buddhism to the myths of the Polynesians, and from the Negro fetish to the ancient Incas and Aztecs.

But he was an aggressive man. He hailed Darwin's 'healthy reformation', but he contested in an *Open letter to Herr Professor Ernst Haeckel* with biting wit what he considered to be the eccentricities of Darwinism—in particular the new human family tree, which placed *Homo sapiens* so painfully close to the apes. He conducted an even more violent argument with the geographer Friedrich Ratzel—an altercation which is, moreover, still going on to-day.

In 1882 Ratzel had written an *Anthropogeography* in which he had stated that certain cultural elements and even whole civilizations could be attributed to migration. According to his 'theory of migrations', the primitive peoples did not themselves produce the greater part of their cultural achievements, but borrowed them from ancient higher civilizations. Bastian in his *Elementary Theory* proclaims exactly the opposite; he says that every civilized race produced its own culture and developed it in its own geographically demarcated area. Extreme supporters of Ratzel are now called Diffusionists, who say that all human cultures derive from a common mother-culture; extreme supporters of Bastian are those ethnologists who want to divide the earth into precisely-defined racial and cultural areas. The majority of anthropologists, ethnologists and students of civilization in fact believe that the truth lies somewhere between the two points of view.

Among all the nations that in the course of the nineteenth century began to take an interest in the lives of foreign races, the United States seemed to be particularly predestined to conduct objective ethnological research. Apart from the extermination of the Red Indians, the USA had not made any appreciable attacks on other races. Apart from the Negro problem in the southern states, there was no particular race prejudice. She possessed—at least until the end of the century, when Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Philippines were still independent—no colonies.

There was an Ethnological Society in America as early as 1842; it was the creation of travellers who were glad to tell posterity about their experiences and observations. Their president, the geologist and Indian agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, published in the years 1851 to 1856, at the expense of the American government, a gigantic six-volume work on the Red Indian races in the United States. Yet the leading role played by American ethnologists in the modern world is due not only to Schoolcraft but also, and above all, to the fortunate outcome of a trial that attracted much attention.

This trial lasted from 1835 to 1838. The parties involved were the British Court of Chancery and the North American government. It was about a fortune of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling which an English millionaire and private scholar had left behind him on his death. He was James Smithson, the bastard son of the Duke of Northumberland, who lived mostly abroad and was a man extremely interested in the natural sciences who spent his money chiefly on chemical experiments. He did not like his mother country and apparently foresaw that the Americans would come to idolize learning. For when he died he bequeathed to his nephew and heir Henry James Hungerford the whole of his fortune with the provision that—should Hungerford die without leaving a legitimate heir—it should pass entirely to the United States for the formation of a scientific Institute.

In fact his nephew Hungerford left no legitimate heir when he died in 1835. But the English authorities were most unwilling to allow such a huge sum of money to cross the Atlantic into American hands. So a trial was instituted, which the United States won after a three-year struggle. In April 1846, by special act of Congress, the Smithsonian Institute for the increase and diffusion of knowledge was brought into being. The fields of science with which the Smithsonian Institute concerned itself were researches into the magnetism of the earth, astronomy and—above all—ethnology.

This is how one of the greatest scientific institutes on earth came into being. The Smithsonian Institute built museums, picture galleries and libraries, provided ethnological and archaeological exhibitions, equipped expeditions, bought Lindbergh's plane in which he flew the Atlantic, corresponded with famous scholars and entered into contact and set up an exchange system with all the museums on earth. The Bureau of American Ethnology, which

was financed by the foundation, first devoted itself to the North American Indians and then to all the races of the world that were even of the slightest ethnological interest. Whole generations of ethnologists were encouraged by the Smithsonian Institute, and the achievements of countless researchers are inseparably bound up with James Smithson's philanthropic foundation. In the Smithsonian Institute's publishing house there appeared in 1877 a work that was later to become the bible of defenders of progressive thought and which now, as then, remains one of the standard works of every Marxist library, Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society*.

Lewis Morgan first interested himself in the sociology of the beaver, and then in the sociology of mankind. The conceptions of marriage, family and state which had existed until then reposed, he believed, on false premises; they were nothing but imaginary fantasies. Morgan had investigated in detail the most varied Red Indian societies and cultures and compared them with those of antiquity. He had also studied the philosopher Hobbes, knew Darwin and believed in the principles of natural selection in the struggle for existence and in the survival of the fittest. He divided the history of man into three main epochs, savagery, barbarism and civilization. He sub-divided every epoch into lower, middle and higher levels. He made clear also why it was that humanity had developed from a savage to a civilized condition; the process of production had compelled them to it, and work, the necessity of making a living.

'The theory of the degeneration of mankind which has been illustrated by the example of the life of savage tribes,' he wrote, 'is no longer tenable and finds not the slightest support in the facts of human experience.' He also felt that it was no longer admissible to divide human history into the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. For one could not judge a race simply by the materials it employed, one must instead estimate the worth of the general social conditions in which the race lived. This was exactly what the early socialists had asserted. The non-socialist and biologist Morgan provided Marx, Engels and Lenin with their ethnological material.

What Morgan said about the development of human civilization could well be taken from any socialist primer: 'Human civilization has everywhere followed pretty much the same course. Human needs have been roughly the same in parallel circum-

stances. The workings of the intellect were, according to the fairly uniform universal development of the brain, much the same in all human races. The most ancient fore-runners of the white nations in all probability had to work their way through stages of civilization similar to those which exist still among savage and barbarian peoples. The chief races of humanity can be classified according to their relative cultural progress.⁷

The lower stage of savagery was characterized by Morgan as being that state in which man lived partly in the trees like the apes, fed on fruits and roots and only just began to become articulate in speech. In the middle state of savagery, man ate fish and crabs, made weapons of stone and wood, and knew the use of fire—an existence similar to that of the Australian aborigines. At this stage, cannibalism begins. The higher stage of savagery was the period in which the bow and arrow are discovered, baskets woven, huts and boats constructed. This corresponds, according to Morgan, to the type of life led by many North American Indian tribes when they were first discovered by the white man.

Man moves from savagery to barbarism: 'the invention and practise of the potter's craft is the most reliable indication we can find of the border-line between savagery and barbarism'. But Morgan's barbarians were not just potters, they also reared and domesticated animals, planted crops, began in their middle stage to fire tiles, to build stone houses and to smelt ore. On the higher level of barbarism cannibalism died out, for now man had sufficient animal flesh for his needs. Man now worked in iron, built ships and carts, developed weapons, arts and crafts and architecture, created an aristocratic class, kept slaves and lived in walled towns. With the discovery of a phonetic alphabet and the use of a script man finally crosses the threshold into civilization.

The theories of Darwin, Tylor, Bachofen and Morgan all aroused great dismay at first; they were gradually assimilated, tested, extended or revised. To-day they are regarded as turning-points in history, as the first bases of a new evolutionary conception of history. Some of Morgan's views were discredited, some of them remained valid. It was held against Morgan that he had often tried to force the most widely different racial and cultural elements confusingly and unselectively into a too-rigid scheme. But his claim that races should in future be studied not as fixed entities but in the light of their historical development remained unassailable.

'We have all good cause to remember,' as Morgan expressed it, 'that we owe our present condition with its countless benefits of security and comfort to the sufferings, the heroic strivings and the patient labour of our barbarian and our even earlier savage forefathers. Their works, their experiences, their successes turned savagery to barbarism and barbarism to civilization.' But what had 'civilized man' done for the 'savage' to whom he owed so much? The age of Darwin was also the age of embarrassment and shame, of attempts to make good the disasters of the past. And with particular zeal the ethnologists descended upon that race which according to Morgan represented the lowest existing level of human civilization—the aborigines of Australia.

Ghostly hands on rock walls

The inhabitants of these regions are the most wretched creatures in all the world.

William Dampier, c. 1688

'IF HUMAN BEINGS in a state of savagery had not remained in isolated parts of the earth as living proofs of what the general primitive state of human society had once been,' Morgan wrote in his *Ancient Society*, 'it would be impossible for us to obtain any definite picture of this condition.' Such a primitive condition Morgan believed he had discovered among those people who once, before the arrival of the European, populated the Australian continent and whose scattered remnants have long ago been driven back into forests and deserts of the fifth continent.

Explorers and researchers until then had devoted little attention to the brown, bearded, aboriginals of Australia. Cook called them 'the ugliest, worst-built race I have ever seen', and turned up his nose at their 'apeish motions'. In the eyes of the Australian colonists the aborigines were a suspicious, thievish and uncultivated lot. And the missionaries deplored 'the ineradicable inclination these people have to lead wandering lives and to return to their old manner of existence'.

In 1856 the Elberfeld high-school teacher Johann Carl Fuhlrott discovered in the valley of the Neander near Düsseldorf the remains of a primitive man with ape-like features—the first Neanderthal Man. In 1859 appeared Darwin's work on the origin of species. Four years later Huxley referred to the Australian

aborigines as 'living fossils', primitive forms of humanity, and anthropologists began to make comparisons between Australians and Neanderthals. Another sixteen years later Lewis Morgan published his *Ancient Society*. The 'ugly monsters' hunted by the descendants of convicts deported to Botany Bay and by other settlers in Australia had become suddenly the most interesting race on earth.

It is a curiosity of the history of exploration that the many travellers to the coasts of Australia since the seventeenth century were hardly ever struck by the peculiarities and characteristics of the natives. The first whites to sight the fifth continent were the Portuguese Godinho de Eredia in 1601 and the Spaniard Pedro Fernandez de Quiros in 1606, but they did not come into contact with the natives. Various captains of the Dutch East India Company confused it with New Guinea, considered it to be a comfortable and barren land and were glad when they could raise anchor and sail home to Java.

About 1623 a captain Jan Carstensz encountered on the coast of the present Cape York peninsula in Northern Australia a tribe of bearded brown men whom he describes as follows: 'They are wretched savages, without the use of metal of any kind, let alone gold or silver. Their weapons are shields and spears of light wood or bamboo, tipped with fish bone or even human bone. They are very skilful at throwing these spears'. Presumably Carstensz was the first European to see the Australian aborigines. In the region of their encampment he found all kinds of bones, took them to be human bones and therefore referred to the Australians as cannibals. Because they seemed interested in glass beads, he enticed a few men by holding out a handful of beads to them, and tried to capture them. His sailors were able to take one on board, another was shot, the others escaped. 'Despite our friendliness,' Captain Carstensz thereafter complains, 'the savages everywhere treated us like enemies'. After what had happened, one can hardly blame the Australians.

Carstensz's successors behaved no better, and left no word of their encounter with the natives, whom they probably considered to be wild beasts. Then a man entered the scene who was to undertake the systematic exploration of Australia, the governor of the Netherlands East India Company, Antonius van Diemen. One of the captains whom van Diemen sent out to explore the *terra australis incognita*, the great Abel Tasman, circumnavigated the

continent in 1642, discovered New Zealand and found in the south of Australia an island which to-day bears his name, Tasmania. On this island dwelt not brown but black men. Tasman mistakenly thought they were giants, but otherwise said nothing about them. He did not suspect that he had come across the most primitive people on earth, the Tasmanians, as they were later called. He declared on his return exactly what other captains had declared, that Australia was a barren wilderness, whereupon the Dutch stopped their voyages to Australia.

Other nations, too, had little interest in taking possession of such an apparently infertile southerly land. And so it came about that the next person to set foot on Australia and to study its inhabitants was a pirate with literary ability. His name was William Dampier and he came from the English village of East Coker in Somerset. He had started life as a farmer's lad, became a sailor on a voyage to the West Indies, worked for years in the Antilles as a soldier, lumberjack and plantation overseer, finally acquired a half-rotten boat, hired a motley crew and plundered merchant ships off the coasts of Africa, in the South Seas and in Malayan waters.

In 1688 he touched the north-west coast of Australia. He saw the first kangaroos and encountered natives who seemed to him to be 'the most wretched creatures in all the world'. As people in England were interested in his observations and experiences, his past life was quietly forgotten and he was given the command of a ship called the *Roebuck* so that he might pay another visit to Australia, this time on a commission from the British navy. Now the *Roebuck* was even less seaworthy, if that could be possible, than Dampier's old pirate ship. The old buccanneer did in fact sail around for a while in Australian and New Guinean waters, found as the Dutch had that it was a frightful region and then set off on the voyage home, but in the Atlantic the *Roebuck* broke up. Dampier was rescued. But now he had had enough of the navy; he once more took up his piratical way of life, this time on a better ship, and sailed several times to Australia. His log-book *Dampier's Voyages round the World*, was one of the most amusing travel books of his time.

Several decades went by before, in the summer of 1770, another European vessel lay in an Australian bay. It was Cook's frigate the *Endeavour* on her first voyage round the world. And the region where Cook and his scholarly companions set foot on earth was

called Botany Bay, in the neighbourhood of what is now the city of Sydney. There Cook repaired his ship which had been damaged on the coral reefs, his botanist Daniel Solander collected Australian plants, and the leader of the research staff, Joseph Banks, racked his brains over the kangaroos which he saw bounding about. But it was the Tahitian Tupia whom Cook had taken with him as guest and interpreter who took the greatest interest in the Australian aborigines.

Tupia was afraid of these strange, almost sinister-looking creatures. He called them *Tata Ino*, 'sad, unfortunate ones', and thought they must be dwellers in the land of the dead. The aborigines were timorous as beasts, hardly left any footprint on the sands, could not be won over either by smiles or presents. As soon as they saw someone from the *Endeavour* they withdrew fearfully into the bush. Were they the souls of men who had died long ago? Tupia firmly believed they were. He sensed that the white hosts were closer to him, that between himself and the aborigines a great gulf yawned, a gulf that seemed unbridgeable. *Tata Ino*, the lost, dead souls—a remarkable judgement of a primitive race from a brown Polynesian, who could hardly believe it possible that the familiar earth should contain such creatures.

The natural scientists Banks and Solander also gradually began to wonder; everywhere in the South Seas the natives had come with great curiosity to greet the great foreign ship and its crew, but here the savages cast not a glance at the *Endeavour* or at the white men's encampment. Banks found wind-breaks and simple huts in which the Bushmen must live. He left clothes and glass beads in these dwellings, but the bushmen would not touch them and would not enter the huts again. Only after infinite trouble did Cook's specialists succeed in attracting the brown men with gestures. Cook offered them bread; they sniffed it and threw it away. When an aborigine tried to take away with him a burning splinter of wood from the camp kitchen the grass caught fire so that nearly all the tents were destroyed. 'The most pitiable folk on earth' was Cook's perhaps rather irritated verdict. Nevertheless he added that the people of the bush, despite their naïveté and primitive way of life were probably 'more happy than we Europeans'.

What could be done with this great continent? Cook and Banks thought it would be an ideal place for a penal colony. The English Government followed up this suggestion. On January 20th, 1788, Captain Phillip landed with eleven ships, two hundred soldiers and

seven hundred and seventy five convicts at Botany Bay. In the following decades further penal colonies were set up at Port Jackson, Port Macquarie, on Moreton Bay and on Norfolk Island, in Tasmania and in Western Australia. And now Tupia's Tato Ino really did become 'sad unfortunate ones'.

Within half a century England deported about one hundred and sixty thousand criminals to Australia and Tasmania. Wherever the deportees settled, the aborigines vanished. The free colonists, the farmers, squatters and gold-washers carried on a permanent war of extermination against the timid nomad tribes. The aborigines were driven from the settled areas into the most dismal deserts; their numbers declined within a century from three hundred thousand to fifty thousand. And the efforts of missionaries and of the more humane colonists and officials to accustom the Bushmen to clothing and the benefits of civilization led to the same awful results as on the Amazon, in Polynesia and in the Arctic. They infected the natives with diseases and broke down their natural resistance.

The next well-known visitor to Australia after Cook was Darwin. He was in fact much more interested in the coral reefs than in the natives, but at least he showed an understanding of the aborigines which for that time was remarkable. 'The facial expression was good-natured and friendly,' he says in his *Journey round the World*, 'and they do not seem to me to be such very degenerate types as they are usually depicted as being. They have achieved wonderful things in their arts and crafts. We hung up a cap at a distance of thirty metres and they shot a spear through it with all the celerity with which a good bowman despatches an arrow. They show astonishing quickness of mind in following animal and human tracks. Many of their observations indicate a certain intelligence. Yet they have no wish to plant fields or build houses or lead a settled life. . . . It is a very strange feeling, that here in the midst of civilized peoples a lot of harmless savages are running wild—people who do not know where they will sleep at night, and who gain a living by hunting in the forests.'

Darwin also sensed what a tragic catastrophe had overwhelmed these people: 'The further the white man has penetrated, the more he has spread out over the lands that belonged to the various native tribes. The numbers of the aborigines are dwindling rapidly. This decline is undoubtedly due partly to the introduction of alcoholic beverages, to European diseases also, of which even

the least dangerous like measles and scarlet fever have a devastatingly destructive effect on the natives; it is due also to the gradual disappearance of wild life. Many of their children die in infancy; the population declines rapidly through lack of food. . . . Wherever the European appears, the natives seem fated to die out. The various races of men affect each other in the same way as the various species of animals—the stronger always triumphs over the weaker. It is sad to see this.'

For Fitzroy, Darwin and other members of the *Beagle* expedition the natives danced their corroborees, the magical-totemistic dances which belong to the most exciting and impressive spectacles on earth. 'Their dances,' writes Darwin, 'consist in running sideways or in a goose-step on an open space while they all stamp loudly with their feet. This stamping they accompany with a kind of grunting, with a beating-together of their cudgels and spears, with a stretching of the arms and a bending of the trunk. It was quite a wild, barbaric spectacle and to our minds completely meaningless; but we saw that the brown women and children watched it with the greatest pleasure. One of the dances was called an emu dance, because in it each man, using his bent arm, imitates the neck of an emu; in another dance a man imitated the movements of a kangaroo grazing in the forest, while a second man crept up and pretended to slay him with a spear. When all the men danced together, the ground throbbed under the tread of their stamping feet, and the air resounded to their wild cries. The almost naked figures who moved together with uncanny precision in the flickering firelight exhibited perfectly what a spectacle among the lowest barbarians looks like. . . . I have already witnessed many remarkable events in the lives of savages, but none in which the natives were so happy and carefree.'

When Darwin wrote this he was still a young man in whom an exaggerated enthusiasm might be excused. But forty years later his friends Huxley, Lubbock, Tylor and Morgan agreed entirely with him, seeing in the corroboree's exciting primitive dances and in the lives of the aborigines a reflection of primeval human existence. And when Don Marcelino de Sautuola, Henry Breuil and the other great cave-explorers discovered towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in the Ice Age caves of Europe pictures of dancing men, when they saw the imprints of young dancing men's feet preserved in the clay of the cave floors, when harpoons and boomerangs were found to

have been used not just by Australians but also by our palaeolithic forefathers and everywhere documents came to light of primitive totemism with animal masks, animal rites and hunting magic, then it became clear that they were not just 'wild, barbaric and meaningless entertainments' that were being performed in the Australian bush, but ceremonies which the ancestors of western civilized man had once carried out. Australia was seen to be a 'land of living fossils'—with its original plants, its original animals, its original inhabitants. Here, in the Antipodes, time had stood still.

From 1830 students, geologists, explorers, telegraph engineers and gold-prospectors began to investigate the interior of the fifth continent. They all came into contact with the aborigines. But when the great age of anthropology began, most of the aborigines had long ago been herded into reservations. At once, however, the scientists noticed a most extraordinary fact which until then no one had thought about: how was it that Australia was inhabited preponderantly by human beings? In the 'continent of the living fossils' there were no large mammals, only strange marsupial creatures. All biological and geological indications seemed to point to the fact that once, perhaps from fifty to two hundred million years ago Australia belonged to a great southern continent, Gondwanaland. But as early as the first Tertiary Age—at a time therefore when the marsupials were still dominant and the higher mammals still in their first primitive stages—Gondwanaland broke up, since when the Australian continent has remained isolated in the South Seas. Meanwhile no 'modern' animal had reached the continent from Asia, with two exceptions, the dog, and man.

