

JOHN ASHTON

CURIOUS
CREATURES IN
ZOOLOGY

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PREFACE

“Travellers see strange things,” more especially when their writing about, or delineation of, them is not put under the microscope of modern scientific examination. Our ancestors were content with what was given them, and being, as a rule, a stay-at-home race, they could not confute the stories they read in books. That age of faith must have had its comforts, for no man could deny the truth of what he was told. But now that modern travel has subdued the globe, and inquisitive strangers have poked their noses into every portion of the world, “the old order changeth, giving place to new,” and, gradually, the old stories are forgotten.

It is to rescue some of them from the oblivion into which they were fast falling, that I have written, or compiled, this book. I say compiled it, for I am fonder of letting old authors tell their stories in their old-fashioned language, than to paraphrase it, and usurp the credit of their writings, as is too much the mode now-a-days.

It is not given to every one to be able to consult the old Naturalists; and, besides, most of them are written in Latin, and to read them through is partly unprofitable work, as they copy so largely one from another. But, for the general reader, selections can be made, and, if assisted by accurate reproductions of the very quaint wood engravings, a book may be produced which, I venture to think, will not prove tiring, even to a superficial reader.

Perhaps the greatest wonders of the creation, and the strangest forms of being, have been met with in the sea; and as people who only occasionally saw them were not draughtsmen, but had to describe the monsters they had seen on their return to land, their effigies came to be exceedingly marvellous, and unlike the originals. The Northern Ocean, especially, was their abode, and, among the Northern nations, tales of Kraken, Sea-Serpents, Whirlpools, Mermen, &c., &c., lingered long after they were received with doubt by other nations; but perhaps the most credulous times were the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when no travellers’ tales seem too gross for belief, as can well be seen in the extreme popularity, throughout all Europe, of the “Voyages and Travels of Sir John Maundeville,” who, though he may be a myth, and his so-called writings a compilation, yet that compilation represented the sum of knowledge, both of Geography, and Natural History, of countries not European, that was attainable in the first half of the fourteenth century.

All the old Naturalists copied from one another, and thus compiled their writings. Pliny took from Aristotle, others quote Pliny, and so on; but it was reserved for the age of printing to render their writings available to the many, as well as to represent the creatures they describe by pictures (“the books of the unlearned”), which add so much piquancy to the text.

Mine is not a learned disquisition. It is simply a collection of zoological curiosities, put together to suit the popular taste of to-day, and as such only should it be critically judged.

JOHN ASHTON.

CURIOUS CREATURES

Let us commence our researches into curious Zoology with the noblest of created beings, Man; and, if we may believe Darwin, he must have gone through many phases, and gradual mutations, before he arrived at his present proud position of Master and Conqueror of the World.

This philosopher does not assign a high place in the animal creation to proud man's progenitor, and we ought almost to feel thankful to him for not going further back. He begins with man as an Ascidian, which is the lowest form of anything of a vertebrate character, with which we are acquainted; and he says thus, in his "Descent of Man": —

"The most ancient progenitors in the kingdom of the Vertebrata, at which we are able to obtain an obscure glance, apparently consisted of a group of marine animals, resembling the larvæ of existing Ascidians. These animals probably gave rise to a group of fishes, as lowly organised as the lancelet; and from these the Ganoids, and other fishes like the *Lepidosiren*, must have been developed. From such fish a very small advance would carry us on to the amphibians. We see that birds and reptiles were once intimately connected together; and the Monotremata now, in a slight degree, connect mammals with reptiles. But no one can, at present, say by what line of descent the three higher, and related classes — namely, mammals, birds, and reptiles, were derived from either of the two lower vertebrate classes, namely, amphibians, and fishes. In the class of mammals the steps are not difficult to conceive which led from the ancient Monotremata to the ancient Marsupials; and from these to the early progenitors of the placental mammals. We may thus ascend to the Lemuridæ; and the interval is not wide from these to the Simiadæ. The Simiadæ then branched off into two great stems, the New World, and Old World monkeys; and from the latter, at a remote period, Man, the wonder and glory of the Universe, proceeded."

"We have thus far endeavoured rudely to trace the genealogy of the Vertebrata, by the aid of their mutual affinities. We will now look to man as he exists; and we shall, I think, be able partially to restore during successive periods, but not in order of time, the structure of our early progenitors. This can be effected by means of the rudiments which man still retains, by the characters which occasionally make their appearance in him through reversion, and by the aid of morphology and embryology. The various facts to which I shall here allude, have been given in the previous chapters. The early progenitors of man were no doubt once covered with hair, both sexes having beards; their ears were pointed and capable of movement; and their bodies were provided with a tail, having the proper muscles. Their limbs and bodies were also acted on by many muscles, which now only occasionally reappear, but are normally present in the *Quadrumana*... The foot, judging from the great toe in the fœtus, was then prehensile; and our progenitors, no doubt, were arboreal in their habits, frequenting some warm, forest-clad land. The males were provided with great canine teeth, which served them as formidable weapons."

In fact, as Mortimer Collins satirically, yet amusingly, wrote: —

"There was an Ape, in the days that were earlier;
Centuries passed, and his hair became curlier,
Centuries more gave a thumb to his wrist, —
Then he was Man, and a Positivist."

Darwin says that the men of the period wore tails, and if they were no longer than that in this illustration (which is copied from the same book), they can hardly be said to be unbecoming — still that is a matter for taste — they are certainly more graceful than if they had been rat-like, or like a greyhound, or toy terrier. Many old authors speak of tailed men in Borneo and Java, and not only were men so adorned, but women. Peter Martyr says that in a region called Inzaganin, there is a tailed

race – these laboured under the difficulty of being unable to move them like animals – but as he observes, they were stiff like those of fishes and crocodiles – so much so, that when they wanted to sit down, they had to use seats with holes in them.

Ptolemy and Ctesias speak of them, and Pliny says there were men in Ceylon who had long hairy tails, and were of remarkable swiftness of foot. Marco Polo tells us: “Now you must know that in this kingdom of Lambri¹ there are men with tails; these tails are of a palm in length, and have no hair on them. These people live in the mountains, and are a kind of wild men. Their tails are about the thickness of a dog’s.” Many modern travellers have heard of hairy and tailed people in the Malay Archipelago, and Mr. St. John, writing of Borneo, says that he met with a trader who had seen and felt the tails of a race which inhabited the north-east coast of the island. These tails were about four inches long, and so stiff that they had to use perforated seats. The Chinese also declare that in the mountains above Canton there is a race of tailed men. M. de Couret wrote about the Niam Niams, tailed men, who, he says, are living in Abyssinia or Nubia, having tails at least two inches long. We all know the old Lord Monboddo’s theory that mankind had originally tails – nay, he went further, and said that some were born with them now – a fact which will be partially borne out by any military medical inspecting officer, who in the course of his practice has met with men whose “os coccygis” has been prolonged, so as to form a pseudo tail, which would unfit the man for the cavalry, although he would still be efficient as an infantry soldier.

Here is a very fine picture from a fresco at Pompeii representing tailed men, or, maybe, æsthetic young Fauns, treading out the vintage.

But tailed men are as nothing, compared to the wonderful beings that peopled the earth in bygone times. It seems a pity that there are none of them now living, and that, consequent upon never having seen them, we are apt to imagine that they never existed, but were simply the creatures of the writer’s brain. They were articles of belief until comparatively recent times, and were familiar in Queen Elizabeth’s time, as we learn from Othello’s defence of himself (Act i. sc. 3): —

“And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.”

They were thoroughly believed in, a century or two previously, in connection with Geography, and, in the “Mappa Mundi” (one of the earliest preserved English maps), now in Hereford Cathedral, which dates from the very early part of the fourteenth century, nearly the whole of the fanciful men hereafter mentioned are portrayed.

Sluper, who wrote in 1572, gives us the accompanying picture of a Cyclope, with the following remarks: —

“De Polipheme & de Ciclopiens
Tout mention Poetes anciens:
On dit encor que ce lignage dure
Auec vn oeil selon ceste figure.”

Pliny places the Cyclopes “in the very centre of the earth, in Italy and Sicily;” and very likely there they might have existed, if we can bring ourselves to believe the very plausible explanation that they were miners, whose lanthorn, or candle, stuck in cap, was their one eye. At all events we may consider Sluper’s picture as somewhat of a fancy portrait.

¹ Supposed to be Sumatra.

Among the Scythians, inhabiting the country beyond the Palus Mæotis, was a tribe which Herodotus (although he has been christened “The father of lies”) did not believe in, nor indeed in any one-eyed men, but Pliny, living some 500 years after him, tells afresh the old story respecting these wonderful human beings. “In the vicinity also of those who dwell in the northern regions, and not far from the spot from which the north wind arises, and the place which is called its cave, and is known by the name of Geskleithron,² the Arimaspi are said to exist, a nation remarkable for having but one eye, and that placed in the middle of the forehead. This race is said to carry on a perpetual warfare with the Griffins,³ a kind of monster, with wings, as they are commonly represented, for the gold which they dig out of the mines, and which these wild beasts retain, and keep watch over with a singular degree of cupidity, while the Arimaspi are equally desirous to get possession of it.”

Milton mentions this tribe in “Paradise Lost,” Book 2.

“As when a Gryphon through the wilderness,
With winged course, o’er hill, or mossy dale,
Pursues the Arimaspi, who, by stealth,
Had from his wakeful custody purloin’d
The guarded gold.”

But there seems every probability that the story of the Gryphon was invented by the goldfinders, in order to deter people from coming near them, and interfering with their livelihood. There were, however, smaller Arimaspians, which probably the Gryphons did not heed, for Pliny tells us about the little thieves of mice. “In gold mines, too, their stomachs are opened for this purpose, and some of the metal is always to be found there, which they have pilfered, so great a delight do they take in stealing!” Livy, also, twice mentions mice gnawing gold.

There were Anthropophagi – cannibals – as there are now, but, of course, they then lacked the luxury of cold missionary – and there were, besides, many wonderful beings. “Beyond the other Scythian Anthropophagi, there is a country called Abarimon, situate in a certain great valley of Mount Imaus (*the Himalayas*), the inhabitants of which are a savage race, whose feet are turned backwards, relatively to their legs; they possess wonderful velocity, and wander about indiscriminately with the wild beasts. We learn from Beeton, whose duty it was to take the measurements of the routes of Alexander the Great, that this people cannot breathe in any climate except their own, for which reason it is impossible to take them before any of the neighbouring kings; nor could any of them be brought before Alexander himself.

The Anthropophagi, whom we have previously mentioned as dwelling ten days’ journey beyond the Borysthenes (*the Dneiper*), according to the account of Isogonus of Nicæa, were in the habit of drinking out of human skulls, and placing the scalps, with the hair attached, upon their breasts, like so many napkins. The same author relates that there is, in Albania, a certain race of men, whose eyes are of a sea-green colour, and who have white hair from their earliest childhood (*Albinos*), and that these people see better in the night than in the day. He states also that the Sauromatæ, who dwell ten days’ journey beyond the Borysthenes, only take food every other day.

Crates of Pergamus relates, that there formerly existed in the vicinity of Parium, in the Hellespont (*Camanar, a town of Asia Minor*), a race of men whom he calls Ophiogenes, and that by their touch they were able to cure those who had been stung by serpents, extracting the poison by the mere imposition of the hand. Varro tells us, that there are still a few individuals in that district, whose saliva effectually cures the stings of serpents. The same, too, was the case with the tribe of the Psylli, in Africa, according to the account of Agatharcides; these people received their name from

² γης κλειθρον, meaning the limit or boundary of the earth.

³ The Gryphon must not be confounded with the Griffin, as will be seen later on.

