The cave man's legacy / E. Hanbury Hankin.

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"Man is the only animal that blushes—or needs to."—MARK TWAIN.

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is an attempt to justify the popular opinion that what is commonly described as "the cave man within us" plays, or may play, an important part in influencing our conduct.

If there is anything that appears to be new in this book, it is mainly due to the fact that psychologists appear to be unaware how much historical and ethnological evidence exists in favour of their views as to the nature of our tendency to do wrong, and conversely because ethnologists are unaware of the strong psychological reasons that exist for believing that "the primitive brute" is "still deep down within us chafing at the fetters by which he is bound by social convention."

It may be advisable, at the outset, to explain that the author has no intention of throwing aspersions on the moral character of our presumed ancestor Aurignacian man. The cave man influence probably dates from an earlier stage in human evolution.

My thanks are due to the editors of *Industrial Psychology* (Hamilton, New York) for permission to quote from an article by me on "The Origin of the Tendency to do Wrong" that appeared in their journal for October, 1926.

E. HANBURY HANKIN.

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CHAPTER I

THE MONKEY'S VIEW POINT

THE habits of monkeys deserve attention in view of the belief current among psychologists that certain tendencies to ill-doing, from which we all suffer, are due to vestiges of instincts that were of use to our ancestors at some recent stage of human evolution.

Let us begin by considering some evidence that suggests that certain observances that have been met with on occasion in polite society may have had their sources in the manners and customs of our monkey ancestors.

Some years ago I had a number of monkeys—the common Indian species, the "bandar"—in captivity. They were found by me, to use, in their intercourse with one another, eight different

sounds and some gestures, all of which, with one partial exception, I was able to understand and imitate.[1]

One day a wild monkey paid a visit to my tame ones and an attempt was made by me to catch it.

First, squatting down near one of my own, I made the particular sound whose exact significance was unknown to me. It means approximately good-humoured defiance. Any more precise definition is impossible to me, owing, no doubt, to my lacking the monkey's view point. After this sound had been continued by me for some time, the stranger's attention was attracted. On noticing this, while still squatting on my feet, I leant forward as far as I could and turned round so as to present my back to him. The display of this attitude is a sign of confidence. The strange monkey now approached me. I thereupon began smacking my lips. This indicates a desire for intimate friendship. The reason for this is that these monkeys are in the habit of picking dirt out of each other's fur; they continually smack their lips while performing this friendly office in anticipation of eating what they find. My advances had the desired effect and presently both of us were energetically smacking

[1] G. D. H. Carpenter has been able to recognize and understand thirteen different sounds used by an African species of monkey (*Cercopithecus*). (*A Naturalist on Lake Victoria*, 1920, p. 131.)

our lips and searching the fur on opposite sides of a tame monkey. The latter, it may be explained, was not in a cage but was tethered by a chain to a post.

After continuing our search for some minutes, with the attitude of absorbed attention usual on such occasions, the stranger took it into his head—if indeed I read his mind rightly—that I was trespassing on his preserves, for he suddenly slapped my face. To protest my innocence was outside the range of the monkey language. Fortunately, at this moment, a dog came round the corner of a neighbouring building, so, at once, I made the sound for danger. Then, both of us making the sounds for defiance and rage, we started off and chased the dog away. We returned, with much friendly chattering, details of which have escaped my memory, and resumed our interrupted sport on the tame monkey. Soon I did trespass on the stranger's preserves and made a sudden attempt to catch him. He slipped from my hands, however, and escaped to a tree. The rest of our conversation consisted in showing our teeth at each other and remarks by the monkey not worthy of record.

Several details of this conversation deserve attention. In the first place, no sound or gesture

employed either by me or the monkey was the name of any definite thing. Each sound or gesture was a symbol that led to an inference in the mind of the auditor, and it was this inference that was the spur to action. An analogous means of conveying thought still persists with us. In dealing with uneducated Indians, it has often been noticed by me that it is not what one says but the inference from it that is effective on the mind of the auditor. Similarly, advertisers, nowadays, are realizing the value of "the method of indirect appeal." It is highly probable that the use of sounds and gestures as symbols played a greater part in the conversation of early man than it does with mankind at the present day.