The Australian wild dog, the dingo, resembled the dogs of Indonesia. What about Australian man? He seemed to resemble some archaic primitive man, the Neanderthaler or even the anthropoid apes of Java. The presence of men and dogs in the fifth continent would have caused little surprise if the human inhabitants had been seafarers like the Polynesians and Melanesians of the South Seas. But the aborigines did not look at all as if they could have succeeded in sailing across the broad Timor Straits before the dawn of history with their families, implements and dogs.

Moreover, the fossilized bones of aboriginal Australians and dingos were discovered in earth deposits in which also the remains

of the most varied pre-historical marsupials lay—the *Diprotodon*, the *Nototherium* and other monsters. These colossal marsupials had lived, according to the views then held, in the Tertiary era. Did this mean that already in the Tertiary, millions of years ago, there had been men and dogs in Australia? Then was man much older than science had until then assumed? Did he make his first appearance in Gondwana? When Gondwana submerged, did the dogs and the human beings save their lives by taking refuge in Australia, among the native plants, duck-billed platypuses and marsupials, and live on there to the present day?

In South Queensland, in the Wellington Caves, in South Australia and in other parts of the country human bones were dug up which the students of pre-history, without batting an eyelid, placed in the Middle Tertiary—twenty-five to thirty million years ago. Australia seemed to turn all geological and anthropological knowledge topsy-turvy.

Zoologists and palaeontologists finally solved the riddle. The so-called primeval beasts, the *diprotodon*, the *nototherium* and the other pre-historic giant marsupials of Australia did not live in the Tertiary, but died out only a few thousand years ago. Alleged Tertiary deposits after more precise investigation were unmasked as Pleistocene, corresponding to our Ice Age. But how young were the Australians and the dingos? Or how old?

The German anthropologist Hermann Klaatsch, who in 1904 travelled in Australia, saw the aborigines as survivors of Neanderthal man: 'They stood at a level corresponding to that of the European Ice Age man of a hundred thousand years ago'. Their thick growth of hair, their prominent jaw, their tools, their animal-like nomadic existence—Klaatsch thought all these things put them very close to Neanderthal man. He even compared some of the aboriginal customs with corresponding customs in Europe, referring to them as atavistic rudiments of Neanderthal culture; 'The scars on the face of a German student find their parallels in the great cuts which the Australians inflict upon themselves, in order to prove their love of battle and to proclaim their skill as warriors.' The aboriginal Australian women also had such ornamental scars and were vigorous duellists.

A number of finds created a certain confusion. In the neighbourhood of Warrnambool in Victoria there was excavated, at a great depth, a fossilized footprint that was given an age of several million years. Near Keilor a skull was dug up which appeared to

be about a hundred and fifty thousand years old and which could therefore have belonged to the Neanderthal era. But modern anthropologists and students of pre-history, with the help of chemistry and the geiger-counter, proceeded to estimate more exactly the age of earth strata, fossils and cultural relics, and produced very sobering results which put an end to all previous fantasies. The footprint from Warrnambool belonged to the present era, and all skulls and bones of proto-Australians, the ancestors of the present aborigines, were at the most only twenty to seventy thousand years old, a good age, all the same. Nevertheless, the proto-Australians were not contemporaries of the anthropoid apes or of Neanderthal man, but of the Late Ice Age race of *Homo sapiens*.

Meanwhile, many aboriginal Australian skeletons were found. The most important sites were at Keilor, Cohuna, Talgai and the Wellington Caves. They were all strikingly reminiscent of a Javanese primitive man who had been discovered in 1890, the Wadjak Man. It was Eugen Dubois, the Dutch discoverer of *pithecanthropus*, the 'ape-man of Java', who had excavated the first Wadjak skulls. It is possible that this aboriginal Indonesian was a direct descendant of *pithecanthropus*, but it is quite certain that he lived at the same time as the European Aurignacian and Cro-Magnon races. Southern Asiatic Wadjak men therefore—however fantastic it may seem—appear to have crossed the thousand-mile-wide Timor Straits about fifty thousand years ago, with half-domesticated dogs and to have settled in Australia, the 'Tertiary' continent, which until then had been completely isolated. Other Wadjak men who remained in Asia became the forefathers of the primitive southern Asiatic races, the Veddas and their related tribes.

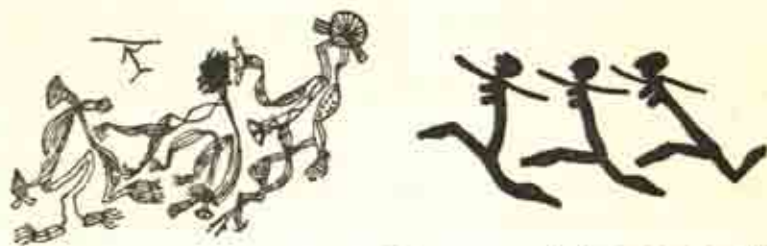
If this is true—and though there have been some objections, in principle there is no reason why it should not be—then the Australians cannot be as primitive as Morgan, Klaatsch and many other scholars supposed. They stood at the same level as our own European and the corresponding Asiatic Ice Age races. They lived and hunted in the same way as these early Palaeolithic races, had a similar totemistic religion, practised similar rites and magical ceremonies, had the same weapons, implements and ornaments.

Only in isolated Australia the early Palaeolithic men did not develop as they did in other parts of the earth. They remained as they were, and even in many respects sank below the cultural level

of Neolithic men. Their nautical skills disappeared, their customs became mummified. The Australians (and the Tasmanians) are the only human races who really had to have a different scientific name from *Homo sapiens*. *Homo sapiens recens* is the name given by systematists to modern man, whether he be white, Mongolian, Negro, Vedda or pygmy. But the aborigines belong to the same category as *Homo sapiens fossilis*, the pre-historic man of the Late Ice Age.

The resemblances between Australians and Late Ice Age men became even more startling when in the caves on the Humbert, Glenelg and Forrest rivers, in the Musgrave mountain ranges, in North Australian Arnhem Land and in many other places Australian rock-paintings of astonishingly high artistic quality came to light. They were pictures of animals and men which strikingly recall European Ice Age art as well as the pre-historic art of the Vedda Indians. Above all, the researchers were amazed to find everywhere on the rock walls the imprints of ghostly hands—and similar hand-imprints were also to be found in the Ice Age caves of southern France.

The rock-paintings on Groote Island and near Yirkalla and Ocupelli in Arnhem Land resemble, in their grace, their almost



5 The paintings of the Australian aborigines are very similar to the Mesolithic paintings found in Spanish caves.

expressionistic facility, the Spanish cave-paintings of the Mesolithic Age. Men and animals are represented in movement, seem to hover, to dance and hunt, their swift motions reduced to a few almost abstract strokes on the rock. Here were discovered even so-called 'X-ray pictures' as in Neolithic-Bronze Age Scandinavia. They show not only the external appearance, but also the skeleton and internal organs, as if the ancient artist had subjected his men to an X-ray examination. It would have been impossible for all these artistic achievements to have been brought about by a race

on the very lowest rung of the ladder of civilization, they could not have been accomplished by Oceanic races related to Neanderthal man, who has left no paintings behind him. They corresponded to the artistic documents of the latest Palaeolithic Age, of the Mesolithic Age and of the Neolithic Age in other races and regions of the world.

More recent anthropological researches have given us quite a different picture of the Australians from that which was accepted in Morgan's time. The aborigines are not black, but grey-brown, so that the expression 'Australian Negro' is quite meaningless. The Australian race had absolutely nothing to do with the African Negroes. The aborigines belong to the representatives of the so-called 'middle group', a group of primitive humans from which the Veddas, the aboriginal Europeans and Indonesians, perhaps even the Ainu also are descended. Australian races have left their mark in Indonesia, in Further India and even—as some recently-excavated skull-deposits show—in the ancient culture-regions of the Near and Middle East. Their civilization is and was by no means so inconsiderable that one must consider the aborigines as 'men who are more like apes than any other living human race'. If we admire the artists and hunters of our European Late Ice Age and regard their pictures, weapons and ornaments with respect, then we must also admire the artists and hunters of Australia and regard their rock-paintings, their boomerangs and their personal adornments with respect; they are both on the same level of civilization.

Some scholars like the American Ashley Montagu and the Australian Curr assume on the grounds of the various cultural deposits and artistic styles that the aborigines settled on the continent in five waves which took place at long intervals of time. The first wave, perhaps seventy thousand years ago, was of quite a different type from those that followed; these earliest Australians had black skins and were culturally hardly distinguishable from Neanderthal men. There will be much to say about this first wave in the next chapter. Then came the chocolate-brown bearded men of the Wadjak type. They brought the boomerang, the wooden shield and the dingo. But the Wadjak immigration did not end the history of the settlement of Australia. Invasion after invasion followed across the Timor Straits—attempts to seize land made by early Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and even Neolithic tribes and hordes from southern Asia.

The real carriers of Australian culture, the corroboree dancers, the inventors of the spear-catapult, the artists, the spreaders of Australian totemism, followed the Wadjak tribe. The present-day Narrinyeri, Wakku and Kabi tribes in South Australia belong to this migratory wave. The strict divisions of the races into matriarchal marriage-groups, male society groups and other sociological peculiarities which Morgan took to be the relics of the childhood of humanity, were introduced by a fourth, the first Mesolithic Age wave. And in the Neolithic Age the fifth wave composed of South Sea Islanders, reached northern Australia, a group related to the Melanesians and Papuans, who spread a civilization similar to that in New Guinea. In any case, Australia at the beginning of its history was not as shut-off as it was once held to be.

Waves two to five mixed physically and culturally. From this mixture merged the thirty or so chief tribes of Australia. The severity of the 'struggle for existence' in the 'pitiless continent' caused the immigrants to lose many of the skills which they had brought with them. Australia did not encourage Stone Age man to cultivate fields, to found cities or to develop civilization. People who live among harmless marsupials and know no other opponents but their fellow-men lack the compulsion to expand their culture which caused the Stone Age Europeans and East Asiatics of the colder regions, the Stone Age Southern Asiatics, Africans and Americans of the tropical jungles to achieve such great things. The highly-gifted immigrants became 'savages', and the primeval Wadjak type gradually gained ground.

Australia's civilization fossilized. It became one with nature and the landscape: men identified themselves with animals, a rock became the bone of an ancestor, a red speck of iron oxide the blood of forefathers. 'The barren bushlands,' as one anthropologist puts it, 'were not only the hunting-grounds of the group, but also their spiritual landscape, their ancestral castle in which the ghosts of their dead lived on.' The strong clan-societies, the rites of puberty, hunting ceremonials and religious mysteries, all the paraphernalia and the usages of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic man, were frozen here, fixed for all time, exactly like the peculiar lungfish, duck-billed platypus and koala of the Australian continent. All the same, the members of the Australian race are no less intelligent than other human beings; the aborigines' children indeed are said to be very much quicker on the uptake than the majority of white children in Australia.

But all the new investigations that were undertaken by scientists have not lessened the mystery of Australia. How did such primitive men as those who came on the first migratory wave succeed in constructing rafts, canoes or pit-pans, and in crossing the Sawu, Timor and Arafura seas between Asia and the fifth continent? Why did they sail out into the unknown, at a time when in South-East Asia there was certainly enough room for everyone? Why did their civilization become mummified in Australia? Did they specialize so much in gathering and hunting that they were caught in a cul-de-sac in human development? Certainly they are considered to be the race most familiar with nature, and the best trackers of animals of all the primitive races. But Red Indians, Africans and other races are also great hunters and yet did not lose their way in a cul-de-sac, but went on developing.

The Australian aborigines are so intelligent that their civilized



6 The Australian aboriginal painters depicted hunting scenes, just as the cave painters of Europe did in pre-historic times.

representatives learn to drive motor-cars quicker and better than the descendants of white convicts and squatters. Is the Australian continent really so very different from other regions of the earth, that it was unnecessary to use one's brains and undesirable to leave behind a primitive bushman existence? Crops are cultivated round the coasts of Australia. From Victoria to Queensland there are countless places which must have tempted man to settle down. Did great geological and climatological upheavals which turned the greater part of the continent into a desert militate against the formation of civilizations, or overwhelm attempts at civilization in heat, sandstorms, thirst? Was this why the aborigine became a restless nomad who could not succeed in bursting the bonds of the Palaeolithic era?

These problems become all the more inscrutable when we learn that the same phenomenon took place on a very fertile island with

an extremely favourable climate. The very same museum-like deadness fell upon the civilization of the very first settlers on the continent—the black-skinned Tasmanians.

Shooting party in Tasmania

There is no creature on earth that creates such havoc among its own kind as man does.

Heinrich von Langsdorff, 1810

IT IS ONE OF THE saddest and most frightful chapters in colonial history, the drama of those primitive human races. The Tasmanians have left us no cave-paintings, no boomerangs; only rubbish-heaps and piles of bones remain to remind us that they once lived on the Australian continent. They were the first to set foot there. The later invaders from South-East Asia probably drove them out of the rest of the continent until they reached the southernmost tip, just as European Aurignacian and Cro-Magnon men presumably pursued and hunted down the Neanderthal men.

When the Europeans arrived, the Tasmanians were still in existence, they had escaped to the island, where the Australians never ventured. It was very beautiful, lay to the south-east of Australia and was full of animals and well forested. Tasmania seemed almost like paradise after the deserts of the continent; here the primitive black race could enjoy a peaceful existence. They lived there until the middle of the last century, and modern anthropologists would give a great deal to have them back. They have given us much information about a level of existence much lower than that of the aborigines and Late Ice Age races, and would have let us see how the forefathers of black-skinned human beings looked and lived.

All the almost African-looking, partly primitive and partly civilized races between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific appear to have evolved from a form of humanity which must have looked more or less like the primeval folk who migrated to Australia and then went on to Tasmania. The history of the black, Negroid racial group possibly begins with the Tasmanians—with that racial group which, to the great regret of ethnologists and anthropologists, has left only very scanty traces in ancient earth deposits. Where are the missing links between the African and the Asiatic-

Oceanic branches of the Negroid race? The last representatives of this lost race which were known to science have been condemned to eternal silence. They are no longer alive.

Of course the slaughter of any race, whether it is anthropologically interesting or not, is deplorable and revolting. And to-day ethnologists and anthropologists treat the Tasmanian question as one of the tragedies of science. Before white men began to study the Tasmanians, they had already wiped them out.

The study of this race has in fact produced up to the present about fifteen books, but it began just as the Tasmanians were dying out. The discoverer of the island, Abel Tasman, left no worth-while observations on the natives, except that they were 'black giants'. In reality, the Tasmanians were no bigger than the Australians. The seafarers Marion and Furneaux, who called at Tasmania shortly before Cook's visit, tell us nothing significant about the natives. The first explorer to take much notice of the primitive 'blackmen' was a scientist who acted as ship's doctor on Cook's third voyage, William Anderson was a keen observer of racial manners and customs. It struck him that the Tasmanians, 'judging by their features, must occupy a position midway between Australians and Papuans'. He thought that the Bass Straits, between Australia and Tasmania, had a long time ago been dry land; the Australians had driven the original inhabitants of the continent to this southernmost tip, which after a sinking of the sea-bed became an island and so preserved the Tasmanians from complete destruction.

In 1803 a penal colony was set up on Tasmania. The island, which is about the size of Ireland, enchanted the deported prisoners because with its pleasant climate, its beautiful landscapes and the fruitfulness of its soil it seemed to offer every advantage for development into a prosperous colony. But they behaved towards the thirty thousand or so Tasmanians exactly as the convicts and squatters had dealt with the Australian aborigines. Man-hunts reduced the numbers of the Tasmanians within twenty years to only a few thousand.

Nevertheless, the island was during this time visited by a few fairly intelligent people who observed the persecuted 'blackmen' a little more closely. They reported that the Tasmanians 'are closely related to the Australians', but had fuzzy Negro hair and rather more rounded heads. They possessed none of the weapons of the aborigines, nor the dingo, they used primitive mallets and

small stone implements, dwelt in hollow or burnt-out trees and fed on food cast up by the sea, above all on mussels and stranded whales. At many places on the Tasmanian coast were found gigantic rubbish-heaps which were reminiscent of the mussel-shell and dust-heaps of the primitive Europeans. A few observers noticed that the 'blackmen' used vessels made of tree-bark for carrying water and for transporting fire to roast their fish.

The tragedy of this primitive folk came to a climax in 1824 when Tasmania received self-government. The settlers decided to wipe out the 'blackmen'. They wanted to round them up in a great man-hunt and drive them from the island. Colonel Arthur's famous black war began. A contemporary chronicler writes: 'By this step a frightful series of robberies, fire-raising and murders perpetrated by the blackmen will be brought to an end; moreover Tasmania will enjoy the great advantage of being free from a native coloured population.' The chronicler was very careful to conceal the fact that the robberies and murders were simply the Tasmanians' answer to the most extraordinarily cruel activities by the colonists. The 'blackmen', who at first had been completely harmless, after two decades of merciless persecution finally in desperation took the law into their own hands and ran amok among the convicts and settlers, destroying all they could.

Colonel Arthur, the leader of the exterminatory campaign, formed a long human chain with the entire white population of the island, which was to drive the 'blackmen' to the southern promontory where a ship was waiting to carry them away. But the man-hunters had not reckoned on the natives' skill in hiding among rocks, in hollow trees and in undergrowth. Moreover, no one knew exactly how many Tasmanians were in existence at that time: estimates varied from several thousand to several hundred only, and above all, no one knew just where the natives were hiding out. So it happened that the only catch that was made during the 'famous black war' was of a six-year-old boy, while all the other Tasmanians were able to slip through the links in the chain.

The white settlers revenged themselves in a brutal way on the black children of nature. In 1830 the government declared a state of siege for the entire island and sent interpreters to announce to the natives that they had the choice of two alternatives, either they would give themselves up for deportation to Flinders Island, a so-far uninhabited place to the north of Tasmania, or they must submit to extermination. This time the leader of the whites was

no strategical addle-pate like Colonel Arthur, but a very thorough-going Mr Robinson who actually succeeded in so intimidating a number of 'blackmen' that they gave themselves up for deportation. Altogether two hundred and ten Tasmanians were taken prisoner in this way; seven of them died before embarkation. The number of those who had not capitulated remained unknown. It was officially announced that the two hundred and ten prisoners were the last of their race; but there are other reports according to which there were still numerous 'blackmen' living on the island after the deportation of their fellows, and who lost their lives in the next few years. At any rate, about 1835, when Darwin visited Tasmania, there were no more natives.

Flinders Island, on which the two hundred and three surviving Tasmanians were set down, was a totally infertile, rocky and sandy desert island about 950 miles square. It might have been possible, even here, to exist on sea-birds' eggs and on seal meat. But the Tasmanians were unable to adapt themselves to their comfortless new home. Probably they were physically and morally too dejected to gather up enough strength to cope with their new surroundings. They died off so rapidly that in 1842 only fifty-four individuals still remained alive.

All this happened at a time when England had long done away with slavery, when humanitarian slogans were ringing out all over the world and ethnology had become a science to be taken seriously. There may just possibly be some excuse for earlier, ignorant conquerors of primitive races, who believed they were, according to their own lights, doing good. But there is no excuse for the Tasmanian colonists. They were living in the nineteenth century. The best intellects of their time had pleaded for the recognition of the right of savage peoples. The 'blackmen' of Tasmania were innocent, primitive folk, they need have been no trouble to anyone. There was enough room for them on the island, and the forty thousand white colonists could have discovered a suitable *modus vivendi* without much trouble. But such thoughts never occurred to the descendants of the British convicts.