Psyllus, one of their kings, whose tomb is in existence, in the district of the Greater Syrtes (*Gulf of Sidra*). In the bodies of these people, there was, by nature, a certain kind of poison, which was fatal to serpents, and the odour of which overpowered them with torpor; with them it was a custom to expose children, immediately after their birth, to the fiercest serpents, and in this manner to make proof of the fidelity of their wives; the serpents not being repelled by such children as were the offspring of adultery. This nation, however, was almost entirely extirpated by the slaughter made of them, by the Nasamones, who now occupy their territory. This race, however, still survives in a few persons, who are descendants of those who either took to flight, or else were absent on the occasion of the battle. The Marsi, in Italy, are still in possession of the same power, for which, it is said, they are indebted to their origin from the son of Circe, from whom they acquired it as a natural quality. But the fact is, that all men possess, in their bodies, a poison which acts upon serpents, and the human saliva, it is said, makes them take to flight, as though they had been touched with boiling water. The same substance, it is said, destroys them the moment it enters their throat, and more particularly so, if it should be the saliva of a man who is fasting.

Above the Nasamones (*living near the Gulf of Sidra*), and the Machlyæ, who border upon them, are found, as we learn from Calliphanes, the nation of the Androgyni, a people who unite the two sexes in the same individual, and alternately perform the functions of each. Aristotle also states, that their right breast is that of a male, the left that of a female.

Isigonus and Nymphodorus inform us that there are, in Africa, certain families of enchanters, who, by means of their charms, in form of commendations, can cause cattle to perish, trees to wither, and infants to die. Isigonus adds, that there are, among the Triballi, and the Illyrii, some persons of this description, who, also, have the power of fascination with the eyes, and can even kill those on whom they fix their gaze for any length of time, more especially if their look denotes anger: the age of puberty is said to be particularly obnoxious to the malign influence of such persons.

A still more remarkable circumstance is, the fact that these persons have two pupils in each eye. Apollonides says, that there are certain females of this description in Scythia, who are known as Bythiæ, and Phylarcus states that a tribe of the Thibii in Pontus, and many other persons as well, have a double pupil in one eye, and in the other the figure of a horse. He also remarks, that the bodies of these persons will not sink in water, even though weighed down by their garments. Damon gives an account of a race of people, not very much unlike them, the Pharnaces of Æthiopia, whose perspiration is productive of consumption to the body of every person that it touches. Cicero also, one of our own writers, makes the remark, that the glance of all women who have a double pupil is noxious.

To this extent, then, has nature, when she produced in man, in common with the wild beasts, a taste for human flesh, thought fit to produce poisons as well in every part of his body, and in the eyes of some persons, taking care that there shall be no evil influence in existence, which was not to be found in the human body. Not far from Rome, in the territory of the Falisci, a few families are found, who are known by the name of Hirpi. These people perform a yearly sacrifice to Apollo, on Mount Soracte, on which occasion they walk over a burning pile of wood, without being scorched even. On this account, by virtue of a decree of the Senate, they are always exempted from military service, and from all other public duties.

Some individuals, again, are born with certain parts of the body endowed with properties of a marvellous nature. Such was the case with King Pyrrhus, the great toe of whose right foot cured diseases of the spleen, merely by touching the patient. We are informed that this toe could not be reduced to ashes together with the other portions of his body; upon which it was placed in a temple.

India and the region of Æthiopia, more especially, abounds in wonders. In India the largest of animals are produced; their dogs, for instance, are much bigger than those of any other country. The trees, too, are said to be of such vast height that it is impossible to send an arrow over them. This is the result of the singular fertility of the soil, the equable temperature of the atmosphere, and

the abundance of water; which, if we are to believe what is said, are such, that a single fig tree (*the banyan tree*) is capable of affording shelter to a whole troop of horse. The reeds here (*bamboos*) are of such enormous length, that each portion of them, between the joints, forms a tube, of which a boat is made that is capable of holding three men. It is a well-known fact, that many of the people here are more than five cubits in height.⁴ These people never expectorate, are subject to no pains, either in the head, the teeth, and the eyes, and, rarely, in any other parts of the body; so well is the heat of the sun calculated to strengthen the constitution... According to the account of Megasthenes, dwelling upon a mountain called Nulo, there is a race of men who have their feet turned backwards, with eight toes on each foot.

On many of the mountains again, there is a tribe of men who have the heads of dogs, and clothe themselves with the skins of wild beasts. Instead of speaking, they bark; and, furnished with claws, they live by hunting, and catching birds. According to the story, as given by Ctesias, the number of these people is more than a hundred and twenty thousand; and the same author tells us that there is a certain race in India, of which the females are pregnant once only in the course of their lives, and that the hair of the children becomes white the instant they are born. He speaks also of another race of men who are known as Monocoli,⁵ who have only one leg, but are able to leap with surprising agility. The same people are also called Sciapodæ,⁶ because they are in the habit of lying on their backs, during the time of extreme heat, and protect themselves from the sun by the shade of their feet. These people, he says, dwell not very far from the Troglodytæ (*dwellers in caves*); to the west of whom again there is a tribe who are without necks, and have eyes in their shoulders.

Among the mountainous districts of the eastern parts of India, in what is called the country of the Catharcludi, we find the Satyr, an animal of extraordinary swiftness. These go sometimes on four feet, and sometimes walk erect; they have also the features of a human being. On account of their swiftness, these creatures are never to be caught, except that they are aged, or sickly. Tauron gives the name of Choromandæ to a nation which dwells in the woods, and have no proper voice. These people screech in a frightful manner; their bodies are covered with hair, their eyes are of a sea-green colour, and their teeth like those of a dog. Eudoxus tells us, that in the southern parts of India, the men have feet a cubit in length, while the women are so remarkably small that they are called Struthpodes.⁷

Megasthenes places among the Nomades of India, a people who are called Scyritæ. These have merely holes in their faces instead of nostrils, and flexible feet, like the body of the serpent. At the very extremity of India, on the eastern side, near the source of the river Ganges, there is the nation of the Astomi, a people who have no mouths; their bodies are rough and hairy, and they cover themselves with a down⁸ plucked from the leaves of trees. These people subsist only by breathing, and by the odours which they inhale through the nostrils. They support themselves neither upon meat nor drink; when they go upon a long journey they only carry with them various odoriferous roots and flowers, and wild apples, that they may not be without something to smell at. But an odour, which is a little more powerful than usual, easily destroys them...

Isogonus informs us that the Cyrni, a people of India, live to their four-hundredth year; and he is of opinion that the same is the case also with the Æthiopian Macrobiani,⁹ the Seræ, and the inhabitants of Mount Athos. In the case of these last, it is supposed to be owing to the flesh of vipers, which they use as food; in consequence of which they are free also from all noxious animals, both in their hair and their garments.

⁴ The Roman cubit was eighteen inches, so that these men were nearly eight feet high.

⁵ From ἀπὸ τοῦ μονοῦ κώλου, "from having but one leg."

⁶ From Σκιαποῦς, "making a shadow with his foot."

⁷ Sparrow footed, from στροῦθος, a sparrow.

⁸ Probably cotton.

⁹ Or long livers, from μακρὸς, "long," and βίος, "life."

According to Onesicritus, in those parts of India where there is no shadow, the men attain the height of five cubits and two palms,¹⁰ and their life is prolonged to one hundred and thirty years; they die without any symptoms of old age, and just as if they were in the middle period of life. Pergannes calls the Indians, whose age exceeds one hundred years, by the name of Gymnetæ;¹¹ but not a few authors style them Macrobiani. Ctesias mentions a tribe of them, known by the name of Pandore, whose locality is in the valleys, and who live to their two-hundredth year; their hair is white in youth, and becomes black in old age. On the other hand, there are some people joining up to the country of the Macrobiani, who never live beyond their fortieth year, and their females have children once only during their lives. This circumstance is also mentioned by Agatharchides, who states, in addition, that they live on locusts, and are very swift of foot. Clitarchus and Megasthenes give these people the name of Mandi, and enumerate as many as three hundred villages which belong to them. Their women are capable of bearing children in the seventh year of their age, and become old at forty.

Artemidorus states that in the island of Taprobane (*Ceylon*) life is prolonged to an extreme length, while at the same time, the body is exempt from weakness. Among the Calingæ, a nation also of India, the women conceive at five years of age, and do not live beyond their eighth year. In other places again, there are men born with long hairy tails, and of remarkable swiftness of foot; while there are others that have ears so large as to cover the whole body.

Crates of Pergamus states, that the Troglodytæ, who dwell beyond Æthiopia, are able to outrun the horse; and that a tribe of the Æthiopians, who are known as the Syrbotæ, exceed eight cubits in height (*twelve feet*). There is a tribe of Æthiopian Nomades dwelling on the banks of the river Astragus, towards the north, and about twenty days' journey from the ocean. These people are called Menismini; they live on the milk of the animal which we call cynocephalus (*baboon*), and rear large flocks of these creatures, taking care to kill the males, except such as they may preserve for the purposes of breeding. In the deserts of Africa, men are frequently seen to all appearance, and then vanish in an instant.”¹²

It may be said that these descriptions of men are only the belief about the time of the Christian era, when Pliny lived – but it was the faith of centuries, and we find, 1200 years after Pliny died, Sir John Mandeville confirming his statements, and, as before stated, these wondrous creatures were given in illustrations, both in the Mappa Mundi, and in early printed books. Mandeville writes: “Many divers countreys & kingdoms are in Inde, and it is called Inde, of a river that runneth through it, which is called Inde also, and there are many precious stones in that river Inde. And in that ryver men finde Eles of xxx foote long, & men yt dwell nere that river are of evill colour, yelow & grene...

“Then there is another yle that men call Dodyn, & it is a great yle. In this yle are maner diverse of men yt have evyll maners, for the father eateth the son, & the son the father, the husband his wyfe, and the wyfe hir husbande. And if it so be that the father be sicke, or the mother, or any frend, the sonne goeth soone to the priest of the law & prayeth him that he will aske of the ydoll if his father shall dye of that sicknesse, or not. And then the priest and the son kneele down before the ydole devoutly, & asketh him, and he answereth to them, and if he say that he shall lyve, then they kepe him wel, and if he say that he shall dye, then commeth the priest with the son, or with the wyfe, or what frende that it be unto him yt is sicke, and they lay their hands over his mouth to stop his breath, & so they sley him, & then they smite all the body into peces, & praieth all his frendes for to come and eate of him that is dead, and they make a great feste thereof, and have many minstrels there, and eate him with great melody. And so when they have eaten al ye flesh, then they take the bones, and bury them all singing with great worship, and all those that are of his frendes that were not at the eating of him, have great shame and vylany, so that they shall never more be taken as frends.

¹⁰ A palm was three inches, so that these men would be eight feet high.

¹¹ From Γυμνητής, one who takes much bodily exercise.

¹² Mirage.

“And the king of this yle is a great lord and mightie, & he hath under him liii greate Yles, and eche of them hath a king; and in one of these yles are men that have but one eye, and that is in the middest of theyr front, and they eat flesh & fishe all rawe. And in another yle dwell men that have no heads, & theyr eyen are in theyr shoulders & theyr mouth is on theyr breste. In another yle are men that have no head ne eyen, and their mouth is in theyr shoulders. And in another yle are men that have flatte faces, without nose, and without eyen, but they have two small round holes in stede of eyen, and they have a flatte mouth without lippes. And in that yle are men that have their faces all flat without eyen, without mouth & without nose, but they have their eyen, and their mouth, behinde on their shoulders.

“And in another yle are foule men that have the lippes about the mouth so greate, that when they sleepe in the sonne they cover theyr face with the lippe. And in another yle are little men, as dwarfes, and have no mouth, but a lyttle rounde hole & through that hole they eate their meate with a pipe, & they have no tongue, & they speake not, but they blow & whistle, and so make signes one to another. And in another yle are wild men with hanging eares unto their shoulders. And in another yle are wild men, with hanging eares & have feete lyke an hors & they run faste, & they take wild beastes, and eate them. And in another yle are men that go on theyr handes & feete lyke beasts & are all rough, and will leape upon a tree like cattes or apes. And in another yle are men that go ever uppon theyr knees marvaylosly, and have on every foote viii Toes...