Let us now consider the monkey custom of smacking the lips as a sign of friendship and affection.

While picking each other's fur, as already mentioned, these monkeys, at frequent intervals, put into their mouths the pieces of dirt that they find. When we come to the apes, in the case of chimpanzees, the gesture seems to be slightly changed. According to Kohler, during the fur-cleaning ceremony, "the mouth of the active partner is rapidly opened and shut in a way peculiar to this activity," but, he says, the hand

is hardly ever lifted to the mouth to dispose of dirt found in the fur.[1]

A baby monkey, when I made the gesture in question, would respond by putting its arms round my neck, pressing its cheek against mine and smacking its lips. Let us look for reasons for thinking that this gesture is the origin of the kiss.

St Paul told the early Christians to salute one another with a holy kiss. Perhaps it is owing to this that the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* contains an article on kissing. From it one learns that among the Chinese, the Yakuts, various Mongolian people and the Lapps of Europe, when a gentleman is kissing a lady, he applies his nose to her cheek, makes a deep inspiration and gently smacks his lips but without allowing them to touch her face. This smacking the lips without touching the cheek is an exact reproduction of the gesture of the baby monkey. On the other hand, more human-like kissing has been observed among apes. Madame Abreu, who has kept many apes in captivity in Cuba, thus describes how she caught a chimpanzee that had escaped and taken refuge in a tree: "I went to the tree and, speaking to him, pretended that I was injured in the arm and suffering. Immediately, on seeing that I was in trouble,

[1] *The Mentality of Apes*, p. 321.

he jumped from the tree, and coming to me held my arm and kissed it strongly. And so we were able to catch him." Of a baby chimpanzee Madame Abreu says: "When I did not put sugar in the baby's milk she would not take it and tried to throw away the glass. Then when I put in some sugar she took it and offered to give me a kiss to thank me." Professor Yerkes says of chimpanzees: "Kissing among these animals is, like many other acts, almost human in its essentials. Possibly this is imitative."[1]

The oldest definite records of kissing that have come down to us are to be found in the Bible (*e.g.*, Genesis xxvii 26 and xxxiii 4). That it was a common form of salutation between adults is graphically shown by the following text: "And Joab took Amasa by the beard to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand; so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib . . . and Amasa died." (2nd Samuel, xx 20).

Thus with my monkeys, and probably also with our monkey ancestors, smacking the lips was a social custom of practical use as a means of showing affection.

With chimpanzees the gesture appears to have

[1] *Almost Human*, by R. M. Yerkes (Jonathan Cape, London, 1925), pp. 134 and 187.

assumed two forms. Either it exists as a useless accompaniment of the fur-cleaning process and this latter is associated with the pleasure these animals show in manipulating each other's bodies besides picking the fur. Secondly, it appears to have taken the form of kissing as we know it. Professor Yerkes suggests the possibility that this gesture has been acquired from human friends. But the instance quoted above of the baby chimpanzee offering a kiss as a sign of gratitude arouses the suspicion that the gesture was due to an instinctive urge.

In the course of evolution of our ancestors, smacking the lips appears to have become less useful and less used, either because there was less affection to show or because other ways of showing affection became available.

Kissing of infants by their mothers takes place over almost all the world. But, outside Europe, at the present day, kissing between adults seems to be entirely unknown.

Thus kissing persists with us as a "vestigial instinct." Its survival appears to be due to its association with other instincts, for instance with the maternal instinct as above mentioned, or, as in Europe, with the sexual instinct, often with a resulting dislike to kissing in public.

