

**THE BEGINNING AND
THE END OF MAN
(INCOMPLETE); PP. 1-37**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649239986

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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E N D O F M A N .

BY LYSANDER S. RICHARDS.

PRICE FIFTEEN CENTS.

QUINCY:
PRINTED AT THE PATRIOT OFFICE.
1874.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF MAN.

THE origin of man and his destiny is constantly agitating the brain of mortals, and to many this enquiry is simply nonsense. The child cares nothing for his great grandfather's ancestry, and whether the race dates back fifty or two thousand years it matters not to him, since his amusements are not disturbed. The cow eats grass and chews her cud, unmindful of the past and indifferent about the future. Plenty to eat and drink, and plenty of sleep, is the sum of its requirements, and the apparent completion of her happiness. Montaigne says of Pyrrho, the philosopher, that being one day in a boat, in a very great tempest, he showed to those he saw the most affrighted about him and encouraged them by the example of a hog that was there, nothing at all concerned at the storm. Shall we, then, dare to say that this advantage of reason, of which we so much boast, and upon the account of which we think ourselves masters and emperors over all other creatures, was given us for a torment?

To what end serves the knowledge of things if it renders us more unmanly; if with it we lose the tranquillity and repose we should enjoy without it, and if it puts us into a worse condition than Pyrrho's hog? And yet, with all the contentment and undisturbed happiness of this dirty creature, who of us would care to be a hog or a cow, instead of men and women endowed with reason

and a full-grown intellect? If "ignorance is bliss," and it is "folly to be wise," mind is a burden and reason a false creation; but as God, or the universe, makes no mistakes, the child is ever puzzling the parent with questions, and is satisfied simply until a new one suggests itself. Nor do these inquiries cease at manhood or womanhood. The happiness of the cow or pig must be very moderate, confined to one faculty, while with man, just in proportion to the development of his intellect his faculties increase, his happiness becomes more intense and his miseries in the same ratio. "The kingdom of heaven is within," and it is for us alone to make our own heaven or hell. When the inquiries of man cease, his mind becomes dwarfed, and his existence here valueless. Our inquiries must be for something more than that which we already know, if the answer lies beyond actual demonstration or proof, reason from analogy.

During the early pre-historic age of man it was sufficient for him to know his birthplace, and that he was born of woman; farther than that the past excited no curiosity or inquiry. Time rolled on, and after the lapse of ages his intellect expands, develops; he studies cause and effect, and naturally asks himself, "Whither am I going, and from whence did I or my ancestors come?" The problem he fails to solve. Moses is born a genius; he gains the ears of the people, and they accept him as their oracle. He invents the story of the creation and places Adam at the head of the race. This answered the question of their origin, and their minds were not further troubled. This story was recorded and became a part of our history. Ages passed, and Moses's record was unquestioned. At last some daring fellow inquires, "If Adam and Eve were the first, where did the woman in the land of Nod come from, whom Cain, their son, sought, and with whom he became joined in matrimony?" This was unanswerable, like the story of the negro who

asked his companion, "How Adam was made, if he was the first man?" "Why, don't you know?" replied his companion; "God made him out of clay. He took a bit and made his trunk, then a head, then legs, arms, etc., and stuck them together and put them up against a fence to dry." "Ah!" rejoins the negro, "who made de fence?" For this unexpected question the companion had made no more provision than did Moses for the question of the ancestry of Cain's wife.

The biblical story, then, of the beginning or origin of man is believed by all liberal thinkers to have originated in the brain of Moses, serving for ages to satisfy the masses upon the question of their origin. But as civilization advanced, and the thinker had outgrown the story, he looks about, and through the searching, investigating mind of the geologist and anthropologist finds that six thousand years is but a drop in the bucket compared to the actual existence of man upon this planet. If the record or story of Moses is the oldest written history extant, our progenitors in the pre-historic age left a record more durable and truthful of their existence carved upon the bones of animals known to have flourished in that age. Enter the forest; we pass a bird's nest forsaken by its inhabitant; no bird is seen, but that the nest was the work of the feathered tribe there is no question. We stumble over an ant's nest, run our toes into a squirrel-hole, or face a hornet's nest all forsaken, not an occupant seen; yet these furnish sufficient evidence of their former presence, for by their works we know them.

Prof. Niles tells the story of a couple of adventurers attempting some years ago the ascent of one of the mountains of Sierra Nevada. They were cautioned by the natives not to make the attempt, as no man had ever succeeded in reaching the summit. This encouraged them, and taking a United States flag, up they journeyed, and through their daring and persisting efforts gained the

summit; the flag unfurled they waved it to the breeze; and while congratulating themselves as the first men who reached this mountain-top, one of them perchance, looked behind, and, behold! to their great surprise there lay upon the rock a New Testament, a pack of cards and a rum-bottle! Their glory was lost, for these furnished unquestionable evidence of the presence of man here before. Visit other grounds, make excavations, observe; a piece of quartz attracts your notice, it possesses shape, and looks like an instrument shaped by man — it is an arrow-head; dig deeper and you find another arrow-head made of flint, and by its side a stone hatchet; these discoveries furnish sufficient evidence of the existence of man at the time of these earth deposits containing said implements, and if the geologist, through his investigation is able to inform us the comparative age of this strata containing these deposits, the antiquity of man in that region can, in a measure, be ascertained. That these implements are identical with man there is not much question; for though a monkey exhibits a fair amount of reason when, to crack a nut, he takes up into a tree a stone and lets it fall thereon, and some birds the same when, to crack the shell of a shell-fish, carry it high up in the air, and lets it fall upon the ground and feeds upon the meat; yet no implements are shaped, and none known to be made by any animal aside from man.

In the Valley of the Somme there has been discovered, in the excavations, fossils of the mammoth and woolly rhinoceros, both extinct, the elephant, hyena, tiger, hippopotamus and the cave-bear. Most of them long ago became extinct in Europe. These animals must have roamed over France, nothing less, says Sir Charles Lyell, than 100,000 years ago. If we can discover associated with these fossils found in the deep excavations the remains of the works of man, we shall establish the fact that his existence on this planet must have extended

back to that period at least. His remains or bones we fail to find associated with said fossils. In fact it is very rare that they are found anywhere fossilized; instead, however, of finding his remains, his works indicating his presence have been discovered. Arrow-heads, knives made of flint, other stone implements, spear-heads, hatchets, poniards, &c., &c., were found associated with the bones of said extinct animals. Not only were these implements discovered, but also with them bones, with finely executed figures of animals flourishing at the time engraved thereon. At this period man probably dwelt in caves and lived by hunting, like the wild Indians of to-day. He brought the game into his cave, devoured it, and possessing in that early day the art inherent in man, displayed it at his leisure in cutting upon the bones the figures above described.

We have found that the antiquity of man dates back at least 100,000 years; we look still further and find that at or near Vezeres, stone implements have been found, of various shapes, clearly indicating the presence of man. The geological strata in which these implements were imbedded is known as the Pliocene strata—rocks that are estimated by most geologists to have been deposited at least a million of years ago. 100,000 years is, then, in reality but one-tenth of the probable existence of man upon our planet. But suppose our ancestry dates back to the Pliocene epoch, a million of years, is that the beginning of man? Science has been able to trace him no farther from the work he has left, and yet, noting the very gradual progress of the race since, it is reasonable to suppose that a great many years—aye, ages—must have elapsed previous to the epoch mentioned, ere it could have arrived at that stage in art to enable the race to manufacture implements of stone with sufficient distinctness to indicate to their posterity, a million of years distant, their presence upon the planet.