“There is another yle that men call Pitane, men of this lande till no lande, for they eate nought, and they are smal, but not so smal as Pigmes. These men live with smell of wild apples, & when they go far out of the countrey, they beare apples with them, for anon, as they lose the savour of apples they dye – they are not reasonable, but as wyld beastes. And there is another yle where the people are all fethers,¹³ but the face and the palmes of theyr handes, these men go as well about the sea, as on the lande, and they eate flesh and fish all raw... In Ethiopie are such men that have but one foote, and they go so fast yt it is a great marvaill, & that is a large fote, that the shadow thereof covereth ye body from son or rayne, when they lye upon their backes; and when their children be first borne they loke like russet, and when they waxe olde then they be all black.”

There were also elephant-headed men.

In the olden times were men who did not build themselves houses – but sheltered themselves in caves, fissures of rocks, &c., and many are the remains we find of their flint implements, and the bones, which they used to split in order to extract the marrow of the animals they had slain with their rude flint arrows and spears. These, in classical times, were called Troglodytes (from the Greek τρωγλοῦνται, *dwellers in caves*). It was a generic term, although particularly applied to uncivilised races on the banks of the Danube – those who dwelt on the western coasts of the Red Sea – and Ethiopia. These latter could not have led a particularly happy life, for Herodotus tells us that the “Garamantes hunt the Ethiopian Troglodytes in four horse chariots; for the Ethiopian Troglodytes are the swiftest of foot of all men of whom we have heard any account given. The Troglodytes feed upon serpents and lizards, and such kind of reptiles; they speak a language like no other, but screech like bats.”

Pliny, as we have seen, speaks of an adder eating people, whose food enables them to achieve extraordinary longevity, and Mandeville tells us that “From this yle, men go to an yle that is called Tracota, where all men are as beastes, & not reasonable, they dwell in caves, for they have not wyt to make them houses – they eate adders, and they speake not, but they make such a noyse as adders doe one to another, and they make no force of ryches, but of a stone that hath forty colours, and it is called Traconyt after that yle, they know not the vertue thereof, but they covete it for the great fayreness.”

This stone was probably some kind of agate. It could not possibly have been a topaz, as some have thought, as the context from Pliny will show. “Topazos is a stone that is still held in very high

¹³ Other editions read *rough hair*.

estimation for its green tints; indeed, when first it was discovered, it was preferred to every other kind of precious stone. It so happened that some Troglodytic pirates, suffering from tempest and hunger, having landed upon an island off the coast of Arabia, known as Cytis, when digging there for roots and grass, discovered this precious stone; such, at least, is the opinion expressed by Archelaüs. Juba says that there is an island in the Red Sea called *Topazos*, at a distance of three hundred stadia from the mainland; that it is surrounded by fogs, and is often sought by navigators in consequence; and that, to this, it received its present name, the word *Topazin*¹⁴ meaning “to seek” in the language of the Troglodytæ... At a later period a statue, four cubits in height, was made of this stone... Topazos is the largest of all the precious stones.”

This shows that the Troglodytæ of Ethiopia had some commercial energy, and they did a good trade in myrrh and other condiments. Pliny says that the Troglodytæ traded among other things in cinnamon. They “after buying it of their neighbours, carry it over vast tracts of sea, upon rafts, which are neither steered by rudder nor drawn or impelled by oars or sails. Nor yet are they aided by any of the resources of art, man alone, and his daring boldness, standing in the place of all these; in addition to which, they choose the winter season, about the time of the equinox, for their voyage, for then a south-easterly wind is blowing; these winds guide them in a straight course from gulf to gulf, and after they have doubled the promontory of Arabia, the north-east wind carries them to a port of the Gebanitæ, known by the name of Ocilia. Hence it is that they steer for this port in preference, and they say that it is almost five years before the merchants are able to effect their return, while many perish on the voyage. In return for their wares, they bring back articles of glass and copper, cloths, buckles, bracelets, and necklaces; hence it is that this traffic depends more particularly upon the capricious tastes and inclinations of the female sex.”

This shows that some, at least, of the Troglodytes had a commercial spirit, and were in a comparative state of civilisation; in fact the latter is thoroughly proved, when, a little later on, Pliny speaks of Myrobalanum, “Among these various kinds, that which is sent from the country of the Troglodytæ is the worst of all,” thus showing that they had reached the civilised pitch of adulteration! There are also several notices of peculiarities connected with this people, which deserve a passing glance. They had turtles with horns (or more probably fore-feet) which resembled the branches of a lyre; with these they swam. These were in all likelihood the tortoise-shell turtles, for they called them *Chelyon*. The Troglodytæ worshipped them. Their cattle were not like other oxen, for their horns pointed downwards to the ground, so that they were obliged to feed with their heads on one side. These oxen should have been crossed with those of Phrygia, whose horns were as mobile as their ears. And they were the happy possessors of a lake, called the *Unhealthy Lake*, which thrice a day became salt and bitter, and then again fresh, and this went on both day and night. We can hardly wonder that this *Lacus Insanus* was full of white serpents thirty feet long.

¹⁴ In Greek, Τοπάζω, means to guess, divine, or conjecture.

Amazons

The race of Amazons or fighting women, is not yet extinct, as the chronicles of every police court can tell, and as an organised body of warlike soldiers – the King of Dahomey still keeps them up, or did until very recently. According to Herodotus, the Greeks, after having routed the Amazons, sailed away in three ships, taking with them as many Amazons, as they had been able to capture alive – but, when fairly out at sea, the ladies arose, stood up for women’s rights, and cut all the Greeks in pieces. But they had not reckoned on one little thing, and that was, that none among them had the slightest idea of navigation; they couldn’t even steer or row – so they had to drift about, until they came to Cremni (supposed to be near *Taganrog*), which was Scythian territory. They signalised their landing by horse-stealing, and the Scythians, not appreciating the joke, gave them battle, thinking they were men; but an examination of the dead proved them to be of the other sex. On learning this, the Scythians were far too gentlemanly to continue the strife, and, little by little, they established the most friendly relations with the Amazons. These ladies, however, objected to go to the Scythians’ homes, for, as they pertinently put it, “We never could live with the women of your county, because we have not the same customs with them. We shoot with the bow, throw the javelin, and ride on horseback, and have never learnt the employments of women. But your women do none of the things we have mentioned, but are engaged in women’s work, remaining in their wagons, and do not go out to hunt, or anywhere else; we could not therefore consort with them. If, then, you desire to have us for your wives, and to prove yourselves honest men, go to your parents, claim your share of their property, then return, and let us live by ourselves.”

This the young Scythians did, but, when they returned, the Amazons said they were afraid to stop where they were, for they had deprived parents of their sons, and besides, had committed depredations in the country, so that they thought it but prudent to leave, and suggested that they should cross the Tanais, or *Don*, and found a colony on the other side. This their husbands acceded to, and when they were settled, their wives returned to their old way of living – hunting, going to war with their husbands, and wearing the same clothes – in fact they enjoyed an actual existence, of which many women nowadays, fondly, but vainly dream. There was a little drawback however – the qualification for a young lady’s presentation at court, consisted of killing a man, and, until that was effected, she could not marry.

Sir John Mandeville of course knew all about them, although he does not pretend to have seen them, and this is what he tells us. “After the land of Caldee, is the land of Amazony, that is a land where there is no man but all women, as men say, for they wil suffer no man to lyve among them, nor to have lordeshippe over them. For sometyme was a kinge in that lande, and men were dwelling there as did in other countreys, and had wives, & it befell that the kynge had great warre with them of Sychy, he was called Colopius, and he was slaine in bataill and all the good bloude of his lande. And this Queene, when she herd that, & other ladies of that land, that the king and the lordes were slaine, they gathered them together and killed all the men that were lefte in their lande among them, and sithen that time dwelled no man among them.

“And when they will have any man, they sende for them in a countrey that is nere theyr lande, and the men come, and are ther viii dayes, or as the woman lyketh, & then they go againe, and if they have men children they send them to theyr fathers, when they can eate & go, and if they have maide chyldren they kepe them, and if they bee of gentill bloud they brene¹⁵ the left pappe¹⁶ away, for bearing of a shielde, and, if they be of little bloud, they brene the ryght pappe away for shoting.

¹⁵ Burn.

¹⁶ Breast.

For those women of that countrey are good warriours, and are often in soudy¹⁷ with other lordes, and the queene of that lande governeth well that lande; this lande is all environed with water.”

¹⁷ At war.

Pygmies

The antitheses of men – Dwarfs, and Giants – must not be overlooked, as they are abnormal, and yet have existed in all ages. Dwarfs are mentioned in the Bible, *Leviticus* xxi. 20, where following the injunction of “Let him not approach to offer the bread of his God” – are mentioned the “crookbackt or dwarf.” Dwarfs in all ages have been made the sport of Royalty, and the wealthy; but it is not of them I write, but of a race called the Pygmies, very small men who were descended from Pygmæus. They are noted in the earliest classics, for even Homer mentions them in his *Iliad* (B. 3, l. 3–6), which Pope translates: —

“So, when inclement winter vex the plain
With piercing frosts, or thick descending rain,
To warmer seas, the Cranes embody’d fly,
With noise, and order, through the mid-way sky;
To pigmy nations, wounds and death they bring,
And all the war descends upon the wing.”

Homer also wrote a poem, “Pygmæogeranomachia,” about the Pygmies and Cranes. The accompanying illustration is from a fresco at Pompeii.

Aristotle says that they lived in holes under the earth, and came out in the harvest time with hatchets, to cut down the corn, as if to fell a forest, and went on goats and lambs of proportionable stature to themselves to make war against certain birds, called Cranes by some, which came there yearly from Scythia to plunder them. Pliny mentions them several times, but especially in B. 7, c. 2. “Beyond these people, and at the very extremity of the mountains, the Trispithami,¹⁸ and the Pygmies are said to exist; two races, which are but three spans in height, that is to say, twenty-seven inches only. They enjoy a salubrious atmosphere, and a perpetual spring, being sheltered by the mountains from the northern blasts; it is these people that Homer has mentioned as being waged war upon by Cranes. It is said that they are in the habit of going down every spring to the sea-shore, in a large body, seated on the backs of rams and goats, and armed with arrows, and there destroy the eggs and the young of those birds; that this expedition occupies them for the space of three months, and that otherwise it would be impossible for them to withstand the increasing multitudes of the Cranes. Their cabins, it is said, are built of mud, mixed with feathers and egg shells.”

Mandeville thus describes them. “When men passe from that citie of Chibens, they passe over a great river of freshe water, and it is nere iiii mile brode, & then men enter into the lande of the great Caan. This river goeth through the land of Pigmeens, and there men are of little stature, for they are but three span long, and they are right fayre, both men and women, though they bee little, and they live but viii¹⁹ yeare, and he that liveth viii yeare is holden right olde, and these small men are the best workemen in sylke, and of cotton, in all maner of thing that are in the worlde; and these smal men travail not, nor tyl land, but they have amonge them great men, as we are, to travaill for them, & they have great scorne of those great men, as we would have of giaunts, or, of them, if they were among us.”

Ser Marco Polo warns his readers against *pseudo* Pygmies. Says he: “I may tell you moreover that when people bring over pygmies which they allege to come from India, ’tis all a lie and a cheat. For those little men, as they call them, are manufactured on this Island (*Sumatra*), and I will tell you how. You see there is on the Island a kind of monkey which is very small, and has a face just like

¹⁸ From τρεις, *three*, σπιθαμῶν, *spans*.

¹⁹ Other editions say six or seven years.

a man's. They take these, and pluck out all the hair, except the hair of the beard, and on the breast, and then dry them, and stuff them, and daub them with saffron, and other things, until they look like men. But you see it is all a cheat; for nowhere in India, nor anywhere else in the world, were there ever men seen so small as these pretended pygmies."

But there are much more modern mention of these small folk. Olaus Magnus not only reproduces the classical story, but tells of the Pygmies of Greenland – the modern Esquimaux. These are also mentioned in Purchas his Pilgrimage, as living in Iceland, "pygmies represent the most perfect shape of man; that they are hairy to the uttermost joints of the fingers, and that the males have beards down to the knees; but, although they have the shape of men, yet they have little sense or understanding, nor distinct speech, but make shew of a kinde of hissing, after the manner of geese."