The history of kissing presents us with an example of an important phenomenon that underlies much of the complexities of human conduct.[1] Whereas in animals an instinct is usually a plain straightforward tendency to action, that has been inherited and that is equally developed among all individuals of the species, in man we find the primitive instincts modified, weakened or atrophied or perhaps swamped by the action of various social influences. We find them developed to different degrees with different individuals and even in different branches of the human race.

A question of enormous importance to social reformers is how far our primitive instincts may be sublimated or changed by the force of public opinion or by other social influences.

For instance, the " property instinct " or " instinct of acquisition ", which is essentially selfish, will have to be dealt with in any attempt to develop a communist state in which everyone has to produce wealth for the common good rather than for his own advantage. The fact that certain communist societies exist or have existed, is regarded by Thouless as a proof that " there is no psychological ground for regarding such an attempt as of pro-

[1] In this description an attempt is made to follow Thouless in his use of the term instinct in his excellent book *Social Psychology* (University Tutorial Press, 1925).

hibitive difficulty."[1] A need for caution in accepting this conclusion lies in the possibility that such instances were results of a partial atrophy of the property instinct rather than to this instinct having been conquered by a communist regime. For an analogy let us return to the monkeys.

Somewhat vague reports have reached me from two sources of adult male monkeys, during their breeding seasons, under the influence of sexual jealousy, killing the younger males. Sexual jealousy is part of the mental outfit that we inherit from our animal ancestors. It is one of the instinctive feelings that is likely to have become exacerbated by the growth of intelligence during the ape stage of our ancestry. The feeling of jealousy, among human races of the present day, varies greatly in intensity. Let us consider two instances, one of its maximum and one of its minimum development.

On my pointing out to an irrigation engineer in India the corpse of a man floating down his canal, he glanced at it and told me that it was a divorce because it was floating back upwards, the hands and feet of the victim having been tied together before he was thrown into the water. Corpses floating stomach upwards, he said, were suicides.

As an example of the minimum development of

[1] *loc. cit.*, p. 140.

jealousy, we may cite that fact that, in some regions beyond the Indian frontier, and in parts of Africa, the inhabitants offer their wives to travellers, with embarrassing insistence, either as a means of showing hospitality or with a view to pecuniary advantage.

It is extremely unlikely that a community in which maximum jealousy prevails could be induced to adopt the free-love habits associated with minimum jealousy by legislative enactment, unless such enactment was supported by ferocious punishments and complete sacrifice of ideas of personal freedom. With a virile race the property instinct may present as great a difficulty to social reformers.

A bishop travelling in Alaska once had to leave some of his luggage unattended. He expressed a fear lest it might be stolen. "You needn't be frightened of that," said a Red Indian Chief who was with him, "there's not a white man within twenty miles." It is highly probable that it would be far more easy to form a communist state out of Red Indians whose desire for property is in abeyance, than out of Europeans who spend their lives in indulging and stimulating the property instinct. Evidence bearing on this point will be brought forward in later chapters.

Now let us consider the monkey's gesture of

offering a back view as a sign of a desire for friendship. It is probable that this gesture, in the past at least, has been widely spread among savage races. Defoe had heard of it and misunderstood it. In *Robinson Crusoe* he mentions the "ill manners" of savages thus: "turning their bare backs", and says of it, "whether this was a defiance or challenge we knew not or whether it was done in mere contempt."

The use of this gesture may explain an obscure passage in the Bible. Before quoting it we may recall our conclusion that primitive man made more use of gesture and symbols in speech than men of the present day. Hence we may imagine that the leader of a tribe of neolithic savages, wishing to give divine authority to a code of laws he was about to promulgate might do so by assuring his followers that he had received marks of divine favour. Rather than directly saying that the tribal god was friendly we suggest that he might say something that would lead his followers to infer that this was the case. For instance, he might say that the god, when he met him, had taken pains not to show his teeth and he might emphasize this statement by the gesture of covering his face. Then, stooping and turning his back, he might indicate how their god had shown desire for friend-

ship. The tradition of such an occurrence, transmitted orally through many generations and at length put in writing by a writer of dignified and religious feelings but uninstructed in the subject of monkey gestures, may be the explanation of the following passage: "And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (Exodus xxxiii, 22).

