

**LIFE IN ANCIENT BRITAIN, A SURVEY  
OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF  
ENGLAND FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO  
THE ROMAN CONQUEST**

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Life in ancient Britain, a survey of the social and economic development of the people of England from earliest times to the Roman conquest by Norman Ault

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Engraved bronze mirror-back, Late Keltic.  
Found at Desborough, Northants [1].

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PEOPLE OF ENGLAND FROM EARLIEST  
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BY

NORMAN AULT

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## INTRODUCTION

THE idea that the everyday life of the people should be the chief concern of the historian has been familiar since the work of J. R. Green. As yet, however, little or no attempt has been made to apply this principle to what are known as "prehistoric" times. But in the development of the institutions, usages and ideas which constitute civilisation, the division between historic and prehistoric does not exist. Many of the social and economic problems of our own day—as, for example, the specialisation of industry, the activities of the middleman, and the functions of money—can best be understood if first studied, not in their present baffling intricacies, but in the simpler yet quite highly developed form which they had already reached in this country long before Caesar's invasion; and by tracing them back to their origins and ultimate causes in the increasing complexity of the earlier social life. Hence of recent years there has been a growing demand that the study of history should begin at the beginning, and should be based on at least a general knowledge of the considerable attainment of this earlier civilisation; for only thus is it possible to realise the history of man as a living, developing, organic whole. Yet the illuminating discoveries of recent archaeological and anthropological

research remain for the most part in scattered reports and papers or in ponderous volumes accessible only to experts; and there is no single book which presents an up-to-date survey of the whole field of the social and economic life of Ancient Britain.

The present volume is an attempt to supply this lack, and to give a succinct, scientifically reliable and, at the same time, readable account of the origins of our civilisation—an account which, it is hoped, may not only be useful for the upper forms of Schools and, as an introductory study, to Teachers and University Students, but may also interest the general reader. And perhaps some who are tempted to despair of the future of civilisation may find in the spectacle of the sure though slow development of social achievement through the storms and stress of a hundred thousand years, hope renewed, and the promise of the ultimate dawn of an ideal social order.