But to bring the history of pygmies down to modern times – I quote from "Giants and Dwarfs," by E. J. Wood, 1868, and I am thus particular in giving my authority, as the news comes from America, whence, sometimes, fact is mixed with fiction (pp. 246, 247, 248). "It is alleged by contemporary newspapers, that in 1828 several burying-grounds, from half an acre to an acre and a half in extent, were discovered in the county of White, state of Tennessee, near the town of Sparta, wherein very small people had been deposited in tombs or coffins of stone. The greatest length of the skeletons was nineteen inches. The bones were strong and well set, and the whole frames were well formed. Some of the people appeared to have lived to a great age, their teeth being worn smooth and short, while others were full and long. The graves were about two feet deep; the coffins were of stone, and made by laying a flat stone at the bottom, one at each side, or each end, and one over the corpse. The dead were all buried with their heads toward the east, and in regular order, laid on their backs, and with their hands on their breasts. In the bend of the left arm was found a cruse, or vessel, that would hold nearly a pint, made of ground stone, or shell, of a grey colour, in which were found two or three shells. One of these skeletons had about its neck ninety-four pearl beads. Near one of these burying-places was the appearance of the site of an ancient town.

Webber, in his 'Romance of Natural History,' refers to the diminutive sarcophagi found in Kentucky and Tennessee; and he describes these receptacles to be about three feet in length, by eighteen inches deep, and constructed, bottom, sides, and top, of flat, unhewn stones. These he conjectures to be the places of sepulture of a pigmy race, that became extinct at a period beyond reach even of the tradition of the so-called Indian aborigines.

Newspapers for 1866 tell us that General Milroy, who had been spending much time in Smith County, Tennessee, attending to some mining business, discovered near Watertown in that county some remarkable graves, which were disclosed by the washing of a small creek in its passage through a low bottom. The graves were from eighteen inches to two feet in length, most of them being of the smaller size, and were formed by an excavation of about fifteen inches below the surface, in which were placed four undressed slabs of rock – one in the bottom of the pit, one on each side, and one on the top. Human skeletons, some with nearly an entire skull, and many with well-defined bones, were found in them. The teeth were very diminutive, but evidently those of adults. Earthen crocks were also found with the skeletons. General Milroy could not gain any satisfactory information respecting these pigmy graves. The oldest inhabitants of the vicinity knew nothing of their origin or history, except that there was a large number of similar graves near Statesville in the same county, and also a little burial-ground at the mouth of Stone River, near the city of Nashville. General Milroy deposited the bones found by him in the State Library at Nashville."

That a race of dwarfs live in Central Africa, is now well known. Ronzo de Leo, who travelled in Africa, for many years with Dr. Livingstone, at one time almost stood alone in his assertion of this fact. But he was supported in his statement by G. Eugene Wolff, who had been in Central Africa with Stanley, and he maintained that, on the southern branches of the Congo, he had seen whole villages of Lilliputians, of whom the men were not over four and a half feet high, whilst the women were a great deal smaller. He described them as being both brave and cunning, expert with bow and arrow,

with which they readily bring down the African bison, antelope, and even elephants. As trappers of small animals they are unsurpassed. In a close pinch they use the lance with astonishing dexterity, and an ordinary sling, in their hands, is wielded with wonderful skill.

These dwarfs collect the sap of the palm, with which they make soap. The men are smooth-faced, and of a rich mahogany colour, while the hair is short, and as black as night. Tens of thousands of them live on the south branch of the Congo.

Mr. Stanley in his expedition for the relief of Emin Pacha,²⁰ encountered some tribes of these pigmies, but he does not agree with the account which Mr. Wolff gives of them, who describes them as an affable, kind-hearted people, of simple ways, and devoid of vicious tendencies to a greater degree than most semi-barbaric races. The women are industrious and amiable.

Stanley, on the contrary, found them very annoying, and had a lively recollection of their poisoned arrows – but, at the present writing, he not having returned, and we, having no record but his letters, had better suspend our judgment as to the habits and tempers of these small people.

Wolff says they stand in awe of their bigger neighbours, but are so brave and cunning that, with all the odds of physique against them, the pigmies are masters of the situation.

²⁰ See his letters dated September 1888, which arrived in England early in April 1889.

Giants

This last sentence seems almost a compendium of *The History of Tom Thumb*, for his wit enabled him to overcome the lubber-headed giants, in every conflict he was engaged in with them – they were no match for him. Take the Romances of Chivalry. Pacolet, and all the dwarfs, were endowed with acute wits, and there was very little they could not compass – but the giants! their ultimate fate was always to be slain by some knight, and their imprisoned knights and damsels set free. A dwarf was a cleanly liver, but a giant was turbulent, quarrelsome, lustful, and occasionally cannibal. Fe Fi Fo Fum was the type of colossal man, and, as it is quite a pleasure to whitewash their characters in these respects, I hasten to do so before further discoursing on the subject of these great men.

It is Olaus Magnus who thus tells us

“Of the sobriety of Giants and Champions.”

“That most famous Writer of the *Danish* affairs, *Saxo*, alleged before, and who shall be often alleged hereafter, saith, that amongst other mighty strong men in the *North*, who were as great as Giants, there was one *Starchaterus Thavestus*, whose admirable and heroick Vertues are so worthily extolled by him, that there were scarce any like him in those dayes in all *Europe*, or in the whole World, or hardly are now, or ever shall be. And amongst other Vertues he ascribes to that high-spirited man, he mentions his sobriety, which is principally necessary for valiant men: and I thought fit to annex that peculiarly to this relation, that we may, as in a glass, see more cleerly the luxury of this lustful age. For, as the same *Saxo* testifies, that valiant *Starchaterus* loved frugality, and loved not immoderate dainties. Alwayes neglecting pleasure, he respected Vertue, imitating the antient manner of Continency, and he desired a homely provision of his Diet; he hated costly suppers; wherefore hating profusion in Diet, and feeding on smoaked and rank meat, he drove away Hunger, with the greater appetite, as his meat was but of one kind, lest he should remit and abate the force of his true Vertue, by the contagion of outward Delights, as by some adulterate sweetness, or should abrogate the Rule of antient Frugality, by unusual Superstitions for Gluttony. Moreover, he could not endure to spend rost and boyled meat all at one Meal; holding that to be a monstrous Food, that Cookery had tampered with divers things together: Wherefore, that he might turn away the Luxury of the *Danes*, that they borrowed from the *Germans*, that made them so effeminate, amongst the rest he made Verses in his Country Language.” Omitting many of them, he sang thus:

“*Starchaterus* his Verses on *Frugality*”

“Strong men do love raw meat; nor do they need,
Or love, on dainty Cates and Feasts to feed,
War is the thing they most delight to breed,
You may sooner bite off their beards that are
Full hard, and stiff with bristled, rugged, hair,
Than their wide mouths leave Milk their daily fare:
We fly from dainty Kitchens, and do fill
Our Bellies with rank Meats, and Countray swill,
Of old, men fed on boyl’d Meats, ’gainst their will.
A dish of Grass, that had no smack, did hold
Hog’s and sheep’s flesh together, hot or cold,

Nor to pollute their meats with mingling were they bold;
He that eats Cream we bid him for to be
Strong, and to have a mind that's bold and free.

.....

Eleven Lords of elder time we were,
That waited on King Hachon, and at fare
Helgo Begachus sat first in order there.
First dish he eat was a dry'd Gammon, and
A Crust as hard as Flint he took in hand,
This made his hungry, yawning stomach stand:
No man at Table fed on stinking meat,
But what was good and common, each man eat,
Content with simple fare, though nere so great;
The greatest were not Gluttons, nor yet fine,
The King himself full sparingly would dine.
No Drinks were used that did of Honey bost,
Beer was their common Liquor, *Ceres* owest,
They fed on Meats were little boyl'd, no rost.
Each Table was with Meats but meanly drest,
Few Dishes on't, Antiquity thought best;
And in plain Fare each held himself most blest.
There were no Flagons, nor broad Bowls in use,
Nor painted Dishes grown to great abuse,
Each, at the Tap, did fill his wooden cruze.
No man, admirer of the former days,
Did use Tankards or Oxeys;²¹ for their ways
Were sparing, almost empty Dishes this bewrays.
No Silver Basons, or guilt Cups were thought
Fit by the Host, and to the table brought,
To garnish, or by Ghests were vainly sought.”

By precept, and example, he induced many to Temperance and Sobriety – but, in spite of his moderation in food and drink, he was a most outrageous pirate, and Berserker.

At last, however, old, and weary of life, he sought death, and meeting Hatherus, son of a noble whom he had killed, begged him as a favour to cut his head off – and the young man, obligingly consenting, his head was severed from his body, and literally bit the ground. There are records of many more Northern giants, but none of so edifying a life as Starchaterus.

Giants are plentiful in the Bible, the Emins, Anakims, and the Zamzummims: there was Og, King of Bashan, whose iron bedstead was 9 cubits long by 4 broad —*i. e.*, 13 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft. That redoubtable champion of the Philistines, Goliath of Gath, was six cubits and a span high —*i. e.*, 9 ft. 9 in. In 2 Samuel xxi. 15–22, we find mention made of many giants.

“15 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines; and David waxed faint.

²¹ Ox horns, horn cups.

“16 And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giants, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.

“17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him...

“18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant.

“19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

“20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of great stature, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant.

“21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah, the brother of David, slew him.

“22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.”

But these were mere pigmies if we can believe M. Henrion, who in 1718 calculated out the heights of divers notable persons – thus he found Adam was 121 ft. 9 in. high, Eve 118 ft. 9 in., Noah 27 ft., Abraham 20 ft., and Moses 13 ft.

Putting aside the mythical classical giants, Pliny says: “The tallest man that has been seen in our times, was one Gabbaras by name, who was brought from Arabia by the Emperor Claudius; his height was nine feet and as many inches. In the reign of Augustus, there were two persons, Posio and Secundilla, by name, who were half a foot taller than him; their bodies have been preserved as objects of curiosity in the Museum of the Sallustian family.”

But it is reserved to Sir John Mandeville to have found the tallest giants of, comparatively speaking, modern times. “And beyond that valey is a great yle, where people as great as giaunts of xxviii fote long, and they have no clothinge but beasts skyns that hang on them, and they eate no bread, but flesh raw, and drink milke, and they have no houses, & they ate gladlyer fleshe of men, than other, & men saye to us that beyonde that yle is an yle where are greater giaunts as xlv or l fote long, & some said l cubits long (*75 feet*) but I saw them not, and among those giaunts are great shepe, and they beare great wolfe, these shepe have I sene many times.”

Early Men

On the antiquity of man it is impossible to speculate, because we have no data to go upon. We know that his earliest existence, of which we have any cognisance, must have been at a period when the climate and fauna of the Western continent was totally different to their present state. Then roamed over the land, the elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, the *Bos-primigenius*, the reindeer, the cave bear, the brown and the Arctic bears, the cave hyæna, and many other animals now quite extinct. We know that man then existed, because we find his handiwork in the shape of manufactured flint implements, mixed with the bones of these animals – and, occasionally, with them human remains have been found, but, as yet, no perfect skull has been found. There were two types of man, the *Dolicho Cephalous*, or long-headed, and the *Brachy Cephalous*, or round-headed – and, of these, the long-headed were of far greater antiquity.

All we can do is to classify man's habitation of this earth, as well as we can, under certain well-defined, and known conditions. Thus, that called the Stone Age, must be divided into two parts, that of the roughly chipped flint implements – which is designated the *Palæolithic* period – and that of the polished and carefully finished stone arms and implements, which necessarily show a later time, and a higher state of civilisation – which is called the *Neolithic* period. The next age is that of bronze, when man had learned to smelt metals, and make moulds, showing a great advance – and, finally, the Iron Age, in which man had subdued the sterner metal to his will – and this age immediately precedes History.