The Tasmanians vegetated for six years on Flinders Island. Then the British public received a painful shock. A few courageous ethnologists and newspaper writers told the world what was happening down under to an innocent race. Men like the English historian Bonwick, and Roth, the commissioner for Australian native tribes, declared that the oldest human race on earth was

being insidiously done to death. At that time there were still forty-four 'blackmen' on the isle of death. Public opinion compelled the Tasmanian authorities to bring back these last survivors at once to their homeland. They were settled in a special reservation made for them at Oyster Cove near Hobart. Then the scientific world descended upon them, convinced of its sacred duty to save whatever could be saved.

Bonwick wrote two books which attracted great attention: *The Lost Tasmanian Race* and *The Black War of Van Diemen's Land*. Roth tirelessly collected all he could find out from the Tasmanians about their civilization, customs and language. It was not much. For Roth was not dealing with a race culturally and spiritually intact, which could have become a useful object of study, but only with a few human ruins in a state of slow disintegration. According to Roth the Tasmanians were closely related to the Melanesian-Papuan population of western Oceania, but were much more primitive, possessed a Palaeolithic culture and used a language which had absolutely no connection with any other on earth. The race literally died in the scholars' arms—in 1869 the last man, named Woodreddy by the English, breathed his last.

One old lady remained, who was nicknamed Lala Rookh. She was taken to London—on anthropological grounds—in order to observe this last representative of a primitive race in more convenient surroundings than at Oyster Cove. In London Lala Rookh wore European clothes, enjoyed the kind attentions of all leading scientists and was gaped at as if she had been part of a raree-show. 'Her face,' wrote the ethnologist Felix von Luschan, 'combines in a wonderful way many of the characteristics which we have discovered from the skeletons of early Palaeolithic men. Luschan and other experts compared her head with the Neanderthal skull and thought that the old lady from Tasmania was 'as good as a reconstruction of our most ancient forefathers'. Later it was in fact discovered that Lala Rookh's skull formation bore astonishing resemblances to that of the most beautiful and most typical of the Neanderthals—the one from La-Chapelle-aux-Saints. But just then, in 1877, the old lady died in London, as deeply mourned as some precious gorilla in the Zoo.

It was later found that the 'blackmen' had once lived in Southern Australia and had there fought valiantly against the aborigines. In one or two Australian tribes, for example the Kurnai in Victoria, there was obviously Tasmanian blood. That

the aboriginal Tasmanians are 'surviving Neanderthals' is to-day very much doubted.

The Tasmanians may have been a black and in many ways still truly Neanderthaloid variant of the primeval Asiatic race, just as the Australians and Veddas are a lighter-skinned variant of that early human race. But in the strictest sense of the term they were not true Neanderthals and not survivors of the Late Neanderthals. Their civilization barely rose, however, above the level of what we consider Neanderthal culture to have been.

There is another interesting hypothesis, very vaguely adumbrated on the distant horizons of pre-history. In Mesolithic and Neolithic deposits in Indo-China fossilized men of a Negroid type were excavated, they were also found in very ancient Indian burial-mounds, in Indonesia and even in China. They do not look as primitive as the Tasmanians, for they developed further. But they may be descended from Tasmanian-like ancestors who once dwelt on the Asiatic mainland in Palaeolithic times. The anthropologists speak to-day of a 'Melanesoid race' which in pre-historic times populated the south-east Asian region along with light-skinned races and from there settled in several waves in the surrounding lands. The black-skinned Indians are descendants of these primeval Melanesoid peoples, as well as the dwarf Negritos in remote areas of Further India and Malaya, the Papuans on New Guinea and the true Melanesians, the black-skinned, wavy-haired inhabitants of the islands in the south-west of the Pacific Ocean.

Melanesoid peoples also contributed to the population of America. Going in the other direction, they presumably reached Madagascar. A few anthropologists played with the dangerous idea: did even the African Negroes come from black primeval Asiatics? Did the African Negro's forefathers look like the 'black-men' of Tasmania? Science has discovered much about the origins of the white-, the yellow- and the brown-skinned races. But the primeval origins of the black races has remained until to-day an unsolved riddle.

The puritanical cannibals

The Melanesian is as sensitive to tactless behaviour and as conventional regarding questions of manners and decorum as an elderly Victorian gentleman or lady.

Bronislaw Malinowsky, 1929

IN 1906 THE French anthropologist Lapique broke geographical-ethnographical ground which had so far been taboo to the scholarly world. He saw the black Africans and the black inhabitants of Asia and Oceania as being all members of a single Negro race. Naturally it had already struck ethnologists that a Papuan or a Negrito looked astonishingly like a black-skinned African, but as they lived on opposite sides of the globe no one had ventured to draw conclusions from this resemblance. But Lapique did. He declared that people with black skins, broad noses and certain hair-styles belonged anthropologically to the same group, whether they lived in the Congo area or in the South Seas. Moreover, the black peoples of Africa and Asia and Oceania also had certain cultural features in common, matriarchy, magic and the worship of spirits.

The first discoverers of the black South Sea Islanders received the same impression. As early as 1526 Spanish explorers in the South Seas had occasionally touched at New Guinea and the neighbouring Melanesian islands. About 1545 the conquistador Ortiz des Retes coined the name Nova Guinea, because 'the shores of this land and the nature of the villages are quite similar to those in African Guinea'. A chronicler of one of these early Spanish voyages writes about the Papuans: 'The inhabitants are said to be black, agile and swift-footed, and of good intelligence, just like some of the black slaves who fell among Christians. But whether this land is an island or is attached to the southern mainland has not yet been discovered.'

The very honourable Don Alvaro Mendaña de Neyra tried to find this out in several voyages to the South Seas between 1567 and 1595. All he could find were those islands which we now call the Solomon Islands. The natives there were also black as Negroes and, moreover, cannibals. Mendaña was bitterly shocked when these 'Negroes' ventured to defend themselves against the rude assaults of his troops and then feasted on the flesh of the

slaughtered whites. But he did not want to return to Peru empty-handed, so he made up the following charming fairytale:

'On these islands to the east of Nova Guinea,' as the contemporary chronicler writes, 'Alvaro Mendaña discovered naked men, and pigs, dogs, fowls, carnations, ambergris, cinnamon and much gold. He found a golden city and destroyed it. He called the islands the Solomon Islands because he believed that King Solomon must have got his gold from there.' It was correct about the naked men, the pigs, dogs and fowls, but there was nothing on the islands to suggest Solomon's golden land of Ophir. Yet this information set the world in a ferment; for over two hundred years it was the dream of all voyagers to the South Seas to find Mendaña's Solomon Islands and King Solomon's 'gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks'. Mendaña was unable to deliver any further accounts of this nature; he was murdered by mutineers on the Marquesas.

But his mate Pedro Fernandez de Quiros carried on the search for the islands of Solomon. He even obtained the sanction and blessing of the Pope for this worthy undertaking and packed his ship with settlers because he wanted to annex the wonderland of Ophir for Spain as soon as possible by immediate colonization. He told his crew that they should approach the Solomon Islanders 'frankly and honestly, but carefully and cautiously'. But they did not get so far—Quiros did not reach the Solomon Islands, but the New Hebrides. But here, too, there dwelt naked black savages, and it seemed a veritable Garden of Eden for the founding of a 'New Jerusalem'.

Quiros wrote: 'The land is an earthly paradise, full of all kinds of splendid fruit, animals, metals, silver, gold, pearls and sugarcane—a second China.' To show the natives who was master now, Quiros captured one of the Melanesians, cut off his head and hung his corpse from a tree. He hoped the inhabitants would now run to him with their gold and other treasures, the existence of which he had already noted in his log-book, but had so far not been able to get his hands on. His shock-treatment had unexpected results, the highly civilized Melanesians, who had been slightly influenced by Polynesian culture, rose as one man and inflicted such heavy losses on the white interlopers that there was no longer any question of the founding of a 'New Jerusalem' in Oceania.

Subsequently New Guinea and Melanesia were visited by ships of Dutch, French and British nationalities. They were held to be uninviting regions, the natives were black and hideous, behaved

very rudely and were quite obviously partial to the flavour of human flesh. Finally in 1768 Bougainville re-discovered the Solomons. His countryman Lapérouse perished somewhere in the Melanesian archipelago. Two more Frenchmen, D'Entrecasteaux and Dumont d'Urville, explored between 1791 and 1840 in greater detail the islands of the South Seas and found—for they were inheritors of Rousseau's ideas—that the civilization and customs of the black-skinned South Sea Islanders were not nearly as bad as had been made out.

The anthropologists gradually came to distinguish three different Melanesoid racial groups in Oceania; a pygmy-like forest population in the interior of New Guinea, then the thick-set, snub-nosed Papuans living in the main areas of the island and finally the slender, lanky Melanesians of the coastal regions and on the Melanesian islands. A few tribes were still living well back in the Stone Age, while others almost resembled Polynesians in their cultural achievements. But in the following respects they were all alike, they were dark-skinned, extremely, austere puritanical and very prudish. Moreover, their cannibalism had the form of an almost dogmatic ritual.

Whole libraries have already been written about the prudery and the cannibalism of the Melanesians and Papuans. The fact that the black South Sea Islanders had a horror of incest, adultery and sexual perversions should really have gained the approval of sympathetic Europeans. But the ethnologists apparently found this only extremely queer and comical. For generations of scholars have sought with passionate zeal to find out why a Melanesian father does not have sexual intercourse with his daughters, and the brother with his sisters, why moral offenders had to commit suicide and why homosexuality was considered loathsome.

The Papuans and Melanesians also were, and are still, people with human weaknesses, but in any case people who observe very strictly their taboos and moral codes. It is thanks to their attitude towards prying researchers that they have gone down in ethnological literature as the most puritanical of all people. This protective caution, as Malinowski explains, 'taught the Melanesians to make known their moral rules and codes in only very broad generalizations, incomprehensible even to the most zealous tattlers and scandal-mongers among the missionaries and the government officials, in order that he and his compatriots may appear in the best light, that no man and no aspect of his communal life

may have a bad name'. In this respect the black-skinned South Sea Islanders were far better judges of human nature than their light-skinned neighbours in Polynesia. Moreover, in this way they were able to protect their women from the unwelcome amatory attentions of the whites and so preserved their race from the scourge of venereal diseases.

The black-skinned Melanesians conducted a similar propaganda-campaign with regard to their cannibalism. They soon noticed that this custom also was for a European something very unusual: every traveller and every researcher twitched out his notebook whenever he nosed out something about cannibalistic goings-on. All ethnologists soon agreed that 'the taste for human flesh in Melanesia is a very widespread vice'. Readers were told that the people of the New Hebrides traded human flesh from island to island, that the Fiji Islanders liked to eat human flesh using long forks and that certain tribes considered it a duty to sacrifice one of their members once a year for home consumption. They went on to say that Papuans, New Caledonians, Admiralty Islanders and others served up their dead relations for supper, fattened up young women for the slaughter and referred to human flesh as 'long pig'.

The natives soon detected that the whites were in constant fear of being popped into a Papuan stock-pot. And so they made the most of their accounts of cannibalism, as they had done when describing their moral codes. One visitor to New Guinea, a certain Loria, describes in detail how the people on the island of Logea envelop the body of a dead enemy in coconut leaves, hang it by a rope from the branch of a tree over a blazing fire and roast it. As soon as the rope had burnt through and the corpse had fallen to the ground, all partakers of the cannibal feast fell with wild yells upon the half-cooked corpse and carved off the tastiest bits with their knives. Other visitors declared that before roasting the corpse was dismembered, the various parts wrapped in leaves and then laid on the fire: 'Usually the brain is eaten first, then the thighs and finally the rest of the body; the remains of the meal, especially the bones, are later worn as bodily adornments. The women make all the preparations for the banquet, but are not allowed to eat any human flesh; they have to content themselves with licking the gravy-soaked leaves.'

In just such a sensational manner did travellers to New Guinea depict the head-hunting activities of the Papuans: 'This barbaric

custom has its roots in the vanity of young men, the wish to be admired and courted by the fair sex; for the more heads a head-hunter has, the higher he is honoured by others. So the victim is attacked usually from behind, often without the least provocation; the head is severed from the trunk, taken back to the village and stuck up on a stick or a spear in front of the young man's house.' The unscientific layman shudders when he reads such things, but the specialist knows that head-hunting has died out in Further India, Indonesia, West Africa and among various South American tribes. The Jivaró-Indians even turned their trophies into 'tsantsas', shrunken heads, and were known as head-shrinkers. But not only these 'savages' went on head-hunting expeditions, but also our own forefathers, the Neolithic Europeans. So it is a widespread and very ancient human custom.

The ethnologist Robert von Heine-Geldern has found out the deeper motives behind this custom. Many primitive peoples had a skull-cult; they collected the skulls of dead relatives in order to preserve more carefully the inherent magical properties of the dead. The skulls were treasured and worshipped as 'magical power-houses' and they were also relics which increased the tribe's prestige. Gradually the high-water mark of such a culture was reached when each tribe wanted to have as many skulls as possible. Not only were the skulls of the dead dug up, but trophy hunts were also started in which the dead enemy's head was cut off. As with all cults, this degenerated into a decadent form. American Indians drew the bones out of their trophies and made shrunken heads, Central American culture-races replaced the teeth and eyes with precious stones and other trinkets, Asiatics made the skulls into artistically-decorated eating and drinking vessels. At the time of the migration of the peoples Germanic princes still quaffed the victory drink from the skulls of their enemies. To-day the Jivaró shrunken heads are bought for high prices by tourists avid for sensation; in fact there are black marketeers in South America who deal mostly in unauthentic heads or in refined imitations of them.

Western man in the course of his explorations and colonizations in the name of civilization has slaughtered countless millions of coloured 'savages'. He sacrificed millions of slaves, instituted *autos da fé*, hounded and killed helpless natives like wild beasts, he precipitated the world into wars, in which not inconsiderable numbers of people were offered up to useless destruction. But he is

more put-out over cannibalism and head-hunting, which altogether comprised only a fraction of the suffering he has caused himself, than over any other of *Homo sapiens'* gruesome activities. And to-day the majority of people still believe that cannibals lust after the taste of human flesh, have a revengeful character and dump into their cooking-pots any nice research scholar, any amiable missionary they can lay hands on, not to mention their own parents, wives, concubines and children. This reputation has only been of advantage to the Papuans and Melanesians, for they were not 'civilized' as the Polynesians were, not hunted to death like the Tasmanians, for people were afraid of them and left them in comparative peace.

So it was really a daring thing to do when the natural philosopher Nikolai Nikolajevich Miklucho-Maklai went alone and unarmed among the cannibals along the coast of Astrolabe Bay in north-east New Guinea—to a region and among a race never before visited by a white man. Miklucho-Maklai, a fanatical supporter of Darwin's theories, one-time assistant to the leading German Darwinist Ernst Haeckel, had already been infuriated by the stereotyped assertions of narrow-minded pseudo-scientists that the primitive races of the south-east Asiatic-Oceanic region were descended from a form of human life quite different from that which produced the other races of man. According to his opinion—which was also shared by Darwin and Miklucho's mentor Ernst Haeckel—these primitives were as truly human as the whites in the west, they were only on a different cultural level. In order to prove this, the Russian scientist wanted to find a race which so far had never been touched by civilization and had never seen a European.

He chose a Papuan tribe in a region which thirteen years later under the name of 'Kaiser Wilhelm Land' was for thirty years to be a German colony, but which then was still a No-Man's land. The Russian Geographical Society provided the funds for the undertaking—the not very princely sum of thirteen hundred roubles and a free passage to New Guinea. The twenty-five-year-old scholar engaged as companions only the Swedish sailor Olsen and a Samoan Polynesian called Boy, who was to cook their meals.

He had bad luck with his companions: Olsen was an extraordinary coward whose terror of the 'man-eaters' gave him muscular cramps, and Boy could not cook. So Miklucho-Maklai was left entirely to his own devices. This was the reason for his great

success with the Papuans. He has left an account of how this came about; he refused on principle to carry weapons among the natives. When he entered the first Papuan village, at once a number of extremely warlike Papuans came up to him with their lances raised. Smiling peacefully, Miklucho-Maklai walked on, distributing glass beads, nails, fishing-hooks and lengths of red cloth. The natives accepted the gifts, but still kept up a threatening attitude, although 'their facial expressions were very sympathetic', as Miklucho observed with biological accuracy. The black warriors wielded clubs and cudgels, drew their bows and pointed their arrows at the scholar. Miklucho went on smiling the smile of peace, waved to them in a friendly, though somewhat nervous manner, but then two arrows swished past his head, uncomfortably close. 'I thought to myself,' Miklucho later wrote, 'that the natives only wanted to see how I would behave now; for I noticed that after the arrows were dispatched all eyes were upon me, as if they wanted to observe the expression on my face.' So he did not flinch and went on smiling radiantly at the Papuans.

This is what happened next: 'Suddenly one of them thrust his lance at me; it would have hit me on the nose or in the eye but I stepped aside a couple of paces and heard a few voices raised in wonder at my sang-froid. I was very glad that I had not brought my revolver, for who knows, I might have shot at them.' If he had, he would not have lived to tell the tale. But he soon realized that the Papuans had intended this threat only as a joke. He entered into the game, saw a hammock, climbed into it and pretended to fall peacefully asleep. 'When I opened my eyes,' he goes on to say, 'I saw that the natives now were unarmed and were not looking at me so threateningly.'

From then on the most cordial relations existed between him and the 'man-eaters'. The Papuans found the bearded Kaaram-tamo, the 'man from the moon', as they called the scholar, uncommonly funny. They obviously took him to be the representative of a very lowly race and tried most movingly to acquaint him with their customs. As Miklucho entered into the game and even allowed them to tattoo him, he was able to win their confidence to such a point that he was able to prevent tribal wars and to learn all about their civilization. In his opinion it was by no means a primitive civilization, but was one incredibly well adapted to the New Guinea environment. When after fifteen months a ship came and took him away, the Papuans wept tears of grief.

Miklucho-Maklai soon returned to New Guinea. He also visited New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, the Solomons and there until 1883 he observed Melanesian-Papuan customs. 'I had the good fortune to live among one of the most primitive races in the world and to observe their way of life. No one had been to this region of New Guinea before me, and the Papuans imagine that they are the only inhabitants of the earth. It seems to me highly necessary to get to know the other races in New Guinea, to compare them with the Melanesians of the neighbouring islands, to clear up the relationships between the Papuans and the Negritos of the Philippines, to find out if there is a fuzzy-haired race on the Malacca peninsula and to find out the connection between these black-skinned, fuzzy-haired races.' This humane, progressive student of Haeckel succeeded in carrying out his programme. Above all he was a friend and defender of the black tribes of Oceania, a passionate fighter for their freedom and their right to self-determination.

He lived to see the colonization of New Guinea by the British, Dutch and the Germans. He sent moving telegraphic protests to Bismarck and other government leaders and pleaded with them not to send punitive expeditions against the poor Papuans just because they were head-hunters and practised cannibalistic rites: 'In my opinion the white men's guilt is so great already that any kind of so-called "corrective action" will only serve to increase the score of criminal acts which we have committed against the natives.' He told the captains who brought him to New Guinea that it was their duty not to worry about his fate at the hands of the natives and 'under no circumstances to make reprisals in the event of my being killed by them'. When he heard that a white adventurer had been slain by the Papuans, he sent a furious letter to the authorities who were seeking vengeance for the deed: 'I knew this person through his shameless and cruel way of handling the natives; his loss is not to be deplored: I shall only say that the islands of the Pacific are well rid of at least one more rogue.'

Despite his warnings the colonists rapidly foisted all kinds of civilized horrors upon the Papuans and Melanesians. Then Miklucho started a press campaign: 'junk, alcohol and tobacco are cheap enough, and the Europeans do not miss what they give away so freely; but the sea-captains and merchants care very little that these things spell the ruin of the natives'. He impressed upon all natives with whom he later came in contact that 'they must defend themselves against the whites, must hide their women and their

jewels from them and must keep as much as possible out of the way of armed Europeans'. This noble human being knew too well what his race was like. If he lived in our own day, he would surely have been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. He died in 1888, at the early age of forty-two, as the result of the hardships he had suffered—a sacrifice to ethnological research. To-day his name is known only to the scholarly world, but he deserves a place in the pantheon of all lovers of humanity, along with Las Casas, Cook, Penn, Livingstone and Lincoln. He was the Albert Schweitzer of the Papuans.