We now have to consider another monkey gesture that appears to throw light on a singular custom that is mentioned in the Bible.

If two monkeys are shouting defiance at another monkey that they are not prepared at the moment to attack, they are apt to assume the following posture: Number one is on all fours facing the enemy. Number two stands on him, not on his back however but on his thighs, clasping the latter with his feet. Thus the enemy is faced by the united front of two angry faces close together. It is quite in accordance with the analogy of the probable origin of the kiss to suggest that this clasping of the thigh gradually came to be regarded as a sign of friendship. This stage appears to have been reached by the apes. According to Kohler, as "a friendly

form of welcome", one chimpanzee will place his or her hands between the thighs of another.[1]

Again it is in accordance with the probable course of evolution of the kiss, for touching the thighs as a sign of affection to fall out of use except when retained in connection with some other observance. Possibly the gesture in question survives as part of the following singular oath ceremony employed by Australian aborigines:

"One native remains seated on the ground with his heels tucked under him; the one who is about to narrate a death to him approaches . . . and seats himself cross-legged upon the thighs of the other; and the one who is seated uppermost places his hands under the thighs of his friend; . . . an inviolable pledge to avenge the death has by this ceremony passed between the two." (Sir G. Grey).

What may have been another form of this oath ceremony was employed by the ancient inhabitants of Palestine as shown by the following quotations from the Bible:

"And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a

[1] *loc. cit.*, p. 315.

wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter" (Genesis xxiv, 2).

And:

"And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not I pray thee in Egypt. . . . And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me, And he sware unto him" (Genesis xlvii 29).

The fact of the use of the gesture in question in such places so far apart as Palestine and Australia is evidence of its extreme antiquity. It seems far more probable that it is derived from some such monkey gesture as that above described than that it has some obscure sex significance as has been suggested in biblical commentaries.

It has been pointed out that one effect of developing intelligence in monkeys and apes would be to stimulate the further development of the property instinct. Evidence that already among monkeys this instinct demands more than is needed for mere subsistence is given by the following

anecdote. It illustrates also what this instinct implies when untrammelled by social influences.

At a tea party in the verandah of my house in Agra, there were present a lady, a large monkey, a small monkey and myself. I poured out the tea. The lady cut the cake. She began by giving a large piece of cake to the large monkey which he proceeded to stuff into his cheek pouches. Then, at my suggestion, she gave him another piece which he held in one hand, then other pieces for his other hand and for each of his two feet. Then, the lady, wrongly thinking that his property instinct was satisfied, leant over him to give a small piece of cake to the small monkey. Instantly the large monkey dropped all his cake from his hands and feet and, with loud cries of anger, attacked the lady savagely and tore her dress. The lady was ignorant of a point of monkey etiquette that had often been observed by me, namely, that until the head of the family has had all he wants of any luxury, his family must wait. To him the idea of private property is a purely artificial conception. "Everything belongs to government and I am the government" is the big monkey's view point.

This large monkey was very much attached to a baby monkey. They were inseparable. But yet,

if I was angry with him, he would at once turn to this baby and bite it savagely till he made it scream. Similarly Kohler says of his chimpanzees: "When Sultan was quite young, and I punished him, he, not daring to avenge himself upon me, would run in a fury at Chica, whom he could not abide anyhow, and persecute her, although she had absolutely nothing to do with the cause of his rage."[1] The idea of vicarious punishment for revenge is not unknown among human beings. A lady informs me that, as a child, when her nurse punished her, she would bite and beat her doll as a substitute for revenging herself on her nurse.