The cave men were of undoubted antiquity – and were hunters of the wild beasts that then overran Western Europe, and who split the bones of those animals which they slew in order to obtain the marrow. Although strictly belonging to the *Palæolithic* period, they manufactured out of that stubborn material, flint, spear-heads, knives, scrapers – and, when the bow had been invented, arrow-heads. Nor were they deficient in the rudiments of art, as some tracings and carvings on pieces of the horns of slaughtered animals, clearly show. Mr. Christie in digging in the Dordogne caves found, at La Madelaine, engraved and carved pictures of reindeer, an ibex, a mammoth, &c., all of them recognisable, and the mammoth, a very good likeness. This was incised on a piece of mammoth tusk.

The lake men, judging by the remains found near their dwellings, occupied their houses during the Stone and Bronze periods. Herodotus mentions these curious dwellings. “But those around Mount Pangæus and near the Doberes, the Agrianæ, Odomanti, and those who inhabit Lake Prasias²² itself, were not at all subdued by Megabazus. Yet he attempted to conquer those who live upon the lake, in dwellings contrived after this manner: planks, fitted on lofty piles, are placed in the middle of the lake, with a narrow entrance from the mainland by a single bridge. These piles that support the planks, all the citizens anciently placed there at the common charge; but, afterwards, they established a law to the following effect; whenever a man marries, for each wife he sinks three piles, bringing wood from a mountain called Orbelus; but every man has several wives. They live in the following manner; every man has a hut on the planks, in which he dwells, with a trap door closely fitted in the planks, and leading down to the lake. They tie the young children with a cord round the foot, fearing lest they should fall into the lake beneath. To their horses and beasts of burden they give fish for fodder; of which there is such an abundance, that, when a man has opened his trap-door, he lets down an empty basket by a cord into the lake, and, after waiting a short time, draws it up full of fish.”²³

Here, then, we have a valuable record of the lake dwellings, and similar ones have been found in the lake of Zurich. In 1854, owing to the dryness and cold of the preceding winter, the water fell a foot below any previous record: and, in a small bay between Ober Meilen and Dollikon, the

²² A lake between Macedonia and Thrace.

²³ The fishermen of lake Prasias still have lake dwellings as in the time of Herodotus.

inhabitants took advantage to reclaim the soil thus left, and add it to their gardens, by building a wall as far out as they could – and they raised the level of the land thus gained, by dredging the mud out of the lake. In the course of dredging they found deer horns, tiles and various implements, and, the attention of an antiquary having been directed to this find, he concluded that it was the site of an ancient lake village. The lakes of Geneva, Constance, and Neufchatel, have also yielded much that throws light on the habits and intelligence of these lake men. They wove, they made pottery, they grew and parched corn – nay they ground it, and made biscuits, they ate apples, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, hazel and beech nuts, and peas. They evidently fed on cereals, fruit, fish, and the flesh of wild animals, for bones of the following animals have been found. Brown bear, badger, marten, pine marten, polecat, wolf, fox, wild cat, beaver, elk, urus, bison, stag, roe-deer, wild boar, marsh boar – whilst their domestic animals were the boar, horse, ox, goat, sheep, and dog. These, it must be remembered, range over a wide period, including the stone and bronze ages. They wore ornaments, too, for pins, and bracelets have been found. Lake dwellings have been found in Scotland, England, Italy, Germany and France – so that this practice seems to have obtained very widely. In Ireland they made artificial islands in the lakes, called Crannoges, on which they erected their dwellings. Pile dwellings now exist, and are inhabited in many parts of the world.

We have other traces of prehistoric man in the shell mounds, *kjökkenmöddings*, or kitchen middens, which still exist in Denmark, and have been found in Scotland on the shores of the Moray Firth and Loch Spynie; in Cornwall, and Devon, at St. Valéry at the mouth of the Somme, in Australia, Tierra del Fuego, the Malay Peninsula, the Andaman Islands, and North and South America, showing a very wide range. The Danish *kjökkenmöddings*, when first thoroughly noticed, (of course, in this century), were taken to be raised beaches – but when they were examined, it was found that the shells were of four species of molluscs or shell-fish,²⁴ that did not live together, and that they were either full-grown, or nearly so. A stricter examination was made, and the result was the finding of some flint implements, and bones marked by knives, conclusively showing that man had had a hand in this collection of shells – and the conclusion was come to that these were the sites of villages of a prehistoric man, a hypothesis which was fully borne out by the discovery, in some of them, of hearths bearing traces of having borne fire. Thus, then, these refuse heaps were clearly the work of a very ancient race, so poor, and backward, as to be obliged to live on shell-fish – and these mounds were made by the shells which they threw away.

We can find a very great analogy between them and the Tierra del Fuegians, when Darwin visited them, while with the surveying ships *Adventure* and *Beagle*, a voyage which took from 1832 to 1836; and, when we read the following extracts from Darwin's account of the expedition, we can fancy we have before us a vivid picture of the makers of the kitchen middens. "The inhabitants, living chiefly upon shell-fish, are obliged constantly to change their place of residence; but they return at intervals to the same spots, as is evident from the pile of old shells, which must often amount to some tons in weight. These heaps can be distinguished at a long distance by the bright green colour of certain plants which invariably grow on them... The Fuegian wigwam resembles, in size and dimensions, a haystack. It merely consists of a few broken branches stuck in the ground, and very imperfectly thatched on one side, with a few tufts of grass and rushes. The whole cannot be so much as the work of an hour, and it is only used for a few days... At a subsequent period, the *Beagle* anchored for a couple of days under Wollaston Island, which is a short way to the northward. While going on shore, we pulled alongside a canoe with six Fuegians. These were the most abject and miserable creatures I anywhere beheld. On the east coast, the natives, as we have seen, have guanaco cloaks, and, on the west, they possess sealskins. Amongst the central tribes the men generally possess an otter skin, or some small scrap about as large as a pocket handkerchief, which is barely sufficient to cover their backs as low down as their loins. It is laced across the breast by strings, and, according as the wind blows, it is shifted

²⁴ The most abundant were the oyster, mussel, cockle, and periwinkle.

from side to side. But these Fuegians in the canoe were quite naked, and even one full-grown woman was absolutely so. It was raining heavily, and the fresh water, together with the spray, trickled down her body... These poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, their gestures violent and without dignity. Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe they are fellow-creatures and inhabitants of the same world... At night, five or six human beings, naked, and scarcely protected from the wind and rain of this tempestuous climate, sleep on the wet ground, coiled up like animals. Whenever it is low water, they must rise to pick shell-fish from the rocks; and the women, winter and summer, either dive and collect sea eggs, or sit patiently in their canoes, and, with a baited hair line, jerk out small fish. If a seal is killed, or the floating carcase of a putrid whale discovered, it is a feast: such miserable food is assisted by a few tasteless berries, and fungi. Nor are they exempt from famine, and, as a consequence, cannibalism accompanied by parricide."

This I believe to be as faithful a picture as can be drawn of the makers of the shell mounds.

But in Denmark, although shells formed by far the major part of these middens, yet they ate other fish, the herring, dorse, dab, and eel. Birds also were not despised by them, bones of swallows, the sparrow, stork, capercailzie, ducks, geese, wild swans, and even of the great auk (now extinct) have been found. Then of beasts they ate the stag, roe-deer, wild boar, urus, dog, fox, wolf, marten, otter, lynx, wild cat, hedgehog, bear, and mouse; beside which they lived on the seal, porpoise, and water rat.

Owing to the almost total absence of polished implements – and yet the fact being that portions of one or two have been found – the makers of these kjökkenmöddings, are classed as belonging to the later Palæolithic period.

Of the Bronze and Iron Ages there is no necessity to write, men were emerging from their primæval barbarity – and all the gentle arts, though undeveloped, were nascent. Men who could smelt metals, and mould, and forge them, cannot be considered as utter barbarians, such as were the long-headed men, with their chipped flint implements and weapons.

Wild Men

Sometimes a specimen of humanity has got astray in infancy, and has been dragged up somehow in the woods, like Caspar Hauser, and Peter the Wild Boy, and fiction supplies other instances, such as Romulus and Remus, Orson, &c. Some of them were credited with being hairy as are the accompanying wild man and woman, as they are portrayed in John Sluper's book, where they are thus described: —

“L’Homme Sauvage

“Combien que Dieu le createur seul sage,
A fait user les hommes de raison:
Icy voyez un vray homme sauvage,
Son corps vela est en toute saison.”

“La Femme Sauvage

“Femme sauvage a l’œil humain, non sainte,
Ainsi qu’elle est sur le naturel lieu,
Au naturel vous est icy depeinte,
Comme voyez qu’il appert a votre vue.”

When Cæsar came to Britain for the second time, he found the Britons, although to a great extent civilised, having cavalry and charioteers (so many of the latter, that Cassivelaunus left about 4000 to watch the Romans), and knowing the art of fortification, yet in themselves, only just emerging from utter barbarism – the colouring and shaving of themselves showed that they had vanity, and were making, after their fashion, the most of their personal charms. Cæsar (Book v. 14) writes: “Of all these *tribes*, by far the most civilised are those who inhabit Kent, which district is altogether maritime; nor do they differ much from the Gallic customs. Most of those in the interior do not sow corn, but live on flesh and milk, and are clad in skins. All the Britons, in truth, dye themselves with woad, which produces a bluish colour, and on this account they are of a more frightful aspect in battle. They have flowing hair, and every part of the body shaved, except the head and the upper lip. Ten, and *even* twelve of them have wives in common between them, and chiefly brothers with brothers, and fathers with sons; but, if there is any offspring, they are considered to be the children of those by whom each virgin was first espoused.”

Hairy Men

If, as we may conjecture from the above, the ancient Briton was “a rugged man, o’ergrown with hair,” his full-dress toilette must have occupied some time. But extreme hairiness in human beings is by no means singular, and very many cases are recorded in medical books. Many of us may remember the Spanish dancer, Julia Pastrana, whose whole body was hairy, and who had a fine beard. She had a child on whom the hair began to grow, like its mother; and, but a few years back, there was a hairy family exhibited in London – their faces being covered with hair, as is the case of the *Puella pilosa*, or Hairy Girl – given by Aldrovandus in his *Monstrorum Historia*.

She was aged twelve years, and came from the Canary Isles, together with her father (aged 40), her brother (20), and her sister (8), all as hairy one as the other. They were brought over by Marius Casalius, and first shown at Bologna, so that this is no doubt a faithful likeness, as Aldrovandus lived and died in that city. He gives other examples, but not so well authenticated as this.

There were two wonderful hairy people at Ava, in Burmah, who are described by two most trustworthy eye-witnesses, John Crawford, in his “Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava” – and in 1855, by Captain Henry Youle, in his “Narrative of the Mission sent by the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava.” They were father and daughter, respectively named Shu-Maon, and Maphoon. The father may strictly be said to have had neither eyelashes, eyebrows, nor beard, because the whole of his face, including the interior and exterior of his ears, were covered with long silky silvery grey hair. His whole body, except his hands and feet, was covered with hair of the same texture and colour as that now described, but generally less abundant; it was most plentiful over the spine and shoulders, where it was five inches long; over the breast, about four inches, and was most scanty on the arms, legs, thighs, and abdomen.

Of the daughter, Captain Youle writes: “The whole of Maphoon’s face was more or less covered with hair. On a part of the cheek, and between the nose and mouth, this was confined to a short down, but over all the rest of the face was a thick silky hair of a brown colour, paleing about the nose and chin, four or five inches long. At the alæ of the nose, under the eye, and on the cheek bone this was very fully developed; but it was in, and on, the ear, that it was most extraordinary. Except the upper tip, no part of the ear was visible. All the rest was filled and veiled with a large mass of silky hair, growing apparently out of every part of the external organ, and hanging a pendant lock to a length of eight or ten inches. The hair over her forehead was brushed so as to blend with the hair of the head, the latter being dressed (as usual with her countrywomen) *à la Chinoise*; it was not so thick as to conceal her forehead.

“The nose, densely covered with hair, as no animal’s is, that I know of, and with long locks curving out, and pendant like the wisps of a fine Skye-terrier’s coat, had a most strange appearance. The beard was pale in colour, and about four inches in length, seemingly very soft and silky.”