Since Miklucho-Maklai's day we have found out that the black-skinned South Sea Islanders reached a cultural level equal to that of the light-skinned Polynesians. Culturally they are as widely separated from their Tasmanian forefathers as the Tahitians and Easter Islanders are from the Australians and Veddas, so that in the Pacific too the Negroid race has achieved things which one can only regard with the highest respect. Various scholars have thought that Polynesian influences were here at work. Now in fact in Melanesia we find Polynesian taboos, Polynesian tattooing, the Polynesian outrigger boat and Polynesian ancestor-worship. So it cannot be denied that Polynesians have influenced Melanesian culture. But apart from these obvious and limited contacts and influences, the Melanesian and Papuan civilizations are as clearly distinguishable from Polynesian civilizations as those of ancient Africa from those of ancient Europe.

The Papuan bow and arrow, the coloured fibre-textiles, the pile-dwellings, bone implements, bangles, anklets and ear-rings, the head-dresses of birds of paradise and cassowary feathers, the plaited breast-plates and spine-shields, the dance masks, the drums, ritual flutes and clay pots, the garden cultivation, the secret totemic rites, the marvellous wood-carvings—all these are typical of New Guinea civilization. Typically Melanesian are the houses, painstakingly constructed of lime-washed planks, the refined fishing equipment of wood and shark's teeth, the sago, yam and taro plantations, the rearing of swine; the ornaments made of mussel shells, tortoise-shell, beetles' wings, leaves; the mussel-shell axes, the matriarchal marriage castes, the dukduk secret societies, mussel-shell coinage, the bull-roarers reminiscent of Africa, the relief carvings and the belief in bush spirits.

The masks and feather cloaks of the dark-skinned inhabitants of the Pacific are no less admired in ethnological museums than

corresponding creations from Polynesia. Both black-skinned and light-skinned races have achieved wonders in seamanship. And only racial prejudice can explain that the general public regards the Polynesians now, as always, as highly cultivated noble savages while the Melanesians and Papuans are looked upon as only half-human cannibals. In one important respect the black race showed itself to be far superior to the light-skinned race; they were better able to defend themselves against the white man. While the number of Polynesians since Cook's day has declined from half a million to a hundred thousand, now as always there are two and a half million Melanesians and Papuans, almost the same as at the time when they were first discovered.

Of course the black-skinned South Sea Islanders also had to pay their toll of blood. On New Caledonia, for example, only half as many Melanesians are living as in 1878. Certain 'culture vultures' claimed that head-hunting and cannibalism were the causes of this decrease in population, but the punitive expeditions which were sent out were presumably far more destructive than all the cannibalistic and other native activities. Moreover, their contact with white colonists caused numerous Papuans and Melanesians to commit suicide. The natives died off also by being conscripted for plantation-work, by illegal slavery and slave-dealing, by infection with the white man's diseases, by the secret importation of alcohol and arms, by the introduction of new types of houses, unsuited to the climate, of useless clothing and inappropriate foods.

Here we must say a word about missionaries. Their value, or lack of it, have long been arguing-points for ethnologists. That is understandable, for the ethnologist's tasks and interests are quite different from those of the missionary. Eighty years ago, the activity of missionaries was still regarded, in the words of Felix von Luschan, 'as the greatest enemy of ethnology'. It was bitterly regretted that they were so zealous in burning and destroying cultural monuments and in interfering with the social structure of the natives. But this tense relationship soon changed when the missionaries began to send ancient carvings to museums instead of burning them, and—even more important for ethnology—to investigate their real significance. It was realized that it was impossible to teach a new religion without having first studied the old rites and ceremonials. Many missionaries became ethnologists and were able to combine spiritual and scientific labours in their practical work in an admirable way.

Missionaries have achieved great things in many countries overseas. They have tempered native cruelty, and colonial cruelty too, checked disease, fought against slavery and collected priceless ethnological material. Among these men must be mentioned Bishop Las Casas, Cardinal Lavigerie, Charles-Eugène de Foucauld, Johann Ludwig Krapf, David Livingstone and Martin Gusinde. Many ethnological reports and studies of civilization which now form a permanent part of scientific literature are based on the devoted labours of missionaries, who have achieved especially fine things in the field of language study; they learnt the native languages and acquired knowledge far outside the range of any scientist or specialist. The number of dictionaries and grammars that they compiled is legion.

So if ethnologists cast suspicious glances at the work of missionaries, there must be some good reason. Even among the most admirable and enlightened divines overseas there are men who still believe that the inclinations and possibilities of a race can be drastically altered by education. With many races this might be possible, as experience has shown, but with others such attempts have completely failed or have been made to succeed only at the cost of irreplaceable cultural and ethical values. To these races belong the Pygmies, the Bushmen, Negritos and Australians. It has never been possible to make such children of nature really useful members of western civilization without both uprooting and demoralizing them.

Only in recent years has it been possible to obtain conclusive information about the interior of New Guinea. The Danish anthropologist Jens Byerre who visited the Papuans there saw that under the influence of missionaries they had given up head-hunting but had also abandoned completely their ancient customs and ceremonies. This resulted in a very dangerous spiritual vacuum. Above all the Papuans took Christian teaching too literally, and were unable to apprehend its deeper meaning. They believed that Christ would soon come to them in a ship or in a plane and 'provide them with the right weapons to drive the white man out of their land'. So there was no longer any need to work, for Christ's ship or plane would be loaded with tobacco, clothes, tinned foods, pocket-lamps, knives, axes, arms and ammunition for everyone, and from then on everyone would live in paradise.

In other regions of New Guinea the Papuans believed that the whites were holding back the gifts sent them by God, in order to

force them to continue working. In other parts they believed that extreme unction was a means of changing black complexions into white ones. None of these 'converts' had any idea of the essential meaning of what the mission-schools taught them. They clung to externals, interpreted them wrongly and went through a spiritual crisis similar to that which in Kenya has led to the Mau-Mau movement, in South America to various messianic movements, and in other parts of the world to nationalistic or extreme-leftish uprisings.

'The white man has indeed brought peace to the cannibal tribes of New Guinea,' thinks Bjerre, 'but he did not realize the high cost that would have to be paid for this peace and for the destruction of the old way of life which it caused . . .'

Where did the Negroes come from?

There is one thing that cannot be denied: the West will be judged by what comes to pass in Africa.

Richard Wright, 1954

YES, WHERE *did* the Negroes come from? Even in the wisest and most detailed anthropological and ethnological works no answer will be found to this question, though there are all kinds of hypotheses, suppositions and questionable indications. Black-skinned people, as we have heard, live in southern Asia and Oceania. Negroid skulls have been dug up at various places in the Indian-East Asiatic region. All indications point to the fact that Asia was the cradle of the black race. Here a dark-skinned variation of southern Asiatic primitive man may have developed the characteristics which we to-day denote as 'Negroid'—a form of humanity looking perhaps something like the much-regretted Tasmanian lady, the last of her race, Lala Rookh.

The African Negroes are of even more 'Negroid' type than the dark races in Asia and the South Seas. Their skin colour is generally darker, their hair woollier, their lips more prominent—in short, their whole appearance is more 'Negro-like' than that of a Tamil or a Papuan. Accordingly they must be the pure, original Negroes, and the black race must have had its birth in Africa. But apart from one or two exceptions, there is no proof of

this. All primitive Africans, ignoring Neanderthal or even older human types, belong broadly speaking to European humanity.

The Boskop and Florisbad men of South Africa, about whom we shall hear in another connection, are comparable with the races of the European Late Ice Age and also with the small yellow Bushmen of the Namib and the Kalahari; they are quite certainly not Negroid. In East Africa were found large numbers of fossilized skulls and skeletons—in Oldoway, in the region of the Nakuru and Elmenteira lake basins, in Gamble's Cave. They all belong to the so-called Ethiopoid type; they were closely related to the Ice Age Aurignacian race and are obviously ancestors of the East Hamitic tribes, that is of a non-Negroid tribal group belonging to the 'white' race. Whereupon we must insist that most East African tribes (the Masai for example) were originally not Negroid types but Mediterraneans, related to the ancient Egyptians, the descendants of light-skinned peoples. To-day, indeed, racial cross-breeding has given them a considerable percentage of Negro blood, so that no clear distinction can now be drawn between Negroids and Ethiopoids.

Then if there are no primeval Negroes in the dark continent, how did the Negroes come to Africa? Did they migrate from southern Asia in some unexplained way along unknown routes? Then the distinctly Negro-like appearance of the black African would be no relic from ancient times but a new departure and a higher development of the Negroid type. That could of course be possible; but against this is the fact that precisely the most primitive Negro tribes, the Palaeonegroids, have particularly dark skin, particularly woolly hair and particularly prominent lips. Or do the parallels between black Asiatics and black Africans rest upon purely coincidental resemblances? In that case, in Africa as in southern Asia, a dark variation of Ice Age man must have developed into the Negroid type. Are there any indications of this having happened?

Some theoreticians have played with the idea that the Negroids perhaps were descended in a direct line from the stocky Late Neanderthals with almost ape-like skull-formation from the last Ice Age, who existed not only in Europe but also in Asia and Africa and who had the bad luck to be contemporaries of the technically superior *Homo sapiens*. Could not these Late Neanderthals, under pressure from the warlike hordes of *Homo sapiens* types, have withdrawn into the African and Asian tropics and there

have developed into the Negroid races of the present day? This is a nice theory, which to-day no longer seems quite so eccentric as it once did, for it has long been known that the Late Neanderthals were at a very high cultural level. But unfortunately they did not in the least resemble the Negroes. The height of the black African, his long skull and other anthropological characteristics on the contrary show that he belongs to the most recent and most highly developed races.

Then suspicion fell upon a very tall, extraordinarily slender and apparently very old primeval man as the great ancestor of the African Negroes. This Rhodesia man was brought to light in 1921 from a shaft in the tin mine at Broken Hill in Rhodesia. The form of his skeleton scarcely differed from that of a modern Negro, but the skull gave a more primitive impression and looked more ape-like than that of the extremest Neanderthal; it even caused some scholars to compare it with the skull of a gorilla. A second primeval man of the same type was excavated a few years ago in Cape Colony. Both these finds are extraordinary exceptions, men with primitive Neanderthaloid skulls and bodies of an almost modern structure. Presumably they were also contemporaries of Late Ice Age *Homo sapiens*. But these mysterious beings with their 'strikingly brutal appearance' are definitely not primeval Negroes.

Another suggestion: do the Negroes perhaps come from Europe? Since 1872 an entire staff of French scholars have been busy examining the nine Grimaldi Caves in the neighbourhood of Monte Carlo and bringing their contents to light. These caves must at one time have been pre-historic family graves, for up to the present there were found there altogether sixteen skeletons of carefully interred Ice Age men, as well as tools, ornaments and fossilized frogs' thighs which were given to the dead to eat on their journey into the Beyond. Most of the skulls were of purely Cro-Magnon type. Only two seemed not to be; the skulls were very long, very high and of an elliptical form, the faces broad and low, the mouth slightly prominent, and in comparison with the trunk the legs seemed unusually long. The French anthropologist Verneau thought that these two Grimaldi men belonged to 'the oldest known representatives of a type which is closely related to the modern Negro'. His colleague Rivet declared that the Grimaldi men must be related to the Melanesians. And if one believed there was a connection between Negroes and Melanesians, then the two

opinions fitted together. Had the Negroid type been found here at last, the type from which the Asiatic-Oceanic as well as the African black-skinned Negroes are descended?

The origin of the Negroes in Europe would be surprising and rather amusing, and yet also very probable. At once certain scholars drew up a picture of the Negroid race's early history; close relatives of our Late Ice Age forefathers, contemporaries and cousins of Cro-Magnon man, were living on the coast of the Mediterranean. Only they were rather darker-skinned than the rest, with longer skulls and longer legs, perhaps already had fuzzy hair and prominent lips. With the ending of the Ice Age, like the other tribes and races, they joined the great migratory movements. Only for some reason or other they turned towards the south. One group of Grimaldi men went to southern Asia, the other to Africa. This seemed to answer the riddle, especially when Verneau found in pre-historic skulls from Italy and Brittany certain features which he took to be Negroid.

But a thorough examination of the skulls revealed that they had simply been compressed, giving them an apparently long, elliptical, prognathous, 'Negroid' character. It was the same with many other of the finds in the Grimaldi Caves; admittedly they had long legs, Verneau's European Negroes, but long legs are found also among other European Ice Age Men.

And now we come to the great exception, to the one primeval African man from whom—perhaps—the Negroid race could be descended. In 1927, in the middle of the Sahara, about two hundred and fifty miles north-east of Timbuctu, two members of the French Augiéras-Draper exploratory commission made a remarkable find. In the Timlesí River basin, close to the Asselar outpost, Besnard and Monod excavated the fossilized skeleton of a man who had lived perhaps seventeen thousand years ago. Accordingly this Asselar man would be somewhat younger than the European and Asiatic Ice Age men, whom he superficially resembled. He must have been very tall, had very long legs, long forearms and an uncommonly narrow pelvis; his skull was higher than that of a primeval European, but the face was broad and low. He was without any doubt a *Homo sapiens fossilis*, one of the many human types from the Late and Post Ice Age. But there was something about him that was different from all other known Ice Age races.

Therefore he was examined with especial thoroughness by the

two leading French anthropologists Marcelin Boule and Henri Victor Vallois. After careful measuring and testing, the result which Boule and Vallois published in the archives of the Institute for Human Palaeontology in Paris was sensational; the rather prominent jaw, the flat nose and the whole structure of the Asselar man indicated that the first and until then the only primeval African Negro had been found. True, he was only a very rough forecast of what the Negro was to be, with his mixture of archaic and modern elements. The almost rectangular eye-sockets, the massive dental equipment and the almost Neanderthal-like back molars were very archaic, but in his other features the Asselar man corresponded with European Ice Age man.

Was he a migrant from Europe, or from Asia? Or was he perhaps descended from the South African Boskop man, from the ancestor of the small Bushmen, who do not belong to the Negro race? Was he a half-breed, a pre-historic mulatto? Despite the great significance of the find it still did not answer the questions about the origin of the Negro race. No other primeval man of the same type has been discovered in Africa, the lanky stranger of Asselar remained an exception. And such exceptions are very questionable; scientists cannot draw any precise conclusions from them.

When the examination of ancient bones proved fruitless, scientists turned their attention to the blood. Blood, as Goethe said, is a very peculiar substance. About 1900 the Austrian bacteriologist Karl Landsteiner discovered the human blood-groups; for this achievement he received the Nobel Prize. His discovery is a very complicated matter whose exact explanation belongs to a medical work. Here it must suffice to say that one part of humanity possesses Agglutino-Gene A and therefore belongs to the A blood-group, another part possesses Agglutino-Gene B and therefore belongs to the B blood-group, while a third part possesses both Agglutino-Genes and belongs to blood-group AB. A fourth section of humanity possesses no Agglutino-Gene and is said to belong to the O blood-group. This knowledge was not only of great medical importance; it was significant for ethnology also.

As early as the First World War health officers trained in biology had established that the blood-groups of various races show a heterogeneous and at the same time characteristic distribution. As blood-groups are subject to the Mendelian Laws, one could therefore reconstruct the relationships between the races and even per-

haps the course and the routes of pre-historic racial migrations. The distribution of blood-groups in individual racial types is indeed very interesting. Among some primitive races, the pygmies, the Bushmen and Australians for example, but also among the Eskimos and American Indians, blood-group O is predominant; among Europeans it is blood-group A, among the population of the Near East it is blood-group AB and among the mongoloid peoples of East Asia it is blood-group B that is predominant. Another striking fact was that the further east one moved, the more blood-group A declined and blood-group B increased.

In 1954 the Johannesburg anatomist Raymond A. Dart drew his conclusions from this. Until then, Dart had been known to the public at large through his tireless excavations and analyses of South African primeval men. His greatest achievement in this field was the discovery of the 'Taung Child', a fossil perhaps a million years old or more which is half-way between anthropoid ape and primeval man and whose finding gave the impetus to the excavation of many such 'missing links', ape-like forms out of the grey dawn of time. But from 1954 Dart also began to take an interest in ethnology and particularly in pre-historic migrations.

He believed that in the days of primeval man there was only one blood-group, the O group, which has been preserved among many primitive races to-day. Before the creation of the new blood-groups, Eskimos and American Indians, he claimed, must have wandered from their original homes to the New World and must therefore have been carriers of blood-group O. But then by mutation blood-group A appeared in the European races and blood-group B in the East Asiatic races; these later formed themselves into blood-group AB among the oriental mixed races. Dart sees the influences of Europe or of related racial groups in all cases where strong A group currents are traceable, and where B group currents are dominant he sees the influences of East Asia or of related races. To the A group belong the East Hamites, the Iranians and the Polynesians; to the B group belong the East Europeans, the Turks and the southern Asiatics. All dark-skinned races, whether Negro, Melanesian or black Asiatics, are characterized by an equal distribution of A and B groups. Nevertheless, the Negroid races of Asia and Oceania seem from the point of view of blood-serology to form a unity with the Negroids of Africa. And the strong B quota among the Africans again makes anthropologists ask whether the Negroes did not after all come from Asia. As far as

blood-groups are concerned they are indistinguishable from the peoples of Further India and Indonesia.

Some scientists have declared themselves against this blood-serological classification, saying that the blood-groups have not the slightest value for ethnological study. Above all they cast doubts on the theory that the whole of primeval humanity belonged to the O group, bringing forth the fact that all our blood-groups can be found among the anthropoid apes: for example a chimpanzee of the A blood-group can receive a transfusion of blood from a human being belonging to the A group.

So all palaeontological and blood-serological indications of relationships between Asiatic-Oceanic and African negroids are still very unreliable. But the study of the Negro race is still a comparatively recent branch of science.

The Negro was a different species from the European, a vicious, shameless or at least very lowly representative of *Homo sapiens*—such opinions were held by the majority of Europeans in the nineteenth century. And these were also the opinions held by the majority of African explorers. The extreme representative of this way of thinking—if it can be called thinking—was the one-time poor-house boy and later star reporter John Rowland who has gone down into history under the pseudonym of Henry Morton Stanley. He allied himself with an Arab slave-hunter and mass-murderer, the infamous Hamed ben Mohammed, known as Tippu-Tib, in order to conquer the Congo.

Certainly there were many other explorers of 'Darkest Africa' who were of quite different stamp; missionaries like Livingstone, Krapf and Rebmann, unprejudiced scholars like Barth and Schweinfurth. It is from these men that we have the really worthwhile ethnological reports which formed a solid basis for future study. Between a Stanley and a Livingstone yawns a moral abyss similar to that between a Pizarro and an Albert Schweitzer. It is the greatest tragedy of African colonial history that the majority of pioneers went the way of Stanley and not that of Livingstone.

Certainly Livingstone also condemned cannibalistic tribes and deplored the 'frightful state of moral bewilderment in which these people live', for Livingstone was a child of his time and applied moral values belonging to European conditions. On the other hand Stanley, too, found many Negro groups very sympathetic, praised their appearance and behaviour, for Stanley was the prototype of the alert journalist-explorer who was not blind to the

beauty of the Negroes as long as the Negroes behaved as Stanley wanted them to do. But Livingstone was concerned 'to win the hearts of the Africans through kindness and unselfishness'; Stanley was concerned only to attain his ends through thoughtless, reckless energy that despised the dignity of man.

Not until the twentieth century did the obscure corners of African life become illuminated by the quiet, clever, unpretentious labours of quite unheroic ethnologists, students of civilization, anthropologists and missionaries. The extent of the progress that has been made can be judged by the example of a tribe that was once much decried, the Zande or Azandeh-Negroes in the northern Congo. Some arrogant Arab ivory- or slave-dealer had given the Zande the nickname 'Niam-Niam', which is still in use. The word 'Niam-Niam' according to the Arabs is of Zande origin and means 'man-eater'. In fact it means nothing at all and is just empty sound. But the 'Niam-Niam' (yum-yum?) tribe became the terror of African literature.

