

**DAWN OF ART IN THE
ANCIENT WORLD: AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SKETCH**

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Dawn of Art in the Ancient World: An Archaeological Sketch by William Martin Conway

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WILLIAM MARTIN CONWAY

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An Archaeological Sketch

BY

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P R E F A C E

THE kernel of the following book is the substance of three lectures, delivered at the Royal Institution in January 1891. These have been entirely rewritten and approximately doubled in length; but, even in their revised state, they are not to be regarded as forming a handbook, however brief, of the large subject with which they deal. They are, and are intended to be, of a personal character. They present, not a simple and precise survey of known facts with regard to the beginnings of art and civilisation in the ancient world, but rather an account of the deductions, impressions, hardy generalisations, and even sometimes (if you will) of the guesses of an individual mind in the presence of those facts.

Discovery advances apace. Since these sheets have been printed off, important papers have been read at the Oriental Congress, to which reference might have been made in the text. Moreover, Mr. Flinders Petrie's valuable *Notes on the Antiquities of*

Mykenae have appeared in the belated twelfth volume of the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. They are in substantial agreement with my own conclusions, but they contain a more accurate approximation to the dates of the different *Ægean* remains than has before been arrived at. The following passage (p. 204) is too important not to be quoted :—'We have been led to place the flourishing period of pre-Hellenic (*Ægean*) art to about 1500 or 1400 B.C., when intercourse with Egypt was common. The great treasury tombs probably range from this time to 1200, when the Vaphio tomb was built. At about 1150 the graves were made in the circle at Mykenae, and decadence had already set in. From 1100 to 800 B.C., or until the art was crushed by the Dorian migration, the prevalent decorations were impressed glass; and to this age belong the beehive tomb of Menidi and the private tombs of Mykenae, Spata, and Nauplia. The range of this civilisation was from the north of Europe down to Egypt, not only by distant trade, but by familiar intercourse.'

I regret that I did not read Mr. Frazer's valuable work, *The Golden Bough*, till these sheets had been

printed off; otherwise I should have referred to the interesting speculations as to the origin and doctrine of Totemism which he there records or suggests. The book, however, is one which no student of the beginnings of art and civilisation can afford to neglect.

I have reprinted, as the last chapter of this book, an article on the 'Cats of Ancient Egypt,' which originally appeared in the *English Illustrated Magazine*. It amplifies in some respects one or more of the subjects referred to or discussed in the earlier chapters.

The address on the *Succession of Ideals*, printed as introductory chapter to this volume, was originally intended to perform such a function; but it was to have been followed by a series of chapters dealing in turn with the ideals of all the great art-epochs of the world. Other points of view have, however, in the meantime proved more attractive, and that scheme has been abandoned. The address, as it now stands, is not in perfect harmony with the chapters that follow, but I have preferred to print it as it was written rather than to meddle with the expression of

an idea which belongs more to my memory than to my present thoughts.

In conclusion, I have to thank my friend, Mr. R. Weir Schultz, whose good work on the ancient and Byzantine architecture of Greece is so well known, for employing some of his leisure time in drawing for me all except one of the illustrations to this book.

W. M. C.

SCHEVENINGEN,
September, 1891.

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