Scratching one's head when in doubt is a gesture that appears to have been inherited from our anthropoid ancestors, for it has been observed by Kohler among chimpanzees.[2]

Changes of expression that have been identified as smiling and laughter have been noted by more than one observer among these apes.

Love of dancing also appears to have come to us from our pre-human ancestors, for chimpanzees have a sense of rhythm and are fond of dancing. They also enjoy decorating themselves with "dangling strings, rags, or blades of grass," showing that

[1] *loc. cit.*, p. 300. [2] *loc. cit.*, p. 319.

the "display instinct" takes the same form with apes as with men.[1]

Among human beings the property instinct sometimes assumes the form of a habit of collecting useless objects. A similar variation of this instinct has been observed with a chimpanzee.

Lastly, it may be mentioned that apes have a superstitious fear of the mysterious analogous to primitive man's fear of ghosts. Kohler made some dolls vaguely resembling animals, with black buttons for eyes, of which his chimpanzees were greatly afraid.[2] When he entered their room with one of these toys under his arm, "in a moment," he says, "a black cluster, consisting of the whole group of chimpanzees, hung suspended to the furthest corner of the wire roofing; each individual tried to thrust the others aside, and bury his head deep among them."

The transmission with but little change of various social observances is of interest as evidence of the continuity of mental life from monkey to man. This fact is in harmony with the idea of the animal origin of our "brute nature".

[1] Kohler, *loc. cit.*, p. 382. [2] *loc. cit.*, p. 333.

CHAPTER II

PRIMITIVE PUGNACITY

IF our so-called brute nature has been inherited by us from animal ancestors, we might expect to find it most developed among the primitive races of mankind. Let us first consider evidence bearing on this point as regards the instinct of pugnacity.

We owe a detailed account of the customs of the simpler races of men to L. T. Hobhouse, C. C. Wheeler and M. Ginsberg.[1] These authors find that wars or feuds occur among such races in two hundred and ninety-eight instances. In nine cases, with certainty, and in four cases classed as doubtful, war is unknown. Such figures suggest that primitive man had warlike habits which, with few

1 " Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples " in *Series of Studies on Economic and Political Science,* issued by the London School of Economic and Political Science (London, Chapman & Hall, 1915).

exceptions, have been transmitted to his descendants.

On the other hand, Perry has asserted that many of the simpler communities have peaceful habits, and he infers that such habits represent the original condition of mankind. He supports his view by evidence, much of which is singularly open to criticism.[1]

Among the communities he quotes as having peaceful habits are the Eskimo, the extinct Tasmanians and the Australian aborigines. Let us consider some facts that he has overlooked about each of these races.

According to Perry: "If an Eskimo is offended with another, he composes a song to set forth his grievance. When it is finished he invites everyone, including the offender to hear it. If the audience approves of the song, the complainant is considered to have justified himself; if not he is supposed to have been punished." This description does not cover all the facts.

Captain Knud Rasmussen, the Danish Arctic Explorer, informs us that, in one community of Eskimo he visited, no less than sixty-five per cent.

1 "The Peaceable Habits of Primitive Communities" in *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1917, Vol. XVI, p. 28. Some critical remarks on Perry's work may be found in my book *Common Sense and its Cultivation*, p. 278.

of the men were murderers. The reason for this state of affairs is the practice of female infanticide, which is carried to such an extent that the number of women is insufficient and the men are always fighting for them.

A very remarkable custom is recorded by Boaz.[1] He says: "Among the Central Eskimaux, a murderer settles in the house with the relations of the murdered man, and, after some weeks' residence with them, is challenged to a wrestling bout. If defeated he suffers death; if victorious he may kill one of the family." This is described as a "regulated fight". Apparently the murderer, by living in the household of the victim, comes to be regarded as one of the family and may be killed, after a fight with one of them, without starting a blood feud.