About the middle of the last century the great French novelist Alexandre Dumas wrote a sensational novelette about this tribe under the title *L'Homme à la Queue* (*The Man with a Tail*) in which the Zande tribe is depicted as bestial forest demons with tails. Schweinfurth had lived twenty years among the 'Niam-Niam', and called Dumas' bit of trash 'a farrago of the most arrant twaddle'. Schweinfurth wrote enthusiastic accounts of this noble, magnificently-built warrior tribe and passionately protested that 'they are human beings like all of us, all subject, as much as we are, to the emotions of sorrow and joy'. And to-day the 'bestial men with tails' belong to the most highly-regarded of Negro tribes. The anthropologists look upon them as model human beings.

The concept of 'Negro' is really not quite as unscientific as the concept of 'Indian'; for the individual Negroid races seem, despite great linguistic and cultural differences, to be closely related and to have the same origin. Yet it struck explorers that there were at least three completely dissimilar Negro types, the slender, long-skulled and very dark grassland Negroes of West Africa, the rather lighter-skinned and obviously partly Hamitic Bantu south of the Equator and the medium-sized, round-skulled and often rather primitive-looking Negroes of the primeval rain-forests. As early as the end of the eighteenth century came the first news of a tribe which to-day is reckoned to be the most primitive of all Negro tribes—the Bergdama.

In 1791 a Boer trek under the leadership of one Willem van Reenen crossed the Orange River in South Africa. One of the Boers, Pieter Brand, discovered in the mountainous district of Damara Land in South-West Africa a nomad 'savage' tribe with extremely dark skins and of Herculean stature. Actually in this region there should have been only small sallow-skinned Bushmen and no Negroes. For the Bantu, as we assume to-day must have reached the southern part of the African continent in the early Middle Ages and, moreover, looked quite different at that time and were even then no longer as 'primitive' as these 'savage' black-skinned men in Damara Land.

The Boers called the Bergdama 'klipkafirs'. Only gradually was it realized that these 'klipkafirs' were on the same low cultural level as the Bushmen. They lived from hunting and gathering in the deserts, had even given up their own language and exchanged it for that of the then lords of South Africa, the Hottentots. They seem to have lived in the south-west of the continent as long as three to four thousand years ago, that is, long before the immigration of the Bantu. In fact, in some pre-historic rock-paintings in Damara Land Negroes are represented with ape-like features and exaggeratedly thick lips. As at that time there were still no Bantu in South Africa, these very ancient drawings of Negroes are perhaps authentic documents of the life of the mysterious 'klipkafirs'.

The Bergdama, about twenty to twenty-five thousand strong, still dwell in exactly the same regions in which the rock-paintings were discovered. Although they resemble the Bushmen in their nomadic hunting way of life, they have preserved certain cultural features which once could be found only among true Negroes—for example ancestor-worship and the belief in ghosts. Presumably they represent the remains of the oldest African Negro population which at a very early date was driven south-west by more highly-developed tribes into the barren mountain regions. They are not the only primeval Negroes. In the African interior too there exist such off-shoots, remains of tribes that were driven into the primeval forests—middle-sized, with long bodies, sloping foreheads, broad, flat noses, very prominent lips and rather prominent jaws. They are termed Palaeonegroids by ethnologists.

So to-day the ethnologist no longer speaks about Negroes simply. Apart from the Palaeonegroids he distinguishes at least four great groups of Negroes or Negro-blooded races, all as

different from one another as an Iclander from an Arab, a Russian from a Masai. According to this distribution, West Africa is peopled by Sudanoids, culturally often very highly-developed folk, tall and well muscled, and incorporating in its purest form that type which we think of when we think of Negroes. In Central and South Africa live the Bantuoids, whose languages have gained ground also among many primeval forest Negro tribes. Nilotics is the name given to the over-slender, narrow-faced inhabitants of the Upper Nile valley; they are counted as Hamitic-Negroid mixed races. The brown, mostly stump-nosed, narrow-lipped races of East Africa finally are known as Ethiopoids; they are descended from the Hamites, use mostly East Hamitic dialects and have only acquired more or less Negro blood after centuries of racial mingling.

Students of Africa, however, no longer attach very much value to these racial groupings. For the constant racial movements in the dark continent, the cross-breedings and superimpositions which arose from Hamitic migrations, Bantu wanderings, invasions and the formation of states, the abduction of whole populations and many still obscure pre-historical occurrences no longer permit clear distinctions to be made between the very ancient Negroes of the primeval forests, the state-founding Sudanese, the conquering Bantu and the Hamitic-Negroid mixed races. In fact the word 'race' has gradually lost more and more of its significance in Africa; leading researchers have long ago given it up when speaking of Africa and now use the less ambiguous concept of 'cultural group'.

A more detailed examination of the complicated system of culture-groups in Africa would take us beyond the bounds of the present work, for every well-known historian of the civilizations of Africa has devised his own system. It is enough to say here that there is after all no 'real Negro civilization' but that Africa is a mirror reflecting the most varied human cultures—just like Eurasia and America.

Where did the Negroes come from? That was the question we asked at the beginning of this chapter. Now, at the end of the chapter, we must ask: where are they going? Most African civilizations are irrevocably extinct. The natives are becoming proletarianized; greed for money, the anxiety about not being able to make a living, land hunger and over-population have also laid their claws upon Africa. Everywhere alarms are being sounded:

in the lands of Ghana and Guinea, which have shaken off colonialism, in Kenya, where the Mau-Mau rose in revolt, in South Africa, where the black masses, oppressed by racial prejudice, are driven into the arms of political extremists. 'Africa is challenging the West in a way she has never done before', wrote Richard Wright in 1954. 'The West can suffer the ignominious loss of Africa, or can try magnanimously to save Africa.' The West must decide, or Africa will.

CHAPTER IX

THE CUSTOMS OF THE PEOPLES

'... and they knew that they were naked': The little hunters of the desert: Gulliver and the dwarfs: The dilemma of the twentieth century: The coloured front

'... and they knew they were naked'

We anthropologists might be the characters in some folk-tale which people tell about us: they reproach us with wanting to strip the clothes off civilized man, replacing them by a grass skirt, a loin-cloth, or even nothing at all.

Margaret Mead, 1949

WHEN FROM 1948 to 1953 the American zoologist Alfred C. Kinsey, with the collaboration of a great staff of researchers and statisticians, investigated the sexual life of his contemporaries, an age-old taboo at last seemed to have been broken. The Yale professor's two books, fundamentally nothing but lists of percentages—by no means light reading—gave the average twentieth-century man a disquieting but also wholesome shock, robbed him of fondly-held illusions and showed him that the moral façades and moral laws of our era do not in the least correspond to the reality. Since then Kinsey has been regarded as a pioneer of science, the Columbus of sexual research.

Even more shocking and disillusioning was the work *Patterns of sexual behaviour* published by a great American firm in 1951; the authors were the anthropologists Clellan S. Ford and the psychologist Frank A. Beach, both also of Yale University. Ford and Beach were not content with analyzing the sexual life of their compatriots, they compared it point by point with the sexual lives of foreign peoples and even with the sexual relationships of animals. The sexual behaviour of man, a problem mentioned as

rarely as possible in polite society, had become a subject of biological research—like the pairing rites of fish, the hatching habits of birds, the sexual cycles of apes.

But the revelations afforded us by Kinsey, Ford and Beach are really not particularly new. A certain group of scientists has for a long time been using similar working methods, making the same comparisons, providing the same standards of judgments and coming to the same conclusions. These scientists are ethnologists and anthropologists. In the last fifty years innumerable books have been written about the customs, the sexual habits, the moral codes and moral misdemeanours of foreign races. In these, too, man is a subject for biological research, in these, too, is printed quite frankly, without prejudice and often very dryly what skilful questioners have managed to get out of the natives of foreign countries.

The sexual customs of savages do not differ all that much from those of highly-cultivated modern men and women. There are moral façades and taboos, sexual codes, initiation ceremonies and marriage regulations among whites as well as among coloured peoples, as well as the corresponding contraventions and transgressions. In many respects the habits of foreign races are astonishingly like our own. And whenever the love-life of a foreign race or civilization differs fundamentally from our own, there are always quite definite biological, social, economic or religious reasons for the difference.

Marriage with one's sister in East Hamitic ruling families was not incest but was a normal procedure connected with hereditary succession. We find polygamy among extremely patriarchal cultures, where 'the number of a man's wives', as the ethnologist Hilde Thurnwald writes, 'is intimately connected with his prosperity and social position.' The much more infrequent polyandry occurs in extremely matriarchal societies and is probably ascribable to a surplus of men and to economic motives. Those races in which the women even when married enjoyed complete sexual freedom were also typical matriarchies. Kaj Birket-Smith sees in the fact that in some parts of the world girls earn their dowries by prostitution 'a relic of ancient matriarchal civilizations'. When no special value is placed upon virginity before marriage, it is not a question of 'moral laxity'; in such races people respect the sober realism of the conception that young people ought to know everything about each other before marriage. Various tribes have

nothing against illegitimate children, for an unmarried mother—according to Birket-Smith—‘will be more strongly courted than her more retiring sisters, because she has, as it were, given proof of her ability to bear children’. And when homosexuality, abortion and similar misdemeanours go unpunished, it is not because the race is degenerate but because it is more broad-minded than certain barbaric western nations.

The customs of foreign races hold a mirror up to our own. They give us standards of comparison, show us how the moral life of humanity has developed and what rules of conduct the various races and civilizations provided. Sociologists, theologians, psychologists and doctors have long known that the ‘animalistic drive’ in man, this strongest and intensest of all instincts, plays a not inconsiderable role in the general life of *Homo sapiens*. The same drive exists in members of all races, and at all times; everywhere love strikes deep into personal and social life, becoming the main theme of the artist, awakening longings and affording moments of great happiness, but also bringing severe taboos and difficult problems. Man has not been able to master this ‘animalistic drive’ with moral codes. Sexually, as Ford and Beach insist, man is in no way different from the beasts.

Prudery has prevented many chroniclers of the various aspects of this sexual drive from giving frank and forthright accounts. On the other hand there were some specialists who went to work with a zeal that could hardly be called scientific; some made the natives drunk in order to watch the spectacle of their sexual practices, others behaved like Casanovas, the zoologist Otto Finsch for example. All this brought the study of tribal customs into great disrepute, which was only gradually dissipated by the appearance of the great standard works of Buschan and Bernatzik, Malinowski, Benedict and Mead.

These serious scientists attempted in their work to identify themselves as closely as possible with the lives and the environments of the peoples they were studying. This method was known as ethnological fieldwork. But there were ‘fieldworkers’ long before the terms ‘ethnology’, ‘ethnography’ and ‘anthropology’ became known. Magellan’s companion Antonio Pigafetta, Stellar, the explorer of northern Asia, various French *couvreurs de bois* in North America, men like Philibert Commerson, Georg Forster and William Anderson—all were in certain respects fieldworkers. Miklucho-Maklai, Rasmussen, Stefansson and Schweinfurth were

fieldworkers of the highest quality, observers as keen as our modern scientists. And since the days of Alexander von Humboldt the interior of South America has been a particularly fruitful 'field'.

Even to-day the 'Green Hell' of the Amazon and the Matto Grosso is to the layman a mysterious and alarming world. It was here that Colonel Fawcett and other adventurers vanished. The Indian tribes are cut off from each other and from nearly all the benefits of civilization by impenetrable forests. They shoot at travellers their curare-tipped poison arrows from blow-pipes, and the brown head-hunters shrink the heads of their victims. Here on the banks of the Rio dos Mortes, the river of the dead, live the Chavantes, whose territory one enters only when one is tired of life. Only a few years ago some reckless visitors who landed there by helicopter were done to death by Jivarós and other Indians. A stay among the primitive hordes of the 'Green Hell' still counts as one of the last great romantic adventures which our sober era can offer us.

That things here are in fact quite otherwise the author of this book can state from personal experience. From 1892 to 1930 the Brazilian general Cândido Rondon worked tirelessly for a bloodless peace with the majority of the Indian tribes on repeated voyages of discovery in their territories. Rondon was himself of Indian origin, and invented the motto for all future explorers in Brazil: 'Be killed, if necessary, but never kill!' But the Chavantes would not let even such a great friend of the Indians enter their territory.

Yet the majority of the Indian tribes became through Rondon's efforts so sympathetic to modern civilization that to-day the field-worker can even visit without any particular danger those tribes which are considered to be 'uncivilizable and unmissionable'. If one behaves in a reasonable way, does not terrorize the forest-dwellers with helicopters, respects their taboos, leaves their women alone, refrains from photographing things held sacred by the Indians and makes friends with them, then there is no need to be afraid of blow-pipes, poison-arrows and curare. If it had been otherwise, this book would never have been written.

In 1916 Roquette Pinto, one of Rondon's co-workers, published a work entitled *Rondônia* which records the most important results of Rondon's great journeys in the cause of peace. It remains to-day the classic work on the 'Green Hell'; it contains monographs on

most of the Indian tribes of the Matto Grosso and offered ethnology a mass of material which has not yet been exhausted. But other names rank with those of Rondon and Pinto: Humboldt, Langsdorff and the Prince of Wied, Göldi, Martius and Norden-skjöld, Koch-Grünberg, Snethlage and Métraux.

Another fieldworker here, one of the first and best, was Karl von der Steinen. He was a psychiatrist and from 1879 to 1881 at the age of four and twenty undertook a voyage round the world in order to study the mental diseases and mental hospitals of as many countries as possible. In Honolulu he met by accident the ethnologist Adolf Bastian who so inspired him with a desire to do ethnological research that he gave up psychiatry and at once set out to visit some of the South Sea Islanders. Then from 1884 to 1888 he was in the Matto Grosso, explored to the sources of the Xingu and encountered Indians who had never seen a white man before—Bakairi, Nahukuá, Mehinakú and many other tribes. He studied their customs, learnt their languages, filled in many empty places on the map and removed many false conceptions about the forest Indians.

In the Bakairi Indians he got to know a happy, contented race which still lived in paradisaical nakedness and on a Stone Age level but which completely gave the lie to stereotyped visions of brutal, underhand jungle demons: 'Their social relationships have a gentle quality, and their whole life is irradiated by a sunny gaiety.' These naked 'savages' were enthusiastic artists and craftsmen, producing bright ornaments, coverings and mats, and loving festivals of song and dance. And here, in this miniature Garden of Eden, at the source of the Xingu, von der Steinen witnessed that extraordinary custom which had already been described by Marco Polo in East Asia and which is known to us from the ancient Mediterranean, Africa, southern India, Oceania and the Basque country, the 'couvade', the man-childbed.

When his wife had borne a child, the Bakairi husband also lay in the childbed. He looked after the infant, ate only clear soups and was allowed to leave the hammock only after forty days. But then he was submitted to a very severe fatherhood-test; his relatives slit his skin and rubbed in a pepper-like powder. He had to endure this procedure without a sound, otherwise he would not be worthy to be the father of his child. If he did so—and every Bakairi did—then there was a great feast, at the end of which the

ancient order of precedence—father, mother and child—was restored.

What was the significance of this strange custom? Von der Steinen knew the answer. A woman in childbed is threatened by dangerous sicknesses and evil powers, and the father offers himself up, in order to take the perils upon himself. Moreover, in giving birth the mother has to suffer pains, and so her relationship to the child is a particularly close one. The father, who desires the same kind of relationship, is ready to take upon himself a burden of pain in order to become a father in a deeper sense.

European ethnological fieldwork really began when Hugo Adolf Bernatzik of Vienna in 1923 started out on his many expeditions, all financed by himself, to study the various tribes and civilizations of Africa, Asia and the South Seas. He belonged to that happy race of people who can identify themselves completely with another race, and everywhere he went he enchanted the natives, won their confidence and lived as one of the tribe. Bernatzik observed native peoples as if they were natural phenomena, he was both biologist and anthropologist. Moreover, he had the good fortune to possess, in his wife Emmy, the best possible companion and assistant. She was a lawyer, a psychologist and an ethnologist; she kept the diaries of the expedition, sketched huts and clothes, furnishings and utensils as well as occupying herself with the psychology of African, southern Asiatic and Papuan children—until then a field of research untouched by the scholarly world. As both Bernatziks were excellent writers and good photographers, their many books reached a wide public and were translated into many languages. They were pioneer works for they told the reader not only about spectral masked dances, demonic athletic contests, girls' wrestling-matches, Stone Age civilizations and the habits and customs of almost extinct races, but also were careful to assure that the European public acquired an affectionate understanding of coloured humanity.

A pioneer also was Bronislaw Malinowski. His researches were limited to only a few tribes—mainly Australian, Melanesian, Pueblo Indian and South African. He concerned himself chiefly with their sexual practises and customs. If a fieldworker concentrates on a single tribe and on one narrowly-limited aspect of the tribe's life, he can in fact produce analyses of universal and eternal value. Such a work, quoted with reverence by every ethnologist, is Malinowski's study of the habits of the Tobriand

Islanders, among whom he lived for years, *The sexual life of savages in North-Western Melanesia*. It ushered in a new era in the study of the human race.

The celebrated sexual psychologist Havelock Ellis wrote in 1929, when Malinowski's book appeared: 'The sexual life of savages has had to wait a long time for its natural historian. For as sexual taboos weigh at least just as heavily upon the minds of civilized peoples as they do on the minds of savages, this subject has always been enveloped in veils of secrecy. These mysteries, depending on one's attitude to the savage peoples, had about them either something both fascinating and alluring or something both grim and shocking. We looked in vain for an account, based on well-substantiated facts, of any unspoilt race's sexual life,' declared Havelock Ellis. 'In this field true research only recently became possible.'

Now the sexual taboos of the present day are every bit as strong as they were in the nineteenth century, but the attitude of researchers and scientists has changed. About 1900 sexual research was still synonymous with the study of deviations and delusions of the mind, but since Freud and Malinowski it has been applied to so-called 'normal' society. It became a field of research in which not only pathologists, but also exact natural scientists, psychologists, sociologists and historians of civilization frisk.

Despite his strictly scientific attitude to his subject, Malinowski was fundamentally a moralist—though not in the generally accepted sense of the word. He never showed the slightest offence at the spectacle of a foreign race's habits and customs, on the contrary he observed them with a dedicated seriousness, approached them with deep awe, respected them and never hurt the feelings of the natives. He shows himself to be also an excellent, witty, amusing writer. And whenever he cast an eye on European society, he did so with that quiet, unobtrusive irony peculiar to Anglo-Saxons and which he, born a Pole (in Cracow, 1884), used with almost greater mastery than his British models. He insisted that his numerous comparisons between Tobriand and European habits 'should not be judged as social parallels or to be taken for fulminations against our own weaknesses or for hymns of praise to our own virtues'. But the attentive reader cannot help thinking that Malinowski has at times taken great pleasure in comparing the well-known prudery of the Melanesians with the equally well-

known European-American prudery. Whether intentional or not, the resemblances here are in fact amazing.

Malinowski was also the founder of a new movement in ethnology. He was interested in the functionings of a civilization, how its institutions work, what role husband and wife, family, tribe and class play in individual races, how civilizations and institutions develop and for what reasons they developed in a certain way and not in another. For it seemed clear to Malinowski that man's behaviour was not just a matter of doing what comes naturally, he had also acquired and evolved it. This 'new ethnology' is called Functionalism. It became prominent particularly in England and America, and led to the most various schools, systems and methods of research.

The chief of the functionalist school in England was Reginald Radcliffe-Brown, who devoted himself particularly to the study of social phenomena. The Nestor of functionalism in the United States was Franz Boas who evolved completely new ethnological working methods and concerned himself with the art and psychology of native peoples. He was a fervent fighter against racial delusions and racial persecutions. He died in 1942, the same year as Malinowski.