Maphoon, when Captain Youle saw her, had two children, one, the eldest, perfectly normal, the other, who was very young, was evidently taking after its mother.

The Aïnos, an aboriginal tribe in the north of Japan, who are looked down upon by the Japanese as dogs, have always been reputed as being covered with hair. Mr. W. Martin Wood read a paper before the Ethnological Society of London²⁵ respecting them, and he said, “Esau himself could not have been a more hairy man than are these Aïnos. The hair forms an enormous bush, and it is thick and matted. Their beards are very thick and long, and the greater part of their face is covered with hair which is generally dark in colour; they have prominent foreheads, and mild, dark eyes, which somewhat relieve the savage aspect of their visage. Their hands and arms, and, indeed, the greater part of their bodies, are covered with an abnormal profusion of hair.”

²⁵ Transactions of the Ethnological Society, 1866, vol. iv., p. 34.

This, however, has been questioned, notably by Mr. Barnard Davis, whose paper may be read in the 3rd vol. of the “Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London” – and he quotes from several travellers, to prove that the hairyness of the Aïnos had been exaggerated. However, Miss Bird in her “Unbeaten Tracks in Japan” may fairly be said to have put the subject at rest, for she visited, and travelled in the Aïno country. She, certainly, disproves the theory that, as a race, they were hairy, although she confesses that some were – as, for instance (p. 232), “They wore no clothing, but only one was hairy,” and, writing from Biratori, Yezo (p. 255), she says, “The men are about the middle height, broad-chested, broad-shouldered, thick set, very strongly built, the arms and legs short, thick, and muscular, the hands and feet large. The bodies, and especially the limbs of many, are covered with short, bristly hair. I have seen two boys whose backs are covered with fur as fine, and soft, as that of a cat.” Again (p. 283), “The profusion of black hair, and a curious intensity about their eyes, coupled with the hairy limbs and singularly vigorous *physique*, give them a formidably savage appearance; but the smile, full of ‘sweetness and light,’ in which both eyes and mouth bear part, and the low, musical voice, softer and sweeter than anything I have previously heard, make me, at times, forget that they are savages at all.”

The Ouran Outan

Transition from hirsute humanity to the apes, is easy, and natural – and we need only deal with the Simiinae, which includes the Orang, the Chimpanzee, and the Gorilla. These are the largest apes, and nearest approach to man – but, although they may be tailless, yet there is that short great toe which prevents any acceptance of their humanity. The orang is exclusively an inhabitant of Borneo and Sumatra, and in those two islands it may be found in the swampy forests near the coast. It grows to a large size, for an ape, about four feet four inches high, but is neither so large, nor so strong, as the Gorilla. Compared with man, its arms seem to be as extravagantly long, as its legs are ridiculously short. When wild, it feeds entirely on vegetable diet, and makes a kind of house, or nest, in trees, interweaving the branches, so as to obtain shelter. They do not stand confinement well, being languid and miserable – but, in their native wildness, they can, if necessity arises, fight well in their own defence. A. R. Wallace, in his “Malay Archipelago; the Land of the Orang Utan and the Bird of Paradise,” tells the following story of its combativeness.

“A few miles down the river there is a Dyak house, and the inhabitants saw a large orang feeding on the young shoots of a palm by the river side. On being alarmed, he retreated towards the jungle, which was close by, and a number of the men, armed with spears and choppers, ran out to intercept him. The man who was in front, tried to run his spear through the animal’s body, but the orang seized it in his hands, and in an instant got hold of the man’s arm, which he seized in his mouth, making his teeth meet in the flesh above the elbow, which he tore and lacerated in a dreadful manner. Had not the others been close behind, the man would have been seriously injured, if not killed, as he was quite powerless; but they soon destroyed the creature with their spears and choppers. The man remained ill for a long time, and never fully recovered the use of his arm.”

It is called the Simia Satyrus; probably on its presumed lustfulness, certainly not on account of its resemblance to the satyr of antiquity.

Gesner gives us his idea of the orang, presenting us with the accompanying figure of the Cercopithecus, and quotes Cardanus as saying that the Cercopithecus or Wild-man, is singularly made, having the height and form of a man, with legs like man’s – and is covered all over with hair. No animal can withstand it, with the exception of man, to whom, when in its own regions, it is not inferior. It loves boys and women.

Pliny speaks of the Satyr Ape thus: “Among the mountainous districts of the eastern parts of India, in what is called the country of the Catharcludi, we find the Satyr, an animal of extraordinary swiftness. They go sometimes on four feet, and sometimes walk erect; they have, also, the features of a human being. On account of their swiftness, these creatures are never to be caught, except when they are aged, or sickly,” and, in another place, he says, “The Sphyngium and the Satyr stow away food in the pouches of their cheeks, after which they will take out piece by piece in their hands, and eat it.”

Topsell has mixed up the Simia Satyrus with the classical satyr, having legs and horns like goats; but he evidently alludes to the former in this passage. “The *Satyres* are in the Islands *Satiridæ*, which are three in number, right over against India on the farther side of the *Ganges*; of which *Euphemus Car* rehearseth this history: that when he sailed unto *Italy*, by the rage of winde and evill weather, they were driven to a coast unnavigable, where were many desart Islandes, inhabited of wild men, and the marriners refused to land upon some Islands, having heretofore had triall of the inhumaine and uncivill behaviour of the inhabitants, so that they brought us to the *Satyrian Islands*, where we saw the inhabitants red, and had tayles joyned to their backs, not much lesse than horsses. These, being perceived by the marriners to run to the shippes, and lay hold on the women that were in them, the shipmen, for feare, took one of the Barbarian women, and set her on the land among them, whom in most odious and filthy manner, they abused, whereby they found them to be very bruit beasts.”

He gives us his idea of the *Simia Satyrus*, which must have been an accomplished animal, for not only could it, apparently, play upon the pipe, but it had a handy pouch for the reception of the fruit (in lieu of coppers) which it doubtless would receive as guerdon for its performance.

Satyrs

He also mentions and delineates a curious Ape which closely resembles the classical Satyr: “Under the *Equinoctiall*, toward the East and South, there is a kind of Ape called *Ægopithecus*, an Ape like a Goate. For there are Apes like Beares, called *Arctopithec*i, and some like Lyons, called *Leontopithec*i, and some like Dogs, called *Cynocephali*, as is before expressed; and many other which have a mixt resemblance of other creatures in their members.

“Amongst the rest there is a beast called PAN; who in his head, face, horns, legs, and from the loynes downward resembleth a Goat, but in his belly, breast, and armes, an Ape: such a one was sent by the King of *Indians* to Constantine, which, being shut up in a cave or close place, by reason of the wildnesse thereof, lived there but a season, and when it was dead and bowelled, they pouldred it with spices, and carried it to be seene at Constantinople: the which beast having beene seene of the ancient Græcians, were so amazed at the strangenesse thereof, that they received it for a God, as they did a Satyre, and other strange beasts.”

I have said that Topsell has mixed the Ape and the Satyr, inextricably – but as his version has the charm of description and anecdote, I give it with little curtailment.

“As the *Cynocephali*, or *Baboun* Apes have given occasion to some to imagine (though falsly) there were such men, so the *Satyre*, a most rare and seldom seene beast, hath occasioned other to thinke it was a Devil; and the Poets with their Apes, the Painters, Limners, and Carvers, to encrease that superstition, have therefore described him with hornes on his head, and feet like Goates, whereas Satires have neither of both. And it may be that Devils have at some time appeared to men in this likenes, as they have done in the likeness of the *Onocentaure* and wild Asse, and other shapes; it being also probable that Devils take not any dænomination or shape from Satyres, but rather the Apes themselves, from Devils whom they resemble, for there are many things common to the Satyre Apes, and devilish Satyres, as their human shape, their abode in solitary places, their rough hayre, and lust to women, wherewith all other Apes are naturally infected; but especially Satyres...

“Peradventure the name of Satyre is more fitly derived from the Hebrew, *Sair*, *Esa*. 34, whereof the plural is *Seirim*, *Esa*. 13, which is interpreted monsters of the Desart, or rough hairy Fawnes; and when Iisim is put to *Seir*, it signifieth Goats.

“The *Chaldæans*, for *Seirim*, render *Schedin*; that is, evill devills; and the *Arabians*, *lesejathin*, that is *Satanas*: the *Persyans*, *Devan*, the *Illyrians*, *Devadai*, and *Dewas*: the *Germans*, *Teufel*. They which passed through the world, and exercised dauncing and other sports for *Dionisius*, were called Satyres, and sometimes *Tytiri*, because of their wanton songes; sometimes *Sileni* (although the difference is, that the smaller and younger beasts are called *Satiri*, the elder, and greater, *Sileni*;) Also *Bacchæ* and *Nymphæ*, wherefore *Bacchus* is pictured riding in a chariot of vine branches, *Silenus* riding beside him on an Asse, and the *Bacchæ* or *Satyres* shaking together their staulkie Javelines and Paulmers.²⁶ By reason of their leaping they are called *Scirti*, and the anticke or satyricall dauncing, *Sicinnis*, and they also sometimes *Sicinnistæ*; sometimes *Ægipanæ*; wherefore *Pliny* reporteth, that among the western *Ethiopians*, there are certain little hilles full of the *Satirique* *Ægipanæ*, and that, in the night-time they use great fires, piping and dansing, with a wonderful noise of Tymbrels and Cymbals; and so also in *Atlas* amongst the Moores, whereof there was no footing, remnant, or appearance, to be found in the daytime.

“... There are also *Satires* in the Eastern mountaines of *India*, in the country of the *Cartaduli*, and in the province of the *Comari* and *Corudæ*, but the *Cebi* spoken of before, bred in *Ethiopia*, are not *Satyres* (though faced like them:) nor the *Prasyan* Apes, which resemble *Satyres* in short beards. There are many kindes of these *Satyres* better distinguished by names than any properties naturall

²⁶ Thyrsi.

known unto us. Such are the *Ægipanæ*, before declared, *Nymphes* of the Poets, *Fawnes*, *Pan* and *Sileni*, which, in time of the Gentiles were worshipped for Gods; and it was one part of their religion to set up the picture of a Satyre at their dores and gates, for a remedy against the bewitching of envious persons.

“... Satyres have no humane conditions in them, nor any other resemblance of men besides their outward shape; though *Solinus* speakes of them like as of men. They carry their meate under their chin as in a store house, and from thence being hungry, they take it forth to eat, making it ordinary with them every day, which is but annuall in the *Formicæ* lions; being of very unquiet motions above other Apes. They are hardly taken, except sicke, great with yong, old or asleepe; for *Sylla* had a *Satyre* brought him, which was taken asleepe neare *Apollonia*, in the holy place *Nymphæum*, of whom he (by divers interpreters) demanded many questions, but received no answer, save only a voice very much like the neighing of a horse, wherof he being afraid, sent him away alive.

“*Philostratus* telleth another history, how that *Apollonius* and his colleagues, supping in a village of *Ethiopia*, beyond the fall of *Nilus*, they heard a sudden outcry of women calling to one another; some saying, *Take him*, others, *Follow him*; likewise provoking their husbands to helpe them: the men presently tooke clubs, stones, or what came first to hand, complaining of an injury done unto their wives. Now some ten moneths before, there had appeared a fearfull shew of a *Satyre*, raging upon their women, and had slain two of them, with whom he was in love: the companions of *Apollonius* quaked at the hearing hereof, and *Nilus*, one of them, swore (by *Jove*) that they being naked and unarmed, could not be able to resist him in his outrageous lust, but that he would accomplish his wantonnes as before: yet, said *Apollonius*, there is a remedy to quail these wanton-leaping beasts, which men say *Midas* used (for *Midas* was of kindred to *Satyres*, as appeared by his eares). This *Midas* heard his mother say, that *Satyres* loved to be drunke with wine, and then sleep soundly, and after that, be so moderate, mild and gentle, that a man might thinke they had lost their first nature.