It is said that in many instances, regulated fights are less serious. For instance, among the western Eskimos, quarrels are often settled by a boxing match. It is clear that the practice of regulated fights must date from a later time than, and is a social amelioration of unregulated fights. It may be added that among the Greenland Eskimos, an injured man challenges his opponent to a dance

[1] The account given by Boaz is quoted both by Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg (*loc. cit.* p. 54), and also by Westermarck (*The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas,* Vol. I, p. 501).

in which each party sings satirical songs at the other. Cats do something similar but this gives no reason to infer that they have peaceable habits.

Thus the evidence indicates not only that Eskimos are not peaceable but also that their ancestors were still more pugnacious than they are themselves.

Now let us consider the Tasmanians. Perry says that they were peaceful, except that some tribes were warlike to a certain extent. Individuals of one tribe, he alleges, "while quarrelling, did not indulge in pugilistic encounters. But the parties approached one another face to face, and, folding their arms across their breasts, shook their heads (which occasionally came into contact) in each others faces, uttering at the same time the most vociferous and angry expressions, until one or other of them was exhausted or his feelings of anger subsided." It may be suggested that the idea that this method of settling a quarrel was primitive is absurd. Further facts remain to be quoted. *The Van Diemen's Land Annual* for 1834 (p. 80) says of them: "They were perpetually engaged in conflicts between rival tribes, and we are told that these were frequently attended by fatal issues. . . . Some of these tribes are infinitely more savage than

others and more skilled in the arts of war." According to Milligan: "The numerous tribes of which the population of the island consisted were constantly at war with one another, Davis reports similarly.[1] Each tribe occupied certain tracts of country, but they were constantly invading and at war with one another." Authorities agree that they showed many signs of mental slackness and degeneration. But they are credited with extraordinary powers of tracking and of recognizing the footprints of hostile tribes, an accomplishment nurtured by their warlike habits.

Lastly we come to the Australian aborigines. This is the most important case of all as physically they come nearer to our animal ancestors than any other existing human race. According to Perry they are of peaceful habits. He has overlooked the following evidence:

E. M. Curr tells us that "The Australian Black, without exception, nurtures . . . an intense hatred of every male, at least of his own race, who is a stranger to him," and "no black ever neglected to assassinate a stranger at the earliest moment that he could do so without risk to himself."[2] Wester-

[1] *Aborigines of Tasmania,* by H. L. Roth (London, Kegan Paul, 1890).

[2] *The Australian Race* (Trubner & Co., London, 1886), pp. 64 and 85.

marck says: "The Australian Diejerie, we are told, would for a mere trifle kill their dearest friend."[1] Basedow,[2] referring to their warfare, says: "The enmity may have existed for generations past. . . . In former days such battles were, according to all accounts, of fairly frequent occurrence." Curr asserts that wars are frequent. In their battles the opposing forces stand in two rows facing one another and throw spears at each other. Often the battle stops when one warrior has fallen. If no one is killed peace is made. If there has been a death, another battle may take place later. The same authority says that their wars are never for loot but are connected with the fear of sorcery. Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg tell us that "Among the Australians we are often told that any natural death is attributed to a member of some other tribe or local group. It may then be the duty of the whole group to which the dead man belongs to avenge him. This gives rise to a tribal war or a feud between groups, which is often settled by a ceremonial fight." Spencer and Gillen give a description of the elaborate ceremonies that precede the setting out of an "avenging party". Their object is to avenge the death of one of their tribe

[1] *The Origin and Development of the Moral Idea* (Macmillan, 1922), p. 328.

[2] *The Australian Aboriginal* (Adelaide, Preece & Sons, 1925).

which they think is due to the magic of someone in a tribe living perhaps a hundred miles away. Their object is to travel secretly so as to surprise and massacre their victims while asleep.[1] According to Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg, " the ceremonial cut and thrust, which is peculiarly frequent in Australia, is classed as an ' expiatory fight '."