His chief disciple was the gifted anthropologist Ruth Benedict, who in her youth had had hopes of a literary career but at the age of twenty-three turned under Boas' influence to the study of ethnology. She became famous for her exact investigations of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, the Dobu of North West Melanesia and the Kwatkiutl Indians on Vancouver Island, which she incorporated in her world-famous book *Patterns of Culture*. Like her teacher, Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict was a fierce opponent of any kind of racial prejudice or persecution, she was all for the reconciliation of nations and for an understanding of each nation's point of view. So shortly after the American victory over Japan, at a time when American resentment against Japan was at its highest, she published a friendly analysis of Japanese civilization under the title of *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*.

Malinowski's tradition is continued to-day in the work of Margaret Mead, a sympathetic, discreet and thoroughly practical anthropologist who was also a pupil of Franz Boas. Her field of activity was mainly the Pacific, Samoa, the Admiralty Islands, the Papuans of Arapesh, Mundugumor, Jatmul and Chambuli and the island of Bali. She lived there for years like one of the natives

and learnt all their languages. Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, two brave and humane women, have contributed more to the understanding of our own and of foreign civilizations than whole libraries of books of travel and exploration. Whoever makes himself familiar with their works will know what the 'new ethnology' is.

The little hunters of the desert

The stranger and all that is his shall
suffer no want in our land.

From the Hottentot's legal code

IN 1705 A CERTAIN Peter Kolb or Kolbe journeyed to Cape Town to study astronomy but soon passed into the service of the Dutch East India Company. He spent three years in the Cape and saw that the majority of the population there were light-skinned, cattle-raising folk who led a nomadic trekking existence similar to that of the Boers. He referred to these wandering cattle-herdsmen as 'Hottentots', and that is what they are still called by ethnologists. He carefully described what he had seen of the habits and customs of these inhabitants of the Cape.

They were of normal stature, perhaps rather smaller than the average European, wandered round the country with large herds of cattle and led a well-ordered social life. Kolb's book, *Caput bonae spei hodiernum*, that is, *the complete description of the African promontory or cape of Good Hope* appeared in 1719 in Nuremberg. It became the most valuable source of information on the ethnological conditions existing in Africa at that time, for soon afterwards the Hottentot civilization broke down under the severe rule of the Boers, and to-day only fragments of that civilization remain.

But besides these steppe herdsmen there were other light-coloured tribes in Cape Colony, who were very much looked down upon and still regarded as belonging to the animal kingdom—the present-day Bushmen. They were smaller than the Hottentots, about one and a half metres in height, sallow-complexioned, with heavily-wrinkled faces, spiral 'peppercorn' hair and narrow, almost mongoloid eyes which seemed to be nictitating all the time. Their speech made a clicking sound, their women were steatopygous, and they lived in the most deserted and infertile regions of

South Africa. Here, long after Kolb's time, they stalked, hunted and trapped all kinds of wild life as the Mesolithic races had done in primitive times. They wore animal masks when stalking their prey, hid poisoned arrows in the sand to kill broody ostriches and carried a small magical weapon, the 'Bushman's revolver', a tiny bow with even tinier arrows.

So it cannot have been difficult for observers to distinguish the highly-cultivated Hottentots from the dwarfish primitive Bushmen. Yet the nickname 'Hottentot' also became attached to the Bushmen, for the two races resembled one another in certain remarkable ways. They had the same skin-colour, the same rather mongoloid eyes, the same 'peppercorn' hair; their women displayed the same steatopygous features and were distinguishable by a curious enlargement of the external sex organs which has gone down in the history of ethnology as 'the Hottentot apron'. Moreover, there were certain linguistic resemblances; the Bushmen used clicking sounds, and the Hottentots also employed some of these sounds. So it happened that many visitors to Africa confused these two peoples. One of the most famous eighteenth century travellers made this error, which was to have serious consequences.

This man, François Levaillant, more of an adventurer than a scholar, was brought up in the harbour town of Paramaribo in South American Guiana and soon became well known as a gifted collector of animals and ornithologist. From 1781 to 1784 he undertook a voyage to South Africa in order to collect all kinds of rarities for the Parisian curiosity cabinets. This journey made Levaillant world-famous. His zoological reports were quoted in all works of natural history. He was the first modern white man to shoot a giraffe and bring it back to France.

Somehow or other François Levaillant got wind of the dwarf Bushmen whom the Boers at that time considered to be pathologically deformed or ape-like monsters. Above all he was struck by the Bushmen's women: they were very strange creatures, many of them no bigger than ten-year-olds, all steatopygous and provided with 'Hottentot aprons' 'which they have from the earliest childhood'. All previous travellers had remarked upon this feature as a special characteristic of Hottentot women. Therefore the French zoologist also called the Bushmen 'Hottentots', and under this name described them to European scientists; he described their sexual organs in great detail. Naturally this aroused great curiosity in Paris.

When Levaillant was still alive, in 1815, a Dutchman brought a South African Bushman woman to the French capital, where she was promptly classified as a 'Hottentot' by the scholarly world and given the name of Sarah. The poor creature lived there for a year, was thoroughly examined by all the leading scientists and dissected when she died. The steatopygous features and the 'Hottentot apron' were preserved in alcohol. The model of this 'Venus Hottentotte' is still to be seen in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris.

Had a new human type, very ape-like in appearance, been discovered? For decades anthropologists played around with this idea. Other anatomical peculiarities were brought forward in order to prove that the steatopygous South Africans were apart from normal humanity. The Bushmen were said to have an ape-like deformation of the vertebral column; the male members of the race were attributed with irregular formations of the sexual organs, reasons enough to regard the Bushmen as missing links between apes and men. We shall not give any more of the misconceptions which existed in old travel books. Gradually, in the course of the nineteenth century, ethnologists began to make the proper racial, physical and linguistic distinctions between the two peoples.

The 'Hottentots' of Peter Kolb, the Khoi-Khoi as they called themselves, are no smaller than normal Europeans. They speak an East Hamitic dialect, live as nomad herdsmen like the Hamitic inhabitants of East Africa and once possessed a typical Hamitic cattle-rearing culture with a rigid clan system, nature worship and a monotheistic religion. Before the arrival of the Europeans they lived in Kraals, were held to be the most highly-developed race in South Africa and were outstanding warriors who gave the colonists a great deal of trouble. But finally they were so decimated by the whites that only three chief tribes remained, the fairly pure-blooded Nama, the Korana, with a Negro admixture, and the Griqua, with a white admixture. These intelligent, valiant, hospitable Khoi-Khoi were quite definitely not primitive people; on the contrary they at one time belonged to the ruling tribes of the Dark Continent.

On the other hand, the Bushmen, the Săn or Sagua, really looked like survivors from primeval times. They appear to be dwarf Hottentots, use a primitive clicking language, are not familiar with either farming or cattle-raising and do not allow

themselves to be assimilated. Only a few decades ago they lived stark naked in caves, clefts in the rocks and hollowed-out termittaries; they were desert or steppe nomads. All 'Bushwomen' whom scientists examined in Europe belonged to this race, and were no Hottentots.

Culturally there is as wide a gap between a Bushman and a Hottentot as between a Vedda and a Hindu, yet so Hamitic do they both look that the majority of experts class them together in the 'Khoi-San racial group' and the ethnologists call them 'Khoisanoids'. Neither race has anything to do with the Negroid races.

The little Bushmen narrowly escaped the fate of the Tasmanians. The timid huntsmen with their poisoned arrows could not grasp that a Boer's sheep was something other than an antelope, and were regarded by the hard-boiled Boers as human game.

The first visitor to South Africa who did not shoot at them or take them prisoner in order to sell them to the 'steatopygia experts' in scientific institutes was an English zoologist named William F. Burchell. He is well known for his many accounts of animal life and above all for his discovery of the gigantic 'white' rhinoceros of Africa; zoological gardens know his name because it was given to a type of South African zebra. But he was also a keen observer of the natives and a very humane man. Burchell campaigned energetically for the protection of this primitive race who dwelt in an almost waterless wilderness under the severest conditions and yet were always gay, made mock-fighting their favourite sport and were passionately fond of dancing and music.

Burchell also saw how noble and well-built the hitherto so despised Bushman type really was: 'The regular physique of our Bushman guide is wonderfully beautiful as he walks in front of us with the most free and easy bearing I have ever seen. . . . His well proportioned, if also small and delicately-made body, his upright, manly bearing, his firm, sure stride, the feeling of freedom that radiates from his whole being—this all gave me the most indescribable pleasure.' Bushmen were not, as had been earlier accepted, ape-men or pathologically deformed creatures, they were true human beings like the members of any other race, and ideally adapted to a wild life in the bush. In the reservations where later they were herded together and which the ethnologists rightly called 'great houses of correction' they lost many of their qualities that had so fascinated Burchell.

In the years between 1863 and 1866, at a time when no one

guessed the presence of Ice Age works of art in Europe, Gustav Theodor Fritsch travelled through the whole of South Africa and in the course of his zoological studies discovered examples of 'Bushman art'. These were rock-paintings, large in conception, often of high artistic quality, of animals, people and hunting scenes. They belonged to the most various periods and exhibited astonishing parallels with the Sahara paintings, with East Spanish rock-paintings and also with European Ice Age art. Fritsch ascribed all the paintings he found in caves and on cliffs and rocks unhesitatingly to the Bushmen. He was deeply impressed by their sharp observational talent and their outstanding formal qualities. The weather-worn paintings were copied as quickly as possible and whatever was salvageable was sent to ethnographical museums.

As early as 1908 celebrated scholars, among them experts like Oswald Menghin and Felix von Luschan, raised their voices to proclaim the 'highly striking and almost baffling similarity between the Bushman drawings and European Palaeolithic works of art'. They claimed that 'Bushman art' must be as old as the hills and must belong to about the same period as the East Spanish rock-paintings. Felix von Luschan drew the conclusion 'that the art of the Bushman derives originally from North Africa'.

All this sounded very clever and enlightening, and in principle there was nothing wrong with the opinions expressed, for there are obvious similarities between the pre-historic paintings of southern Europe, North Africa and South Africa. The enthusiastic art experts unfortunately overlooked one thing. They did not ask themselves if the creators of these paintings were in fact Bushmen.

We now know the answer to this question; it is contained in our chapter on Zimbabwe. It was found that the older, perhaps three to four thousand-year-old paintings in South Africa were not done by Bushmen but by an unknown race whose traces have vanished but who obviously were related to members of the Mediterranean Neolithic civilizations. But the later South African rock-drawings are by Bushmen.

In pre-historic times there must already have been a much-travelled route between the Nile valley and the East African steppe lands, a north-south route that all human races which live or lived in Africa must have trodden. The Boskop men and their related tribes reached the Cape by this route in the course of the later Palaeolithic age, that is, about twenty thousand years ago.

But all explorers and all investigators of the South African primeval man were struck by one thing; the skulls and skeletons they found differed completely in certain respects from those of primeval Europeans and resembled in these respects those of the Bushmen. They were, it is true, of normal and sometimes indeed above normal size, these Boskop, Florisbad and Bushveld types, but again and again researchers insisted that they must have combined in a very strange way Europoid and Bushman elements. In other words, if one could imagine a dwarf Boskop man, then one had the Bushman as he lives to-day in the Namib Desert. Now how was it that the robust, big-skulled Boskop man, that magnificently-built counterpart to Cro-Magnon man, became the small-built Bushman?

In the Late Ice Age the South African primeval races developed as gatherers, fishermen and hunters, the form of civilization known as the Wilton Culture, after the site named Wilton near Grahams-town. The stone and bone implements of this culture resemble those of the southern European-North African Mesolithic age. Later, in the Neolithic age, those South Africans who lived by the sea lived in the same way as Neolithic North Europeans; they fed on mussels, piled the shells into heaps and became the carriers or upholders of a mussel-heap culture. Till that point no distinction can be made between European and South African pre-history. But if the mysterious ancient rock-paintings are not deceiving us, then the beginnings of a highly developed civilization were already making their appearance in South Africa.

But at that time there had long been quite a new type of man in the inhospitable wastes of the south, a dwarf race that had fallen into primitive ways—the strandlopers as the Boers call them. Strandloper burial-places were found in great numbers in the region of the South African coasts. What had happened? The strandloper race was like a stunted offshoot of the Boskop tribe, and that is what it was. Was it driven out by relatives more favoured by fate? Was it driven into the wilderness by immigrant Hamites? We shall never know exactly what happened.

One thing is certain, these strandlopers are the ancestors of the present-day Bushmen. They remained on the level of the Wilton culture, wandered about the country, lived on all kinds of refuse and disappeared from the history of civilizations. To-day they live a nomadic existence in their reservations in the Namib and Kalahari deserts—a sallow-complexioned, wrinkled race that in their

drawings, magical rites and belief in an almighty being may have preserved elements of their ancestors' spiritual life. They gather wild fruits and hunt all kinds of small animals, they live in caves or under wind-breaks as Stone Age man once did in Europe and Asia.

Yet the Bushmen have contributed something to the history of the human race. Their territory, which presumably once encompassed a large area of East Africa, bordered the territories of other races. Negroes and Hamites overran them, mixed with them. Bushman blood and relics of Bushman culture can be found as far away as the East African great lakes area and among the most varied brown and black tribes. And one race of presumably East Hamitic origin took on so many Bushman elements in South Africa that to-day it is classed in the same group as the Bushmen—the Hottentots.

To-day Africa is still referred to as the 'Dark Continent'. And indeed from an ethnological point of view there is much here that is dark, obscure and unsolved. Bushmen and Hottentots are only two problem races among many. Even more mysterious and more astounding were and still are the dwarf races who exist in various corners of the African primeval forests. They look quite different from the South African Bushmen, they are the smallest of the small—the pygmies of the ancient travellers' tales.

Gulliver and the dwarfs

The black men say that in a desert-like landscape there do live only dwarfs who by their devilish arts can become invisible and thus slay most of their elephants, with very little trouble.

Olfert Dapper, c. 1668

IT IS NOT KNOWN whether the witty, satirical writer Jonathan Swift already knew something of the existence of dwarf races when he sent his hero, the ship's surgeon Lemuel Gulliver, to Lilliput, the land of the dwarfs. His odyssey took place in the region of the Sunda Islands, and it was known long before Swift's time that Negritos of about one and a half metres in height were to be found there. These 'little nigger boys' are dwarf members of the Asiatic black race who are more adapted to the peculiar conditions of life

in the thickets of the Indo-Malayan region and on the islands of the Indian Ocean than men of normal size.

Dwarf races exist, as we have heard already, in the interior of New Guinea and Madagascar and in various regions of Africa. That isolated human tribes or groups very soon become dwarfs under unfavourable conditions is proved by numerous examples, the best known of which is that of the Vikings in Greenland.

The old conception that the pygmy peoples are offshoots from primeval man is to-day dismissed by most scientists. Our primeval forefathers were of normal size and did not have the almost 'child-like' appearance of modern pygmy tribes. Yet nearly all pygmies and semi-pygmies have one thing in common with the primeval man of the Late Ice Age, they have remained on the cultural level of primeval forest or steppe hunters, still live far back in the Stone Age and seem under the onslaughts of our brutal civilization—as Ruth Benedict once expressed it—to be 'candidates for social death'.

Certain pseudo-scientific ethnological works have encouraged the simple but completely untenable conception of a 'pygmoid racial group' in which all pygmies are related to one another. There is not the slightest proof for this.

Before we embark upon the adventurous and exciting voyage of discovery that is the problem of the forest pygmies, let us ask ourselves where in Africa, apart from the South, can still be found Khoisanoid features, Bushman cultural relics, Bushman clicking languages. We must again refer to the African rock-drawings. The women in the authentic Bushman drawings in South Africa display steatopygous features, but we can find these also in many East and North African pictures—one proof that the forefathers of the Khoisanoids once really did occupy an enormous territory in Africa. That is not to be wondered at for we have heard already how as early as the Palaeolithic Age the primeval steppe-hunters travelled the north-south route from the Nile across the savannahs to South Africa.

In North and East Africa they have long been overrun and absorbed by other races, but have left cultural relics there in many places. There we find mussel-heaps as in South Africa, dwarf races like the Sandawe and Kindiga who speak clicking languages like the Bushmen. We find Negro tribes like the Kamba and Ndorobo, who not only obviously have Bushman blood but also, like Bushmen, use hunting javelins and missile clubs, hide poisoned arrows

in the sand, poison water and carry the 'Bushman revolver', the magical miniature bow and arrows. So what happened in the deserts of East Africa was the same as what happened in the deserts of South Africa—only that in East Africa it was not light-skinned forefathers of the Hottentots but immigrant Negroes who drove back the steppe-hunters, mixed with them and in so doing took over many Bushman elements.

When the first really authentic reports on the African primeval forest pygmy began to appear towards the end of the nineteenth century, the question was raised whether these Bambuti, Obongo, Bagielli and Beckwi once belonged to the 'Eurafrican steppe hunters', whether they are related to the Bushmen who were driven back into the primeval forest by the surging waves of Negro immigrants. Was Africa in primeval times a land of dwarfs, the 'continent of Lilliput'?

Here we may recall the experiences of Harchuf, who more than four thousand years ago delivered an Akka dwarf to Chiops II. Rumours about the existence of African pygmies have since then spread through all the travel literature of antiquity, of the Middle Ages and modern times, but hard facts were not available until 1870.

Georg Schweinfurth, by profession a natural scientist, was no adventurer, no purveyor of sensational stories or distorter of facts like most of the visitors to the land of the pygmies before the close of the nineteenth century. (These travellers' tales are sometimes picturesque, but really irrelevant here.) Schweinfurth was one of the great 'classical' explorers of Africa. Europe owes to him the first exact information about the geographical conditions between the Upper Nile and the Congo, about tribes like the Nuer, Dinka, Niam-Niam and Mangbetu, about the animal and vegetable kingdoms in the interior of East Africa. Above all he had the good fortune to be able to study numerous native tribes in the southern Sudan and in the northern regions of the Congo in a state which was comparatively undisturbed by modern civilization and the inroads of Arabic-Egyptian slave-dealers.

In 1870 the great explorer was staying for a while with the Mangbetu; he had won the confidence of their king, Munsa, to whom he later dedicated a book. One afternoon King Munsa's warriors came to Schweinfurth 'dragging, despite all his struggles, a strange little man into my tent . . . I could only stare and stare at this tangible embodiment of thousand-year-old myths. The

dwarf was measured, had his portrait taken, fed, given presents and questioned to the point of exhaustion.' He was a Bambuti, an Akka pygmy from the Ituri forest, his name was Adimoku and belonged to a pygmy colony which King Munsa, 'in order to extend his collection of natural curiosities', had settled in the neighbourhood of his palace. Soon after, Schweinfurth saw the other Akka pygmies who lived with the Mangbetu, watched their dances, during which they 'performed truly incredible feats of jumping and agility', and he even discovered numerous half-breeds, the fruit of liaisons between Mangbetu youths and Akka women. Munsa presented him with a fifteen-year-old pygmy youth named Nsewuë, whom he took with him to Nubia. The Sudanese, who knew nothing about pygmies, took him to be, on account of his light skin, the son of the explorer. Unfortunately Nsewuë died of dysentery before Schweinfurth could take him back to his home.

What did the Akka look like? Schweinfurth stated that they were between a hundred and twenty-five and a hundred and fifty centimetres in height, had milky-brown skins and delicate, almost child-like bodies with narrow hands, wide-open child-like eyes and strikingly large auricles. Their lips were much smaller than those of the Negroes; they did not give the impression of being Negroid, but rather superficially resembled the South African Bushman. A few Bushman features—the narrow, blinking eyes, wrinkled skin, peppercorn hair and steatopygia—were not present in the Akka. Their expression was extremely 'lonely', so much so in this respect 'they looked more like apes than men'. Schweinfurth did not see any particularly hairy or bearded individuals, yet he was told about other dwarf tribes whose men are distinguished by their long, pointed beards.