“Whereupon he put wine into a fountain neere the highway, whereof, when the *Satyre* had tasted, he waxed meeke suddenly, and was overcome. Now that we thinke not this a fable (saith *Apollonius*) let us go to the Governor of the Towne, and inquire of him whether there be any wine to be had that we may offer it to the *Satyre*, wherunto all consented, and they filled foure great *Egyptian* earthen vessels with wine, and put it in the fountain where their cattel were watred: this done, *Apollonius* called the *Satyre*, secretly thretning him, and the *Satire*, enraged with the savour of the wine came; after he had drunke thereof, Now, said *Apollonius*, let us sacrifice to the *Satyre*, for he sleepeth, and so led the inhabitants to the dens of the *Nymphs*, distant a furlong from the towne, and shewed them the *Satyre* saying; Neither beat, cursse, or provoke him henceforth, and he shall never harme you.

“It is certaine, that the devills do many waies delude men in the likeness of *Satyres*; for, when the drunken feasts of *Bacchus* were yearely celebrated in *Parnassus*, there were many sightes of *Satyres*, and voyces, and sounding of cymbals heard: yet it is likely that there are men also like *Satyres*, inhabiting in some desart places; for *S. Ierom*, in the life of *Paul the Eremite*, reporteth that there appeared to *S. Anthony*, an *Hippocentaure* such as the Poets describe, and presently he saw, in a rocky valley adjoining, a little man having croked nostrils, hornes growing out of his forhed, and the neather part of his body had Goat’s feet; the holy man, not dismayed, taking the shield of faith, and the breastplate of righteousness, like a good souldior of Christ, pressed toward him, which brought him some fruites of palmes as pledges of his peace, upon which he fed in the journey; which Saint *Anthony* perceiving, he asked him who he was, and received this answer; I am a mortall creature, one of the inhabitants of this Desart, whom the Gentiles (deceived with error) doe worship, and call *Fauni*, *Satyres*, and *Incubi*: I am come in ambassage from our flocke, intreating that thou would’st pray for us unto the common GOD, who came to save the world; the which words were no sooner ended, but he ran away as fast as any foule could fly. And least this should seeme false, under *Constantine* at *Alexandria* there was such a man to be seene alive, and was a publick spectacle to all the World;

the carcasse thereof, after his death, was kept from corruption by heat, through salt, and was carried to *Antiocha* that the Emperor himself might see it.

“*Satyres* are very sildom seene, and taken with great difficulty, as is before saide: for there were two of these founde in the woods of *Saxony* towards *Dacia*, in a desart, the female was killed by the darts of the hunters, and the biting of Dogs, but the male was taken alive, being in the upper parts like a man, and in the neather partes like a Goat, but all hairy throughout: he was brought to be tame, and learned to go upright, and also to speake some wordes, but with a voice like a Goat, and without all reason.

“The famous learned man *George Fabricius*, shewed me this shape of a monstrous beast that is fit to be joyned to the story of *Satyres*. There was, (saide he,) in the territory of the Bishop of *Salceburgh*, in a forrest called *Fannesbergh*, a certaine foure-footed beast, of a yellowish carnation colour, but so wilde that he would never be drawne to looke upon any man, hiding himselfe in the darkest places, and beeing watched diligently, would not be provoked to come forth so much as to eate his meate – so that in a very short time it was famished. The hinder legs were much unlike the former, and also much longer. It was taken about the year of the Lord, one thousand five hundred, thirty, whose image being here so lively described, may save us further labour in discoursing of his maine and different parts and proportion.”

The Sphynx

“The Sphynge or *Sphinx*, is of the kind of Apes, but his breast up to his necke, pilde and smooth without hayre: the face is very round, yet sharp and piked, having the breasts of women, and their favor, or visage, much like them: In that part of the body which is bare with out haire, there is a certaine red thing rising in a round circle, like millet seed, which giveth great grace & comeliness to their coulour, which in the middle part is humaine: Their voice is very like a man’s, but not articulate, sounding as if one did speake hastily, with indignation or sorrow. Their haire browne, or swarthy coulour. They are bred in *India*, and *Ethiopia*. In the promontory of the farthest *Arabia* neere *Dira*, are *Sphinges*, and certaine *Lyons*, called *Formicæ*, so, likewise, they are to be found amongst the *Trogloditæ*.

“As the *Babouns* and *Cynocephali* are more wilde than other Apes, so the *Satyres* and *Sphynge*s are more meeke and gentle, for they are not so wilde that they will not bee tamed, nor yet so tame, but they will revenge their own harmes; as appeared by that which was slayne in a publike spectacle among the *Thebanes*. They carrye their meat in the store houses of their own chaps or cheeks, taking it forth when they are hungry, and so eat it.

“The name of this *Sphynx* is taken from ‘binding,’ as appeareth by the Greek notation, or else of delicacie and dainty nice loosnesse, (wherefore there were certain common strumpets called *Sphinctæ*, and the *Megarian Sphingis* was a very popular phrase for notorious harlots), hath given occasion to the poets to faigne a certaine monster called *Sphynx*, which they say was thus derived. *Hydra* brought foorth the *Chimæra*, *Chimæra* by *Orthus*, the *Sphynx*, and the *Nemæan* Lyon: now, this *Orthus* was one of *Geryon*’s dogges. This *Sphynx* they make a treble formed monster, a Mayden’s face, a Lyon’s legs, and the wings of a fowle; or, as *Ansonius* and *Varinus* say, the face and head of a mayde, the body of a dogge, the winges of a byrd, the voice of a man, the clawes of a Lyon, and the tayle of a dragon: and that she kept continually in the *Sphincian* mountaine; propounding to all travailers that came that way an *Ænigma*, or Riddle, which was this: *What was the creature that first of all goeth on foure legges; afterwards on two, and, lastly, on three:* and all of them that could not dissolve that Riddle, she presently slew, by taking them, and throwing them downe headlong, from the top of a Rocke. At last *Ædipus* came that way, and declared the secret, that it *was a man, who in his infancy creepeth on all foure*, afterward, *in youth, goeth upon two legs*, and last of all, *in olde age taketh unto him a staffe which maketh him to goe, as it were, on three legs*; which the monster hearing, she presently threwe down herselfe from the former rocke, and so she ended. Whereupon *Ædipus* is taken for a subtile and wise opener of mysteries.

“But the truth is, that when *Cadmus* had married an *Amazonian* woman, called *Sphynx*, and, with her, came to *Thebes*, and there slew *Draco* their king, and possessed his kingdom, afterwards there was a sister unto *Draco* called *Harmona*, whom *Cadmus* married, *Sphynx* being yet alive. She, in revenge, (being assisted by many followers,) departed with great store of wealth into the mountaine *Sphincius*, taking with her a great Dogge, which *Cadmus* held in great account, and there made daily incursions or spoiles upon his people. Now, *ænigma*, in the *Theban* language, signifieth an inrode, or warlike incursion, wherefore the people complained in this sort. *This Grecian Sphinx robbeth us, in setting up with an ænigma, but no man knoweth after what manner she maketh this ænigma.*

“*Cadmus* hereupon made proclamation, that he would give a very bountifull reward unto him that would kill *Sphinx*, upon which occasion the Corinthian *Ædipus* came unto her, being mounted on a swift courser, and accompanied with some *Thebans* in the night season, slue her. Other say that *Ædipus* by counterfaiting friendship, slue her, making shew to be of her faction; and *Pausanius* saith, that the former Riddle, was not a Riddle, but an Oracle of *Apollo*, which *Cadmus* had received, whereby his posterity should be inheritors of the *Theban* kingdome; and whereas *Ædipus*, being the

son of *Laius*, a former king of that countrey, was taught the Oracle in his sleepe, he recovered the kingdome usurped by *Sphinx* his sister, and, afterwards, unknown, married his mother Jocasta.

“But the true morall of this poetical fiction is by that learned *Alciatus*, in one of his emblems, deciphered; that her monstrous treble formed shape signified her lustfull pleasure under a Virgin’s face, her cruell pride, under the Lyon’s clawes, her winde-driven leuitie, under the Eagles, or birdes feathers, and I will conclude with the wordes of *Suidas* concerning such monsters, that the *Tritons*, *Sphinges*, and *Centaures*, are the images of those things, which are not to be founde within the compasse of the whole world.”

Apes

Sluper, who could soar to the height of delineating a Cyclops, is equal to the occasion when he has to deal with Apes, and here he gives us an Ape which, unfortunately, does not seem to have survived to modern times – namely, one which wove for itself coarse cloth, probably of rushes; had a cloak of skin, and walked upright, with the aid of a walking-stick, and was so genteel, that, having no boots, he seems to have blacked his feet. And thus he sings of it:

“Pres le Peru par effect le voit on,
Dieu a donné au Singe telle forme.
Vestu de jonc, s'appuyant d'un baston,
Estât debout, chose aux hōmes cōforme.”

Before quitting the subject of Apes, I cannot refrain from noticing another of this genus mentioned by Topsell, and that is the Arctopithecus or Bear Ape: – “There is in America a very deformed beast, which the inhabitants call *Haut* or *Hauti*, and the Frenchmen *Guenon*, as big as a great Affrican Monkey. His belly hangeth very low, his head and face like unto a childe, and being taken, it will sigh like a young childe. His skin is of an ashe-colour, and hairie like a Beare: he hath but three clawes on a foote, as longe as foure fingers, and like the thornes of Privet, whereby he climbeth up into the highest trees, and for the most part liveth of the leaves of a certain tree, beeing of an exceeding heighth, which the *Americans* call *Amahut*, and thereof this beast is called *Haut*. Their tayle is about three fingers long, having very little haire thereon; it hath beene often tried, that though it suffer any famine, it will not eate the fleshe of a living man, and one of them was given me by a French-man, which I kept alive sixe and twenty daies, and at the last it was killed by Dogges, and in that time when I had set it abroad in the open ayre, I observed that, *although it often rained, yet was that beast never wet.*²⁷ When it is tame, it is very loving to a man, and desirous to climbe uppe to his shoulders, which those naked *Amerycans* cannot endure, by reason of the sharpnesse of his Clawes.”

²⁷ The italics are mine. – J. A.

Animal Lore

We are indebted to Pliny for much strange animal lore – which, however, will scarcely bear the fierce light of modern investigation. Thus, he tells us of places in which certain animals are not to be found, and narrates some very curious zoological anecdotes thereon. “It is a remarkable fact, that nature has not only assigned different countries to different animals, but that even in the same country it has denied certain species to certain localities. In Italy, the dormouse is found in one part only, the Messian forest. In Lycia, the gazelle never passes beyond the mountains which border upon Syria; nor does the wild ass in that vicinity pass over those which divide Cappadocia from Cilicia. On the banks of the Hellespont, the stags never pass into a strange territory, and, about Arginussa, they never go beyond Mount Elaphus; those upon the mountains, too, have cloven ears. In the island of Poroselene, the weasels will not so much as cross a certain road. In Boeotia, the moles, which were introduced at Lebadea, fly from the very soil of that country, while in the neighbourhood, at Orchomenus, the very same animals tear up all the fields. We have seen coverlets for beds made of the skin of these creatures, so that our sense of religion does not prevent us from employing these ominous animals for the purposes of luxury.

“When hares have been brought to Ithaca, they die as soon as ever they touch the shore, and the same is the case with rabbits, on the shores of the island of Ebusus; while they abound in the vicinity, Spain namely, and the Balearic isles. In Cyrene, the frogs were formerly dumb, and this species still exists, although croaking ones were carried over there from the Continent. At the present day, even, the frogs of the island of Seriphos are dumb; but when they are carried to other places, they croak; the same thing is also said to have taken place at Sicandrus, a lake of Thessaly. In Italy, the bite of a shrew-mouse is venomous; an animal which is not to be found in any region beyond the Apennines. In whatever country it exists, it always dies immediately if it goes across the rut made by a wheel. Upon Olympus, a mountain of Macedonia, there are no wolves, nor yet in the isle of Crete. In this island there are neither foxes nor bears, nor, indeed, any kind of baneful animal, with the exception of the phalangium, a species of spider. It is a thing still more remarkable, that in this island there are no stags, except in the district of Cydon; the same is the case with the wild boar, the woodcock, and the hedgehog.”