Thus the evidence not only shows that the Australian aborigines are the reverse of peaceable in their habits; the expiatory or ceremonial fights can only be regarded as social ameliorations of real fights. In other words, the evidence shows that they are descended from ancestors yet more bloodthirsty than they are themselves. Apart from their murderous habits, their conduct generally seems to be good. J. MacLaren, who lived among these savages for eight years, says of them that " They were seldom guilty of mean actions and of cowardly ones not at all. Lying was most infrequent, and stealing—other than the stealing of women—more infrequent still."[2] This lack of the habit of stealing, together with their communistic habits, furnishes evidence that their property instinct is not strongly developed. Thus their honesty does not appear to be due to moral character, that is to say to

[1] *My Crowded Solitude* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1926).
[2] *Northern Tribes of Central Australia.*

power of resisting temptation, for, according to Sir Baldwin Spencer, the ordinary native is "mentally about the level of a child, who has little control over his feelings and who is liable to give way to violent fits of temper during which he may behave with great cruelty." Such a mental habit has no more appearance of being primitive than has their abnormal insensibility to pain. Their addiction to long and meaningless ceremonies and their tolerance of ceremonial fights, in place of the real fights that no doubt were indulged in by their ancestors, furnish proofs that their minds can not be regarded as "primitive" but as the result of a series of degenerative changes. In accordance with this view it may be mentioned that certain fossil skulls, from Talgai and Wadjak, indicate the possibility that the brains of present day Australians are smaller than those of their ancestors. One exceptional aboriginal, David Uniapon, "has astounded university professors by his breadth of knowledge and is an accepted authority upon the science of ballistics." The possibility must be admitted that such mental powers represent a reversion to an ancestral type.[1]

[1] A question to which one would like to have an answer is whether members of primitive races have common sense, that is the power of arriving at sensible decisions at a moment's notice. An instance of apparent lack of this power is mentioned in my book *Common Sense and its Cultivation*, p. 195 footnote.

Thus we see that much of the asserted evidence that man existed originally in a state of innocence is entirely illusory. Some peaceable communities no doubt exist among the simpler peoples, but we must regard their mental habit as being not original but conditioned by a partial atrophy of primitive instinctive feelings.

It will be of interest to consider an instance in which an historical or at least legendary account exists of the loss of primitive pugnacity. According to Captain Gilbert Mair before the arrival of the Maoris, New Zealand was inhabited by a Polynesian race known as Morioris. When they were expelled by the former race, they took refuge in Chatham Islands, where they remained in undisturbed possession for a thousand years. Influenced by the teaching of their leader Nunuku, they gave up the practice of warfare, the use of arms and the death penalty. "Benevolence to all," says Captain Mair, "was the predominating feature of Moriori ethics. According to their ideas it was evil to cause the death of another or to take his land."[1]

When a party of Maoris landed on their islands in 1835, the Morioris, after some hesitation, decided

[1] *Reminiscences and Maori Stories* (Auckland, Brett Publishing Company, 1926).

to adhere to the teaching of Nunuku, with the result that "hundreds of them were killed; the rest were enslaved, degraded, herded like swine and occasionally eaten like swine." "Part starved," as Captain Mair records, "heart-broken, disease-stricken, and hope-bereft, a doomed people whose idealistic principles have brought them to ruin," except for a few half-castes they have perished from the earth.

There is no evidence that the pugnacity against which Nunuku preached was disposed of by "sublimation" into a socially useful form such as healthy athletic contests. Neither did it suffer "deflection" into another channel such as beating their wives instead of fighting their enemies. Neither did the primitive pugnacity suffer "regression", as would have been the appropriate description had it degenerated into a habit of swearing at each other instead of attacking their foes. Their unwillingness to defend themselves seems to have been due to a partial atrophy of primitive instinctive feelings, as has been noticed elsewhere, though to a lesser extent, among various Polynesian peoples.