On his return home Schweinfurth collected the most varied reports about other African dwarf races and declared that they must be relics of a primeval African population, and cautiously raised the question as to whether they were not perhaps related to the South African Bushmen. But the next explorer to see them face to face took them to be 'ape-men' or—as he expressed it—'the long-sought missing links between modern man and his Darwinian forefathers'. Stanley had the good fortune to visit the actual native home of the pygmies in 1877, the Ituri forest, and to observe the dwarfs there in their untrammelled freedom. But he could not stand the sight of the little people.

In the years 1947 and 1948 two young Czech journalists went on a motor trip right through the African continent. Hanzeleka and Zikmund are modern reporters, representatives of our over-civilized technical age. How did they react to the pygmies in the Ituri forest? This is what they wrote:

'The dwarfs have often met white men and are accustomed to their ways. The village elder startled us at once by demanding two hundred francs for permission to view and film the settlement. But we soon noticed that neither he nor the other dwarfs had any grasp of the value of money and that they could not count. Numbers for them were only connected with the concept of prettily-printed bits of paper; they thought our notes were simply pictures which would look very nice on the plaited walls of their huts before the next rain pulped them. Other, well-proved gifts of salt and cigarettes gave far more pleasure than our gifts of money.'

And they wrote this about meeting a group of pygmies for the first time: 'They run up to us, and one dwarf after another pops his head up from behind the surrounding bushes. At first we feel a little embarrassed. We can't get used to the idea that these child-like little folk are grown men, grandfathers and fathers of families, mothers of children, and that the piles of leaves on the edge of the clearing, which reach hardly to our chests, are their dwelling-places. At first the dwarfs are rather mistrustful, but they soon become accustomed to us. The little mothers suckle their children again. A wizened old little lady busies herself with the pile of wood outside her home. The men are very curious about our cameras, look at each other in the view-finder and press the shutter . . . In front of one of the huts sits a tiny, worried-looking father nursing his youngest son in his lap, while his wife serves him a meal on a banana-leaf . . . From a small clearing sound beating drums, harmoniously accompanied by the bell-like notes of a plucked-string instrument. A few girls are dancing in a circle round the musicians. At every step in the dance the grass tufts and the fringes of their leather girdles sway round their slender hips . . .'

One of the last surviving paradises in Africa? Well, the pygmies also have their troubles; not just everyday worries about earning a living that are common to most people, but the tribulations and hardships caused by their conflicts with other races. 'Under the gigantic leafy roof of the primeval Congo forest,' the Frankfurt zoo director Bernhard Crzimek, who visited the Bambuti in 1953, writes, 'the pygmies found a place of refuge. But as Negroes,

themselves driven out of their territories by stronger tribes, later were forced back into the primeval forest, the pygmies became dependent on them. They speak the languages of these Negro tribes, usually three to five languages which they learn simultaneously, and they have also imitated the Negroes in many other ways.'

The most seriously threatened pygmy tribes are those which the Negroes have laid under tribute. 'The black Negroes have long been in the habit of taking the ivory from "their" Bambuti for very low sums and selling it at a very high profit,' Grzimek reports. 'By this means many Negroes have become very wealthy and they are able to buy up the little women of the Bambuti men. Again and again we saw dwarf women in Negro forest villages and also swarms of half-breeds. This has taken on such vast proportions that the pygmies are often unable to find themselves wives. The primeval forest Negroes consequently are becoming smaller and lighter-skinned, a bastard race, and the pure-blooded pygmies increasingly decline. Sooner or later they will disappear completely.'

There were pygmies in the Belgian and French Congo, in the Southern Cameroons and Gaboon, in Ubangi and also in many regions of East Africa. Through mixing with Negroes the vast majority have become semi-pygmies, that is, Negroid tribes with more or less pygmy blood. It would be quite unthinkable for Negresses to have sexual relations with pygmy men—a frightful picture, which would cause deep indignation among the Negroes. So racial prejudice and exploitation exist here, too, in the primeval rain-forests. The Negro, who feels himself to be far superior to the Bambuti, behaves exactly as the white man does overseas.

Ethnologists have found no proofs of cannibalism among the pygmies. The Bambuti do indeed know the use of plant poisons, but almost never use them. All fieldworkers who have visited the Ituri forest assert that they have never seen any poisoned weapons among the pygmies. Even on an elephant-hunt—which is actually regarded as a ritual ceremony by the Akka tribes—the hunters use no poison. Either they lame the elephants by cutting the sinews in their legs, or they harpoon the sleeping beasts with heavy, spear-like implements provided with barbed hooks—two methods of hunting which require unbelievable courage and great skill. It is interesting that our own Ice Age ancestors, as is shown in various cave-paintings, slew the elephants of Europe, the mighty mammoths, in exactly the same way.

Some sensation-mongers have told all sorts of lies about the sexual uninhibitedness of the Bambuti, of nightly orgies, of frighteningly obscene rites. In actuality the dwarfs practise fidelity and monogamy, have neither wish nor time for extra-marital activities and even obey very strict codes, which make separation very difficult. Women and mothers are very highly respected. The religion of the pygmies has something of Tylor's animism; nature is deified, the rainbow becomes a giant serpent, lightning is a friendly fire-spitter and thunder a demon that goes stamping through the forest. Over and above all that, the forest pygmies believe in a personal god, an 'almighty father', whom everyone has to reverence. If one of their number dies, after the burial the family moves to another place, not out of heedlessness and indifference, but out of sorrow, sincere distress and deep horror.

All these friendly traits may well be correct and true. But in one respect the critics of the pygmy race have told no lies, the forest dwarfs smell abominably! 'The stink that comes from these little beings,' one report says, 'is the most repulsive that I have ever encountered among primitive races—a mixture of disgusting effluvia, in which smells of ammonia, stale urine and rancid fat are uppermost.' The ethnologist at this point cannot forbear to smile. Certainly, to our noses, a Bambuti does not smell very pleasant. But nearly every human race says that the members of other races smell badly, that their body smell is unendurable. The Japanese are indeed the most courteous of people, but they have often asserted that Europeans stink like rotting corpses! And when in 1874 to 1876 the ethnologist Eduard Pechuel-Loesche undertook his great Loango expedition and visited some of the Bafioti, the Negroes snuffed at the air, blew it away from them, and finally explained to the explorer that they didn't want the whites to come any closer to them, for—though the Negroes had every wish to be hospitable—the white man's stink was not to be borne . . .

In modern times, two missionaries have specialized in the pygmies: Martin Gusinde, whom we have already met as an expert on Tierra del Fuego, and Paul Schebesta of the Steyler Missionary Society. Both have written standard works on the dwarf races. They are of differing opinions about the origins of the pygmies. Gusinde believes that in relatively recent times they must, as 'isolated forest dwellers', have developed from the Negroid racial group, so they would be dwarfed, light-skinned

descendants of primeval Negroes, refugees in the primeval forests who there, like many forest animals, preserved over the centuries certain features from their former state. Schebesta on the other hand sees them as descendants of ancient African steppe-hunters; he prefers to trace their descent from the Neolithic Boskop race, a descent identical with that of the Bushman. Raymond A. Dart also believes the pygmies and Bushmen are related; both races display the same dwarf stature, the same predominance of the O blood-group and the same delicate, child-like physical structure.

But other ethnologists insist that the pygmies of Africa are considerably different both from the Negroes and from the Bushmen. Dwarfs like the Ba-tua of the Belgian Congo, who look like miniature Negroes, are not, they say, real pygmies, but semi-pygmies, stunted Negro half-breeds. The pygmies lack the 'mongoloid' facial expression, the peppercorn hair, the wrinkles and the steatopygia of the Bushmen. If one exaggerates a little, one can say that a Bambuti is as different from a Bushman as a Basque from a Lapp. Some researchers even claim that in Africa there are (or were) several pygmy races who had little or nothing to do with one another.

So the pygmy question, like the Negro question, is still to be answered convincingly.

The dilemma of the twentieth century

Racial prejudice is a method of propping up personal vanity and the lust for power with the elements of a faith that are based on nothing but flattery.

Bertrand Russell, 1935

ABOUT THE MIDDLE of the eighteenth century Boers were trekking in search of pasture in the region of South-West Africa now known as Rehoboth. In the same region were nomad Hottentots who were just as land-hungry as the Boers. Both groups, Hottentots and Boers, had the same form of civilization, the same way of living and the same aversion towards the real owners of the country, the Bushmen. 'On the basis of this common idealistic and economic necessity,' wrote the German anthropologist Eugen Fischer, 'and because of their common struggle against the Bush-

men, the vicissitudes of life brought the Boers and the Hottentots together in various communities.'

These communities were extremely interesting; they led to the emergence of a remarkable, much-discussed race which to-day lives chiefly in the townships of Rehoboth, Keetmanshoop, Warmbad and Rienfontein. The Boers in fact were also suffering from a scarcity of women, and they kept casting longing eyes upon the often very beautiful Hottentot women. But unfortunately they could not take the lovely gold-brown girls with them as mistresses in their covered wagons, because their laws forbade it. For the Bible, pious hymns and a puritanical way of life were more important to the Boers than the sexual hungers of their young men. They therefore married Hottentot women, quite legally, before a minister. And from these Boer-Hottentot marriages were born the celebrated Rehoboth bastards, who have entered ethnological and genetic history.

The Rehoboth bastards lived until the twentieth century isolated in their own territory. Each family had noted its descent carefully in the family Bible, it was known precisely which ancestors were Boers and which Hottentots. So it was a unique case in which scholars could study in exact detail the formation of a mixed race: which features it preserves from the ancestral races, and what kind of people they have become—an ideal source of study for the geneticist. And there was indeed a scientist who seized this great opportunity—the thirty-four-year-old Eugen Fischer.

Fischer visited the Rehoboth region in 1908, examined the bastards and looked through their family papers. The result was a book, published five years later, entitled *The Rehoboth Bastards and the Problem of Bastardization in Human Life*. In this work Fischer was able to demonstrate that 'race' is not something constant and that the concept of 'racial inheritance' is an absurd myth. He established that only certain features are transmitted, exactly according to the Mendelian laws. And through the new combinations of such features arise a new genetic type and a 'new race'.

Ruth Benedict says: 'Race, according to the geneticists, is an abstraction; it is not the race which pairs and propagates itself.' It is individuals who propagate themselves, it is only because these individuals possess a number of certain characteristics that they are included in a race. 'Hereditary qualities are handed down

through father and mother in the form of certain characteristics; these should not be regarded as drops of ink in water, but as a heap of little balls which are given a new arrangement in every individual.' The arrangement follows definite statistical rules, as Gregor Mendel has demonstrated in his laws of heredity. New characteristics can be formed by mutation, so that one cannot speak of 'pure' and unalterable races. And 'the so-called racial explanation for the differences in human achievements and accomplishments is'—to quote the words of Toynbee—'either silliness or deceit'.

Fischer saw that a really new nation had been born. The half-breeds were not inferior people, as many laymen imagine in their ignorance, they were healthy, strong and prolific, vigorous, energetic and hard-working. They often were more successful in their work than pure-blooded Boers. Culturally as well as physically the Boers and the Hottentots formed an outstandingly good new combination of qualities, European ideas worked well together with African customs. The lay-out of settlements recalled Hottentot kraals, the interiors recalled Boer farmhouses. And as the bastards were compelled for centuries to inter-breed, they all represented the same type; their faces and beards were Boer, but their hair and eyes were Hottentot.

The nine British sailors who in 1790 after the mutiny on the *Bounty* settled on Pitcairn island with women abducted from Tahiti produced another fine type—trustworthy government officials, extremely industrious colonists and physically magnificent human beings. The Pitcairn Islanders have a splendid appearance and strong bodies; on an average they are astonishingly taller and broader than their British and Polynesian forefathers.

Half-breeds of white and Indian blood are more prolific than pure-blooded whites and pure-blooded Indians. The Arabs in the course of the last fifteen hundred years have married women from the most varied African and Asiatic races, creating an Islamic mixed race outstanding for its cultural and political achievements. The Caboclos in Brazil, half-breeds descended from Portuguese fathers and Indian mothers, and the Morenos, descendants of white planters and black slaves, have provided Brazil with its best brains, and countless other examples could be quoted.

Yet at all times there have been races that endeavoured with hectic fanaticism to preserve the purity of their blood. Human history is full of racial theories, racial delusions and racial persecu-

tions. The caste system of the Hindus was originally a racial prohibition. In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance there were laws which judged sexual relations between Christians and Jews, Moors, Turks or Saracens, as 'sodomy' and therefore punishable by death. And of course the segregation of whites and natives in the colonies was a racial segregation.

But that extraordinary phenomenon of our times, racial prejudice, had its roots in the nineteenth century, when, in the years between 1853 and 1857 the French author and diplomat Joseph Arthur Count Gobineau published his four-volume work on *The Inequality of Human Races*. Gobineau invented the concept of the 'Aryan race', by which he understood persons of the white race possessing long skulls and blond hair, a group which, to Gobineau's regret, was hardly anywhere to be found in its pure state. For the Count was of the opinion that humanity owed all its greatest achievements to this race, and that all other races were therefore inferior. Now the concept of Aryans originally referred to an Indo-Iranian caste, and was later used as the name for a family of languages. The long-skulled, blond whites about whom Gobineau was so enthusiastic are neither to be identified with these ancient Aryans nor to be regarded as a pure race themselves. But this was not known in Gobineau's day.

Gobineau believed that all great empires and civilizations had fallen into ruin because they had not preserved the purity of their Aryan blood. If the ruling house of France and the French aristocracy had kept themselves racially pure, then, he claimed, there could have been no French Revolution. And this was really the key to Gobineau's philosophy, he was an aristocrat, through and through. He lived in a restless, rebellious, war-shattered era. He felt it his duty to show the mob of revolutionary 'unwashed plebs' that they were racially inferior and unfitted to govern the country. He divided France into the 'yellow' race of the Alpine type, and the 'black' race of the Mediterranean type. The common people of these two types might very well mix, but the aristocracy never. So Gobineau was merely upholding what is still sacred to most aristocratic classes, the necessity to preserve caste, an avoidance of marriage with a commoner. His theories are the same as those governing the ruling houses of Europe, and so it would be wrong to blame Gobineau for the racial horrors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* released an avalanche which he had quite definitely not foreseen.

He would have remained an obscure exception on the margins of history if a few people had not taken up his ideas and turned them into a philosophy of life.

In America, a follower of Gobineau, Madison Grant, demanded of the government an increase in the number of Nordic immigrants. America already had a race problem in the Negroes, and had her own fanatics, the Ku-Klux-Klan. But Madison Grant's demands created a new racial problem; in the eyes of people who were of the same mind as he was, immigrants from Mediterranean and East Asiatic regions were degraded to second-class members of American society.

In the English and German colonies and in the South Africa of the Boers there had also long been racial discrimination, and there it was simply adopted cold-bloodedly as colonial policy. All this led to a very dangerous pseudo-scientific *mythos* of European and finally, most dangerously, German racial superiority. This last most dangerous form was brought to birth by an Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who can really not be absolved from the accusation that he was the father of all the racial delusions and racial horrors of the twentieth century, for his theories provided Adolf Hitler with the slogans he desired.

Chamberlain was a disciple of Gobineau. An enthusiastic admirer of Wagner, he settled in Germany, lived in Bayreuth, and there married Wagner's daughter Eva. His musical interests were worthy of all respect, and his Germanophile attitudes would not have done any damage if he had not written two books whose ideas found a fateful echo in his adopted land. Chamberlain encountered in Germany many 'Gobineau Societies'. He met the so-called 'Ethno-philosophers', exalted romantics who wished to make their nation into a master-race. The racial dogmas that Chamberlain announced in his two books *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* and *The Aryan Philosophy of Life* fell upon fertile ground in these circles.

Chamberlain declared that all great men had been Germans—not only Goethe, Kant and Wagner, but also Marco Polo, Dante, Michelangelo, Columbus, Louis XIV and even Jesus Christ. Therefore Germany could claim to be the leader of the world. Now there were many Germans who were of Celtic or Slav type, and naturally Chamberlain knew this, because he had read his Gobineau, so in order not to offend these Germans, he included

them in his 'Aryan master-race' that was promised the domination of the whole world.

But he excluded the Jewish inhabitants of Germany, and also those Germans 'who are constantly in the company of Jews'. For in his opinion these people had acquired the 'Jewish spirit' and were therefore no longer 'authentic Aryans'. He did not explain what this had to do with the biological purity of the Aryan race, which was what he wanted to establish. Like many pseudo-scientists, he scrambled together the most varied concepts from biology, sociology and the history of civilization in the most irresponsible and unscientific way. To him an 'Aryan' was not a man belonging to a certain race, class, language-group or culture, but merely anyone who, in Chamberlain's opinion, deserved the honour of the title.

This was an even more confused mish-mash of ideas than Gobineau's. The anthropologists referred to Chamberlain's works as 'the most confused, the most unreasonable conglomeration of empty hypotheses ever published by a theorist of racial purity'. But Kaiser Wilhelm II read Chamberlain's books, had them placed in all libraries and praised them highly, so that many loyal families felt compelled to become acquainted with them. Now the German Kaiser was no anti-semite, he was simply rather flattered by the hymns of praise which Chamberlain sang to the 'master-race'. But there were anti-semites in Germany as in all other countries, and Chamberlain's *Aryan philosophy of Life* brought more grist to their mills. Anti-semitism and similar irrational attitudes—anti-Germanism in Slav countries, anti-Slavism in Germanic countries, the hatred of the Armenians in Turkey, the hatred of Negroes in America and South Africa, the anti-Mohammedanism among the Hindus and the anti-Hinduism in Pakistan—all these vague, uncontrolled resentments are explosive stuff. A spark can ignite archaic passions, awaken mob violence and precipitate whole racial groups into panic-stricken terror which, once roused, is difficult to subdue.

Five years after Chamberlain's death the most rigid, momentous racial laws were passed that have ever been known in modern times. Millions of people were to be sacrificed to them. The programs of the Hitler era, those execrable parades of racial delusion, showed most clearly how sophistical doctrines of racial purity are. Jewish people do not belong to a definite, exactly determined and fixed race, but are the results of a mixing of the most varied

Eurasiatic tribes and peoples, just as are the members of most European and Near Eastern nations. There are blond- and dark-haired, long- and round-skulled, blue- and brown-eyed Jews as well as Germans, French, English, Italians and North Africans possessing these very features. Certainly the descendants of that original Jewish race which was once driven out of Palestine by the Romans emigrated to Europe over the last fifteen hundred to two thousand years; but they formed no racial, only a religious and cultural unity. And in fact, everywhere that Rome came to power, countless masses of transplanted Asians and Africans became part of the European population. As everywhere else in the world, in Europe all manner of peoples and races and tribes were mixed together.

Jews, as defined by every serious scientist, are people of the white race who cultivate a particular historical and religious tradition, or whose ancestors did so. The reason why this race fell a victim to racialism is an object for historical research, and outside the scope of this book. One thing, however, may be stated here: wherever a social or religious minority tries to improve its conditions of living and to attain the same social standing as the rest of the community, it encounters the bitterest resistance from the great majority and arouses their animosity. Ruth Benedict mentions another reason which is closely related to the first: 'Racialism, which screams in one ear that a certain race is the heir of all time, yells in the other ear the name of some other race which it must wipe out.'

The racial delusions of the Hitler period affected yet another racial group, but this victim fell in quite different circumstances. Its forefathers lived probably one and a half thousand years ago in North-West India. There we still find tribes like the Jat, who still use the Punjab language, and other tribes like the Kafirs who use the Paishacha dialects; all these belong to the Indo-European languages. But the above-mentioned tribes, like the majority of mountain dwellers in the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier regions, were not originally Indo-Europeans, but were related to those ancient Indians which we call, rather roughly, Dravidas. Some of them recall the Munda tribes of Central India, others the Further Indian Mon-Khmer; here, as almost everywhere in India, the most varied races and types were mingled together, who were later influenced by Indo-Iranian conquerors.