He further tells us of animals which will injure strangers only, as also animals which injure the natives only.

“There are certain animals which are harmless to the natives of the country, but destroy strangers; such as the little serpents at Tirynthus, which are said to spring out of the earth. In Syria, also, and especially on the banks of the Euphrates, the serpents never attack the Syrians when they are asleep, and even if they happen to bite a native who treads upon them, their venom is not felt; but to persons of any other country they are extremely hostile, and fiercely attack them, causing a death attended with great torture. On this account the Syrians never kill them. On the contrary, on Latmos, a mountain of Caria, as Aristotle tells us, strangers are not injured by the scorpions, while the natives are killed by them.”

He also throws some curious light, unknown to modern zoologists, on the antipathies of animals one to another. He says: – “There will be no difficulty in perceiving that animals are possessed of other instincts besides those previously mentioned. In fact, there are certain antipathies, and sympathies among them, which give rise to various affections, besides those which we have mentioned in relation to each species, in its appropriate place. The Swan and the Eagle are always at variance, and the Raven and the Chloereus seek each other’s eggs by night. In a similar manner, also, the Raven and the Kite are perpetually at war with one another, the one carrying off the other’s food. So, too, there are antipathies between the Crow and the Owl, the Eagle and the Trochilus; between the last two, if

we are to believe the story, because the latter has received the title of ‘the king of birds;’ the same, again, with the Owlet and all the smaller birds.

“Again, in relation to the terrestrial animals, the Weasel is at enmity with the Crow, the Turtle-dove with the Pyrallis, the Ichneumon with the Wasp, and the Phalangium with other Spiders. Among aquatic animals, there is enmity between the Duck and the Seamew, the Falcon known as the ‘Harpe,’ and the Hawk called the ‘Triorchis.’ In a similar manner, too, the Shrew-mouse and the Heron are ever on the watch for each other’s young; and the Ægithus, so small a bird as it is, has an antipathy for the Ass; for the latter, when scratching itself, rubs its body against the brambles, and so crushes the bird’s nest; a thing of which it stands in such dread, that, if it only hears the voice of the Ass when it brays, it will throw its eggs out of the nest, and the young ones, themselves, will, sometimes, fall to the ground in their fright; hence it is that it will fly at the Ass, and peck at its sores with its beak.

“The Fox, too, is at war with the Nisus, and Serpents with Weasels and Swine. Æsalon is the name given to a small bird that breaks the eggs of the Raven, and the young of which are anxiously sought by the Fox; while, in its turn, it will peck at the young of the Fox, and even the parent itself. As soon as the Ravens espy this, they come to its assistance, as though against a common enemy. The Acanthis, too, lives among the brambles; hence it is that it also has an antipathy to the Ass, because it devours the bramble blossoms. The Ægithus and the Anthus, too, are at such mortal enmity with each other, that it is the common belief that their blood will not mingle; and it is for this reason that they have the bad repute of being employed in many magical incantations. The Thos and the Lion are at war with each other; and, indeed, the smallest objects and the greatest, just as much. Caterpillars will avoid a tree that is infested with Ants. The Spider, poised in its web, will throw itself on the head of a Serpent, as it lies stretched beneath the shade of the tree where it has built, and, with its bite, pierce its brain; such is the shock, that the creature will hiss from time to time, and then, seized with vertigo, coil round and round, while it finds itself unable to take to flight, or so much as to break the web of the spider, as it hangs suspended above; this scene only ends with its death.”

The Manticora

Of curious animals, other than Apes, depicted as having some approach to the human countenance, perhaps the most curious is the Manticora. It is not a *parvenu*; it is of ancient date, for Aristotle mentions it. Speaking of the dentition of animals, he says: – “None of these genera have a double row of teeth. But, if we may believe Ctesias, there are some which have this peculiarity, for he mentions an Indian animal called Martichora, which had three rows of teeth in each jaw; it is as large and rough as a lion, and has similar feet, but its ears and face are like those of a man; its eye is grey, and its body red; it has a tail like a land Scorpion, in which there is a sting; it darts forth the spines with which it is covered, instead of hair, and it utters a noise resembling the united sound of a pipe and a trumpet; it is not less swift of foot than a stag, and is wild, and devours men.”

Pliny also quotes Ctesias, but he slightly diverges, for he says it has azure eyes, and is of the colour of blood; he also affirms it can imitate the human speech. *Par parenthèse* he mentions, in conjunction with the Manticora, another animal similarly gifted: – “By the union of the hyæna with the Æthiopian lioness, the Corocotta is produced, which has the same faculty of imitating the voices of men and cattle. Its gaze is always fixed and immoveable; it has no gums in either of its jaws, and the teeth are one continuous piece of bone; they are enclosed in a sort of box, as it were, that they may not be blunted by rubbing against each other.”

Mais, revenons à nos moutons, or rather Mantichora. Topsell, in making mention of this beast, recapitulates all that Ctesias has said on the subject, and adds: – “And I take it to be the same Beast which *Avicen* calleth *Marion*, and *Maricomorion*, with her taile she woundeth her Hunters, whether they come before her or behinde her, and, presently, when the quils are cast forth, new ones grow up in their roome, wherewithal she overcometh all the hunters; and, although India be full of divers ravening beastes, yet none of them are stiled with a title of *Andropophagi*, that is to say, Men-eaters; except onely this *Mantichora*. When the Indians take a Whelp of this beast, they fall to and bruise the buttockes and taile thereof, so that it may never be fit to bring (*forth*) sharp quils, afterwards it is tamed without peril. This, also, is the same beast which is called *Leucrocuta*, about the bignesse of a wilde Asse, being in legs and hoofes like a Hart, having his mouth reaching on both sides to his eares, and the head and face of a female like unto a Badgers. It is also called *Martiora*, which in the Parsian tongue, signifieth a devourer of men.”

Du Bartas, in “His First Week, or the Birth of the World,” mentions our friend as being created:

—
“Then th’ *Vnicorn*, th’ *Hyæna* tearing tombs,
Swift *Mantichor*’, and *Nubian Cephus* comes;
Of which last three, each hath, (as heer they stand)
Man’s voice, Man’s visage, Man like foot and hand.”

It is mentioned by other writers – but I have a theory of my own about it, and that is, that it is only an idealised laughing hyæna.

The Lamia

The Lamiaë are mythological – and were monsters of Africa, with the face and breast of a woman, the rest of the body like that of a serpent; they allured strangers, that they might devour them; and though not endowed with the faculty of speech, their hissings were pleasing. Some believed them to be evil spirits, who, in the form of beautiful women, enticed young children, and devoured them; according to some, the fable of the Lamiaë is derived from the amours of Jupiter with a beautiful woman, Lamia, whom Juno rendered deformed, and whose children she destroyed; Lamia became insane, and so desperate, that she ate up all the children which came in her way.

Topsell, before entering upon the natural history of the Lamia, as an animal, tells the following story of it as a mythological being: – “It is reported of *Menippus* the Lycian, that he fell in love with a strange woman, who at that time seemed both beautifull, tender, and rich, but, in truth, there was no such thing, and all was but a fantastical ostentation; she was said to insinuate her selfe, into his familiaritie after this manner: as he went upon a day alone from *Corinth* to *Senchræa*, hee met with a certaine phantasme, or spectre like a beautifull woman, who tooke him by the hand, and told him she was a *Phœnician* woman, and of long time had loved him dearely, having sought many occasions to manifest the same, but could never finde opportunitie untill that day, wherefore she entreated him to take knowledge of her house, which was in the Suburbes of *Corinth*, therewithall pointing unto it with her finger, and so desired his presence. The young man seeing himselfe thus wooed by a beautiful woman, was easily overcome by her allurements, and did oftentimes frequent her company.

“There was a certaine wise man, and a Philosopher, which espied the same, and spake unto *Menippus* in this manner, ‘O formose, et a formosis, expetitie mulieribus, ophin thalpies, cai se ophis,’ that is to say, ‘O fair *Menippus*, beloved of beautiful women, art thou a serpent, and dost nourish a serpent?’ by which words he gave him his first admonition, or incling of a mischief; but not prevayling, *Menippus* proposed to marry with this spectre, her house to the outward shew, being richly furnished with all manner of houshold goods; then said the wise man againe unto *Menippus*, ‘This gold, silver, and ornaments of house, are like to *Tantalus* Apples, who are said by *Homer* to make a faire shew, but to containe in them no substance at all; even so, whatsoever you conceave of this riches, there is no matter or substance in the things which you see, for they are onely inchaunted images, and shadowes, which that you may beleewe, this your neate bride is one of the *Empusæ*, called *Lamia*, or *Mormolicæ*, wonderfull desirous of commerce with men, and loving their flesh above measure; but those whom they doe entice, afterwards they devoure without love or pittie, feeding upon their flesh.’ At which words the wise man caused the gold and silver plate, and household stuffe, cookes, and servants to vanish all away. Then did the spectre like unto one that wept, entreate the wise man that he would not torment her, nor yet cause her to confesse what manner of person she was; but he on the other side being inexorable, compelled her to declare the whole truth, which was, that she was a Phairy, and that she purposed to use the companie of *Menippus*, and feede him fat with all manner of pleasures, to the extent that, afterward, she might eate up and devour his body, for all their kinde love was only to feed upon beautiful yong men...

“To leave therefore these fables, and come to the true description of the *Lamia*, we have in hand. In the foure and thirty chapter of Esay, we do find this called a beast *Lilith* in the Hæbrew, and translated by the auncients *Lamia*, which is threatened to possesse *Babell*. Likewise in the fourth chapter of the Lamentations, where it is said in our English translation, that the Dragons lay forth their breasts, in Hæbrew they are called *Ehannum*, which, by the confession of the best interpreters, cannot signifie Dragons, but rather Sea calves, being a generall word for strange wilde beasts. How be it the matter being wel examined, it shall appeare that it must needes be this *Lamia*, because of her great breastes, which are not competible either to the Dragon, or Sea calves; so then, we wil take it for graunted, by the testimony of holy Scripture, that there is such a beast as this *Cristostinius*. *Dion* also

writeth that there are such beasts in some parts of *Libia*, having a Woman's face, and very beautifull, also very large and comely shapes on their breasts, such as cannot be counterfeited by the art of any painter, having a very excellent colour in their fore parts, without wings, and no other voice but hissing like Dragons: they are the swiftest of foote of all earthly beasts, so as none can escape them by running, for, by their celerity, they compasse their prey of beastes, and by their fraud they overthrow men. For when they see a man, they lay open their breastes, and by the beauty thereof, entice them to come neare to conference, and so, having them within their compasse, they devoure and kill them.

“Unto the same things subscribe *Cælius* and *Giraldus*, adding also, that there is a certaine crooked place in *Libia* neare the Sea-shore, full of sand like to a sandy Sea, and all the neighbor places thereunto are deserts. If it fortune at any time, that through shipwrack, men come there on shore, these beasts watch upon them, devouring them all, which either endeavour to travell on the land, or else to returne backe againe to Sea, adding also, that when they see a man they stand stone still, and stir not til he come unto them, looking down upon their breasts or to the ground, whereupon some have thought, that seeing them, at their first sight have such a desire to come neare them, that they are drawne into their compasse, by a certaine naturall magicall witchcraft... The hinderparts of the beast are like unto a Goate, his fore legs like a Beares, his upper parts to a woman, the body scaled all over like a Dragon, as some have affirmed by the observation of their bodies, when *Probus*, the Emperor, brought them forth unto publike spectacle; also it is reported of them, that they devoure their own young ones, and therefore they derive their name *Lamia*, of *Lamiando*; and thus much for this beast.”

The Centaur

This extraordinary combination of man and animal is very ancient – and the first I can find is Assyrian. Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen, in one of his British Museum Lectures (afterwards published under the title of *From under the Dust of Ages*), speaking of the seasons and the zodiacal signs, in his lecture on *The Legend of Gizdhubar*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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