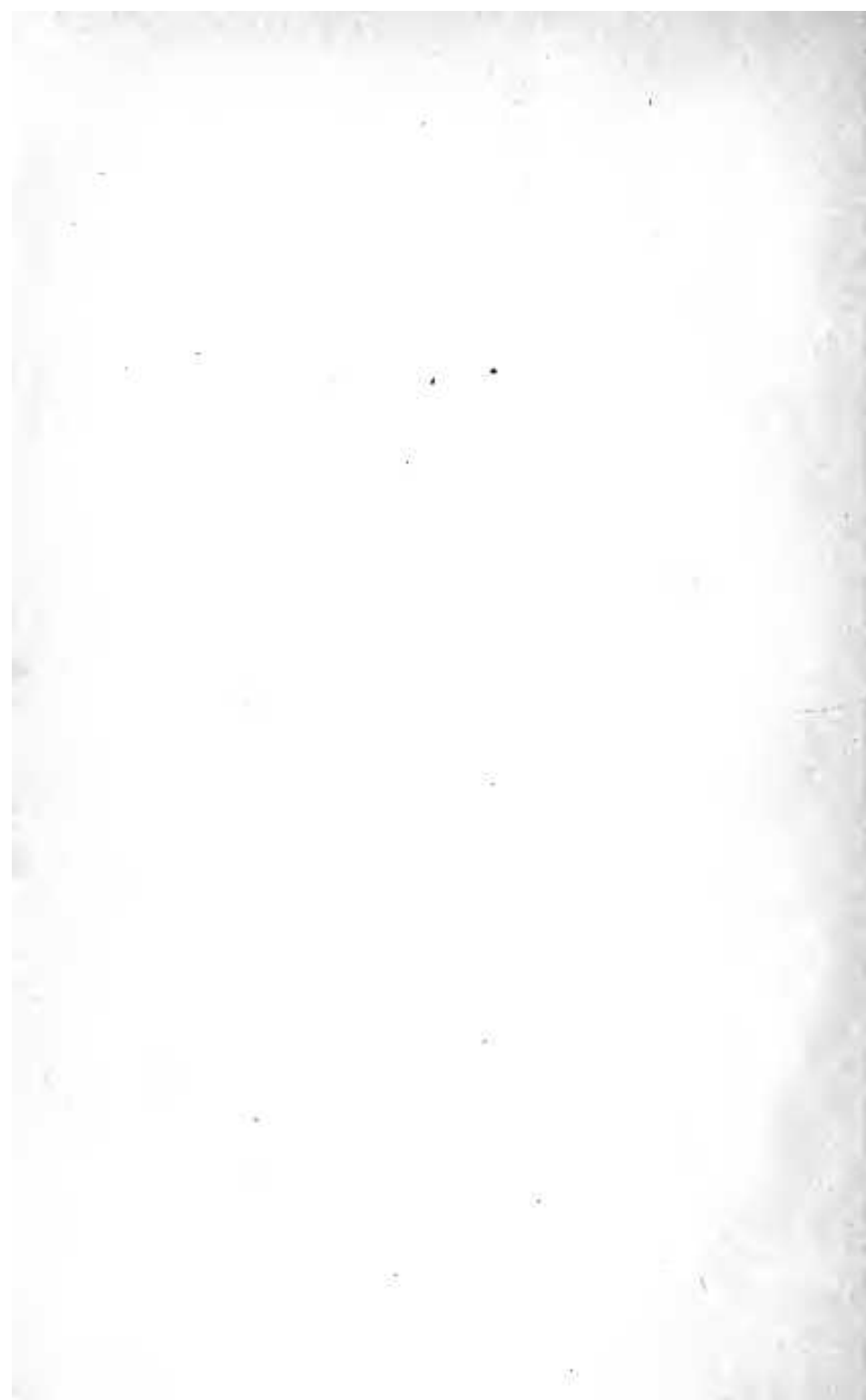
I cannot leave unacknowledged my great debt to Mr. H. Balfour, Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford; and Mr. R. A. Smith, of the British Museum; for the assistance they have given me from the very outset in the preparation of this book. I must also express my gratitude for many valuable criticisms and suggestions, to Dr. R. R. Marett, Reader in Social Anthropology, Oxford; Prof. A. C. Haddon, Lecturer in Anthropology, Cambridge; Prof. A. Thomson, of the University Museum, Oxford; and Mr. A. Bulleid and Mr. H. St. George Gray, the excavators of Glastonbury Lake-village—all of whom have read in manuscript or proof portions of the book; and also to Mr. E. T. Leeds, of the



Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, who has gone through the whole in proof.

At least twenty of the antiquities which appear in the illustrations to the text have never before been depicted; and for the permission which has enabled me to make these and the other drawings in this book, my thanks are due as follows: to the Director of the British Museum, as regards Figs. 3-5, 6 *c*, 9 *b*, *d*, 10 *a*, *b*, *d*, 11 *a-g*, 12 *a-c*, *e*, *f*, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22 *e*, *f*, 24 *a*, *b*, 25 *d*, 26, 27 *a*, *c-e* 2, *g*, *i*, 28, 29 *a*, *b*, 30 *a-g*, *k*, 31-33, 35-40, 48, 49, 50 *a-c*, *e*; to Prof. A. Thomson—Figs. 1, 7, 8; to the Curators of the following museums: Pitt Rivers, Oxford—Figs. 2, 6 *a*, *b*, 9 *a*, 10 *c*, *e*, 11 *h*, 22 *d*, 25 *a-c*; Ashmolean, Oxford—Figs. 12 *d*, *g*, 41 *a*, 43 *b*; and Northampton—Figs. 41 *b*, *c*, 43 *c*, 45 *a*, *b*, and the Frontispiece; to Prof. W. J. Sollas—Fig. 9 *e*; to Dr. R. Munro—Fig. 14; to Messrs. Bulleid and Gray—Figs. 41 *e-g*, 42, 43 *a*, 44, 45 *e-h*, 46, 47, 50 *d*; to Sir A. J. Evans—Figs. 27 *h*, 29 *c*; to the Society of Antiquaries of London—Figs. 18, 19, 22 *a-c*, 24 *c-e*, 27 *b*, *f*, 30 *c*, *h-j*, 34, 40 *a*, *d*, *e*, 41 *d*; and to the Royal Archaeological Institute with regard to Fig. 40 *b*, *c*.

N. A.



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