The Hindus found the North-West tribes rather sinister.

Paishacha is a Sanskrit word, meaning 'friend' or 'demon'. One must assume that the mountain peoples had preserved certain cults which the Hindus were unfamiliar with and which appeared to them to be magical. Perhaps the Indian ruling caste disliked also the restless wandering life of the Paishacha and Jat, their horse-dealing, their habit of peddling their wares, their passion for music and dancing. At any rate, they were placed in the lowest caste and given the name Dom, from which probably derives the word Rom which these people apply to themselves to-day.

The Indian Dom or Rom found more sympathy with the Persian Sassanid rulers. In the fifth century AD King Bahram-Gor brought some twelve thousand musicians and dancers from North-West India to Persia, where they were called Luri. Other peoples of the same origin were referred to by the Islamic authors in Mesopotamia and Syria as Zott. They were considered to be good warriors, fishermen and camel-breeders, but above all they were outstanding singers, dancers and masters of the oboe and the drums. We do not know why since the ninth century they have poured in waves over the whole of the Near East, why they suddenly appeared in Armenia, Egypt and the Bosphorus region. The profounder causes of racial migrations indeed are still quite unknown to us. In any case, the Franciscan Simon Simeon encountered them on Crete in 1322. Twenty-four years later they appeared on Corfu. And in 1348 the Serbian king, Stefan Dushan, presented several of these ancient Indians to a monastery—several gypsy families.

Whole generations of scholars have busied themselves since the beginning of the eighteenth century with the study of the migrations and language of the Romanies, Zigeuners or gypsies. We know since 1844, through the researches of the Italian Predari, the Frenchman Bataillard and the German Pott, that their original home was in the North-West of India. Yet the European public was slow to assimilate this knowledge. Because many gypsies had reached Spain and Western Europe by way of Egypt, in Spain they were called Egipcianos and in England gypsies. Others reached Central Europe by way of the Balkans and Bohemia, and so the French called them *bohémiens*. In certain fearful minds they aroused memories of Tartar attacks, so Scandinavians called them Tattare and in Northern Germany they were known as Tater. Old Dutch and Swiss authors simply call them heathens—'Heiden, Heidens or Heidenen'.

The name Zigeuner is very ancient and was used by Greek or Latin-writing medieval chroniclers in the forms *Atsinkanos*, *Secani* or *Cingari*. But the gypsies themselves never used this name. Besides the well-known name *Rom* they also used the terms *Sinde* (people from India), *Manush* (people) or *Kale* (dark folk). In the fifteenth century gypsy tribes and gypsy families wandered in their wagons across the whole of Europe; they made music on the outskirts of villages and towns, were skilful blacksmiths and coppersmiths, menders of kettles, makers of nets and wood-carvers, sometimes dealt in cattle, told fortunes and added to the gaiety of nations by their music and exhilarating dances.

They found favour with many princes. The German emperor Siegmund gave them safe-conducts and supported them; they were always sent for when one needed a horse, or music, and attempts were made to make them settle down, for the Renaissance was a friendly, tolerant era, when people lived and let live. Yet soon afterwards—in that dark era defaced by bigotry, the Inquisition and the burning of witches—the weather turned around for the gypsies as well as for others. A pitiless persecution of the gypsies began which lasted until the eighteenth century. In only a few states, for example Hungary and Russia, were they regarded as human beings with the same rights as other inhabitants. Here they found a new home. In France and England, too, they were not too badly treated. So a typical gypsy folklore was able to evolve in Scotland and in southern France. The gypsy pilgrimages to *Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer* in the *Camargue* remain to-day one of the much-admired high points in the lives of this nomadic race.

On many people *la Bohème*—the gypsy life—exercised such a fascination that they joined the nomad tribes. Not only eccentric romantics were among their number, but also notorious tramps and ne'er-do-wells. Here is one of the reasons for the dubious reputation gypsies have in certain circles; gypsy words entered into European thieves' cant, and the original habits, customs and ceremonies of the wandering Zigeuners were sometimes so corrupted by the rag-tag and bobtail of Europe that the old gypsy life often became unrecognizable. The authorities did not like the gypsies, who often were forced to steal here a hen, there a loaf of bread in regions where they were forbidden to peddle their own wares.

In the nineteenth century this mysterious race from India suddenly acquired great interest for researchers into the customs of the peoples. Their life, their habits, their religion were all described. It

was seen that they were by no means lawless half-savages, they obeyed rigorous laws, had their own form of justice and at the yearly autumn gathering of the tribes passed judgement on all who had offended against the traditional order of their life. Especially interesting did the scholars find the gypsy matriarchal form of society, which the nomads had brought from India. The wife took the husband into her clan, gave him a tent, a wagon and a horse; and the Phuri Dai, the tribal mother, stood next to the chief as guardian of morals and customs.

Great works on the gypsies have been written, books of inestimable value that profoundly illuminate the ways of this mysterious nomad folk, and written by authors who always tried to gain the sympathy of their readers for the gypsy people. Yet the old prejudices remained. People accused the gypsies of all kinds of witchcraft, referred to them as notorious child-stealers or even as cannibals, pursued them with their hate and desired their extermination. When the racial delusions of modern times broke out, it was as if great works had never been written and humanitarian deeds never performed. In totalitarian Europe the gypsies were branded as 'racially undesirable elements', they were attacked and persecuted and murdered as they were in those dark ages when they were thrown into prison or led to the gallows.

With the end of the Hitler régime racial prejudice by no means disappeared from the world. It can still be observed—in lands where coloured minorities or exploited masses struggle for their rights, in colonies where the greater part of the population strives for freedom and independence, in states where a small ruling-class of whites wishes to prevent the emancipation of the natives. Now as always there are laws demoting other races to the rank of second-rate human beings, and people who accuse certain human races of being biologically and intellectually inferior.

The biologists have long known that our intellectual and cultural attainments have nothing to do with racial heredity. Ancient Indian, oriental and Mongolian nations created great civilizations long before the whites did. People of Semitic and Hamitic origin and language were already playing a leading role in the western world before the Indo-Europeans ever entered into history. American Indians and Negroes founded empires and evolved arts which were equal to, and often better than our own. It is immaterial to the history of mankind what races are the upholders of progress and civilization.

'Race' is a zoological concept, it classifies men, but does not judge them. The leading nations have never willingly accepted this fact. They always held the wishful-thinking, Utopian belief that they and they alone were the upholders of culture and progress. To-day, when this delusion has suffered so many crashing defeats, it rages more than ever. Racial prejudice, that dangerous, age-old plaything of politics and policy, has made the emancipation of the coloured peoples the great dilemma of the twentieth century. Coloured statesmen, bishops, poets, artists and philosophers prove to the white world every day that the present state of things cannot go on.

The coloured front

... the turning-point in a long sequence of events.

Clement Attlee on the Indian Declaration of Independence, 1947

THE HISTORY OF THE discovery of races is, as we have learnt, also a history of conquests and colonial states. The actors in this thousands-upon-thousands-of-years-long drama were not only eagerly-questing scientists, calm scholars and gifted thinkers, but also ancient and modern conquistadores. All beings have a *horror vacui*, an urge to thrust forward into apparently empty space until it has been mastered, settled and firmly controlled. Among human beings this urge is especially strong, and it was the driving force behind all the great achievements in exploration. It led to our knowledge of the geography of our earth, of its many different inhabitants and of the characteristics of the most various peoples and civilizations. Yet man has never been content simply to explore unknown realms and to describe their wonders and peculiarities in the annals of discovery. He forced his own rule upon the lands, peoples and civilizations he discovered, and seized possession of them.

As we have read, there were settlements, trade and military colonies even in remote antiquity. But it was not until modern times that a certain group of nations began to divide the world up among themselves—the Europeans. This colonizing process was interrupted for the first time when in 1776 the United States and a few decades later the Central and South American lands freed

themselves from European domination. Yet here it was not the natives who gained independence, but the white colonists. Until the beginning of the twentieth century history knew only two examples of states being founded by coloured peoples on territories that had formerly been in European possession. In both cases the founders were not the original inhabitants, but descendants of slaves brought there by the white man. These two examples are Haiti and Liberia.

On Haiti, where white planters treated the coloured people especially severely and described them as 'a debased human species', following the French Revolution a great revolt broke out under the 'black Napoleon', the erstwhile Negro slave Pierre Baptiste Toussaint L'Ouverture. In fact it failed, for the French revolutionaries did not extend their ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity to embrace the Negroes of Haiti, but Napoleon, cut off from his overseas possessions by events in the continent of Europe, finally had to give up the island. The former slaves on the sugar-plantations now took over the government of Haiti. All kinds of troubles ensued—struggles for power and revolts, various Negro empires and mulatto republics were set up in the formerly Spanish and French parts of the island. Gradually in the course of the nineteenth century the Republic of Haiti came into being, under the leadership of French-speaking Negroes, but it comprised only the western part of Haiti. East Haiti, inhabited by Spanish-speaking half-breeds, returned as the Dominican Republic into the Ibero-American cultural group.

The case of Liberia is an exception. This West African Negro republic owes its existence to the initiative of a philanthropic American who in 1816 founded a Colonization Society and six years later purchased a strip of the African coast in order to facilitate the return of North American Negroes to their native continent. In 1847 Liberia drew up a Declaration of Independence on the lines of the United States' Declaration, and in the future the USA extended a protective hand over the republic. Of the one and a half million inhabitants in fact only about four per cent are descendants of Negroes who returned from the States. For the North American Negro has long felt himself to be an American and not an African.

In the last forty years more than twenty lands with a total population of about six hundred and twenty million souls have freed themselves from colonial domination. If one includes the Chinese,

the Japanese and the other races who were always able to retain their independence, the number of independent 'coloured' people rises to one and a quarter thousand millions (1,250,000,000), which is more than half the population of the globe. Some of the emancipated states developed so rapidly that they now belong to the great powers of the world. This is a completely new and surprising development which even fifty years ago would have been believed impossible. The dynamic expansion of the coloured peoples is one of the greatest or perhaps even the greatest event in modern times.

Many commentators have said that, with all the help given to coloured races by Europe, the time was ripe for them to 'stand on their own feet'. But this is sheer wishful-thinking by whites who do not like to face unpleasant facts. Almost everywhere the emancipation of the coloured peoples was achieved without European help and only after vigorous intellectual or indeed physical struggles with colonial authorities. From a simple economic and political point of view it can hardly be admitted that Europe gave up even one of her territories overseas with willing grace, after having discovered and conquered it, fought for it, invested capital in it and settled it with pioneers of every kind. Europe was in fact compelled by force of circumstances to give up her overseas territories one by one, and not always with good grace, as might be expected.

Of course coloured peoples learnt a great deal from white civilization. Coloured intellectuals and technicians were educated at European or North American universities; coloured poets, philosophers, clergymen, scientists and politicians were often largely influenced by their white counterparts. But this adoption of a foreign culture is nothing new in the history of mankind. Babylonians and Assyrians, once nomadic Bedouin, built up their civilization, as we have seen, on Sumerian foundations. The Hellenes were influenced by the ancient Mediterranean civilizations in the region of the Aegæan. The Central European at the time of the great migrations learnt from the Romans; the Mongols in the days of the Great Khans learnt from the Chinese. And our mathematicians, doctors and natural scientists in the Middle Ages could have done nothing without Arab scholarship.

'The adaptability of human nature,' wrote Ruth Benedict, 'was the ground from which human progress grew, into which it struck its roots and took its nourishment.' The world of 1900 was a white

man's world, so all peoples who strove for emancipation had to adapt themselves to this world, to absorb it and make bold attempts to incorporate it with their own traditions. And at the beginning how difficult this was made for coloured intellectuals! There are many literary testimonials to this fact.

Yet it is incontestable that the whites have helped the coloured peoples in this respect. But what price did the coloured peoples pay for this help? The English anthropologist Louis Seymour Bazelt Leakey, a scholar born in Kenya, who to-day is the best authority on East African pre-history and the East African peoples, wrote, after the outbreak of the Mau-Mau revolt, about the Kikuyu tribe, that once so peaceful and modest race of forest farmers that suddenly, in 1949, called into being a secret society whose aims were 'the mass murder of the enemy, the white man'. Were the Kikuyu who took the Mau-Mau oath uncivilized 'savages'? Were they 'returning to the Stone Age', as many fanciful journalists asserted in melodramatic reports? Jomo Kenyatta, the president of the forbidden Kenya African Union, was an intellectual educated in Europe and married a white woman. This is how Leakey describes the conditions in which the Mau-Mau arose:

'As long as the tribal customs were respected, possessions were safe. But with the decline of the old order after the appearance of the Europeans, things became different. To-day a young man feels that in order to impress a girl he must dress in fine European suits, must own a bicycle with a trailer in order that he may invite his girl friend to an excursion, and so on. As he often does not earn enough to allow himself such displays, the temptation to steal is considerably greater. The decline of the old ways can be seen in the desire for strong drink which is very common among the young people nowadays. And since people have begun abandoning the old laws and customs, cases of stabbing have been coming before the courts.' In short, European vices have led to an increasing corruption of native social life.

Leakey grew up among the Kikuyu as a missionary's son; so his judgment has a special weight of authority. Honesty compels him to admit that the white man did not bring only dissatisfaction, dishonesty and evil behaviour to Kenya; they improved hygienic standards, banished hunger, and worked for the appeasement of enemy tribes. Though these problems have been solved, others have taken their place. The Kikuyu to-day is exposed to the same

merciless struggle for existence as besets the European. And he cannot be expected not to blame the European for this development. They were highly-educated, civilized Kikuyu who formed the Kikuyu Central Association, the fore-runner of the Mau-Mau, and announced in their manifesto: 'First our land was taken away from us, and now they are laying hands on our most sacred customs. What will they try to steal from us next?'

Such cries ring out to-day not only in Kenya. They ring out in Algeria, in Equatorial Africa, in Madagascar. They ring out in the Near East and the Far East. They ring out from the Negroes in the Antilles as well as from the Negroes in the slums of South African cities, in the port of Singapore as in the jungles of New Guinea. With the emancipation of the coloured peoples an avalanche has been set in motion which cannot now be stopped. This process is gaining speed because the coloured races—independent of political beliefs—demonstrate an astounding solidarity.

While mankind is preparing to extend its exploratory activities into the realms of outer space, the objects of former voyages of discovery, the coloured peoples, are calling to account their discoverers, conquerors, colonizers and exploiters. 'Western man,' says Richard Wright in his book *Black Power*, 'has got it into his head that his handling of coloured peoples is just and above all criticism. Only *his* way of life is perfect. Only *he* has the God-given right to determine and guide the evolution of mankind as he thinks fit. He is convinced that his mere presence on this earth is a great blessing for those less fortunate than himself. He is not willing to make real concessions in the name of justice and peace and freedom.' And it is this conception the white man has of himself and which he so carefully built up and preserved for half a millennium that the 'coloured front' has challenged outspokenly and unmistakably.

What will happen next? Human history has showed us that at all times whole groups of nations, whole civilizations and classes of society have died out and other nations, civilizations and classes come to take their place. The phrase 'Decline of the West' has been haunting the brains of pessimist philosophers ever since Spengler's day. But however crippled the West may be, it still has a chance overseas. To quote Richard Wright's words: 'The West has one last chance, that is, its ideals must fundamentally be valid for all men.' The eternal human urge to explore the unknown drove

explorers to other lands and other peoples—but all too often this urge was linked with the eternal human urge to acquire wealth. To-day, when the great explorer nations are gradually retreating to base, the time has come to take stock.

It will be a very unpleasant and uncomfortable stock-taking. Is Wright correct when he says that the great decline of the west is due to its own stupidity, to moral idiocy and insane race-prejudice? Is the South African Negro newspaper *Imvo Za Ba Ntsundo* right when it says that 'the white man has never known how to explain to us the meaning of this world'? Or will the West, for the first time in the history of mankind, attempt to put into practice his ideas of freedom and justice, his high-flown ethical concepts and his fine plea that we should love our neighbours as ourselves? And will he apply these principles to all peoples, no matter of what race, creed or colour?

If he did, then our present era would not just be the end of a long period of discovery, conquest and colonization, but also a new beginning—a real turning-point in the history of the human race.

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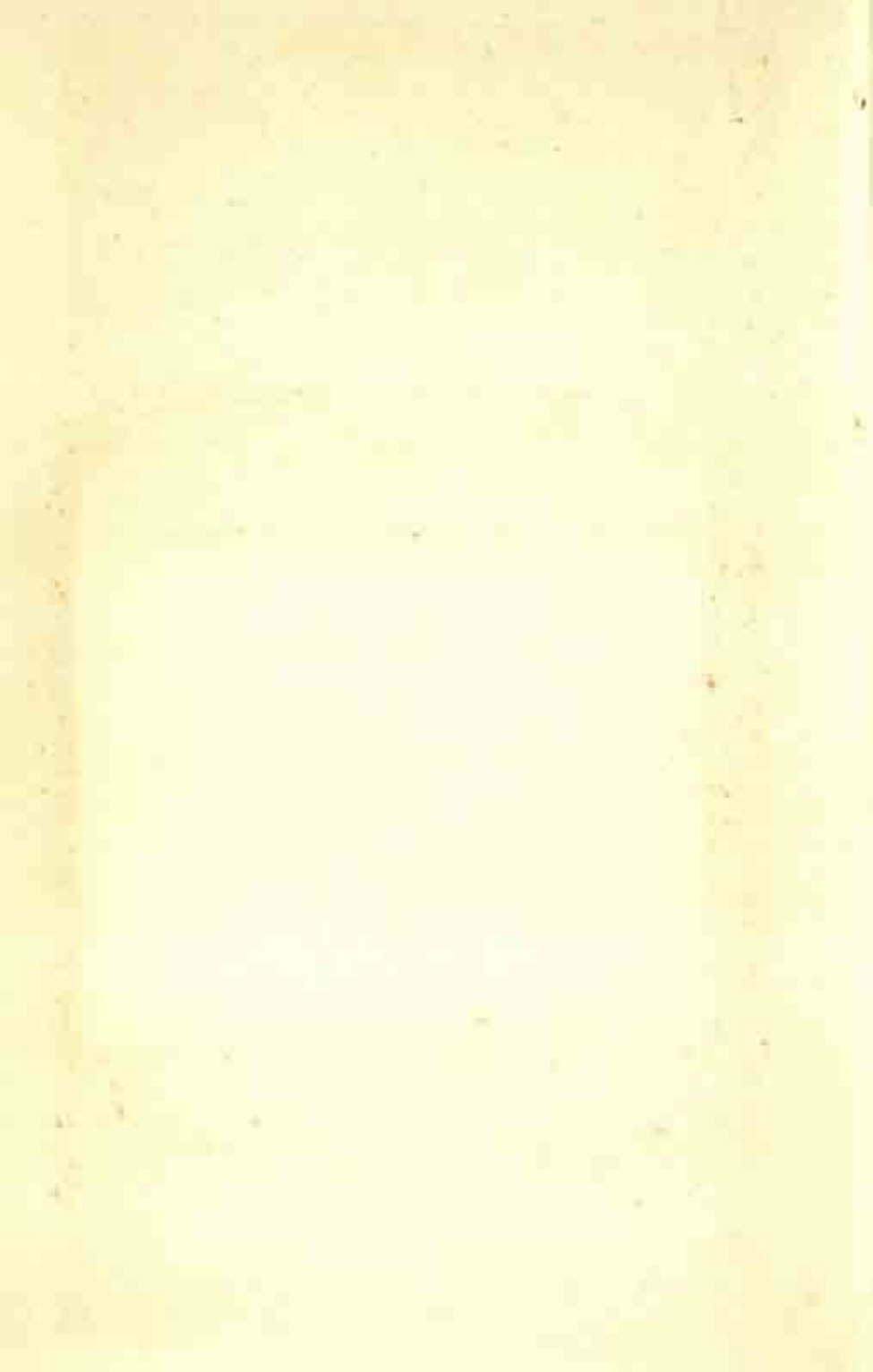
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