For instance, in New Guinea, the only weapons of war mentioned by Saville are spears twelve to sixteen feet in length, as if fighting at close quarters

was avoided.[1] They had one other weapon, a bamboo knife which was solely used for cutting off the heads of the slain which were taken as trophies. These savages are described as approaching for a fight with diabolical fury, but yet they threw their spears from too great a distance so that only a few of the opponents were wounded or knocked over.

It is among the immediate ancestors of virile progressive races, and among members of such races when no longer restrained by social influence that we shall find the most striking examples of "brute nature". Where peaceable habits are found in apparently primitive races, it is probable that, as with the Moriori, there has been a loss of primitive pugnacity.

We will now pass on to describe numerous facts that appear to indicate that our ancestors, at some recent stage of human evolution, suffered from a degree of ferocity and pugnacity that not only is unmatched among any human races of to-day, but also is not matched among either apes or monkeys or any species of animal that might claim to be related to our ancestors. In view of popular usage it is convenient to retain the term "brute nature"

[1] *In Unknown New Guinea,* by W. J. V. Saville (London, Seeley Service Co., 1926, p. 200).

but with the reservation that it is far from indicating a full explanation of the facts of the case.

CHAPTER III

THE AVENGER OF BLOOD

THE desire for revenge exists with apes and monkeys. It is an unpleasing feature of the character of our ancestors that is likely to have been exacerbated as the result of growing intelligence.

The history of primitive legislation is largely an account of the gradual curbing of the practice of blood revenge. This remarkable fact, of itself, furnishes strong evidence of the frequency of murder among our ancestors.

Murder in revenge for murder appears to have presented an overwhelming desire against which early legislators were powerless. In some instances such revenge was even regarded as a sacred duty.

For the ancient Israelites it was laid down that "the avenger of blood himself shall slay the

murderer: when he meets him he shall slay him" (Numbers xxxv, 16-19). In the Koran it is written: "Oh! Ye who believe! Retaliation is prescribed for the slain." Also with some tribes of Australian aborigines, with Guiana Indians and the Eskimo, revenge for murder is a sacred duty.[1] Thus the duty of blood revenge is not merely a feature of the mentality of one race of men. Its observance in such widely separated parts of the world gives a strong presumption that it is an inheritance from a very early stage of human evolution.

When the Israelites first entered Palestine, the first thing they did, after dividing the land, was, not to enact the many laws and regulations that one might expect to be demanded by the needs of their commerce and agriculture, but to take steps to limit the activities of "the avenger of blood". Six cities of refuge were appointed to one of which the slayer had to fly, and, if proved innocent of intentional murder, where he had to stay until the death of the High Priest. If he came out before them, though innocent of intentional murder, he was liable to be killed by the avenger. Thus, in the mind of the avenger, reason was powerless against the urge of a primitive instinctive feeling. Similarly, among the Greeks of the present day, the

1 Westermarck, *loc. cit.*, p. 331.

public executioner has to be protected from the vengeance of the relatives of those he has executed. So much so is this the case that, when he retires from business, he has to seek the seclusion of a monastery. Here again revenge for murder, and consequently murder, takes the guise of an instinctive tendency.

In legal history we find similar evidence. According to Pollock and Maitland: "The Homeric poems show us the blood feud in full force in cases of manslaying (there is little or nothing about wounding), tempered by ransom or composition which appears to be settled by agreement or arbitration in each case. In the classical period of Greek history this has wholly disappeared. But in Iceland, as late as the time of the Norman conquest of England, we find a state of society which takes us back to Homer. Manslaying and blood-feuds are constant, and the semi-judicial arbitration of wise men, though often invoked, is but imperfectly successful in staying breaches of the peace and reconciling adversaries."[1]

Similar evidence comes from other countries. According to Westermarck: "In ancient Eran blood revenge survived the establishment of tribunals. There is evidence left of its prevalence

[1] *History of English Law* (Cambridge University Press, 1898).

in early times among the Ayan population of India, though no mention is made in the Sutras of blood revenge as an existing custom. Among the Greeks it was only in the post-Homeric age that it was given up as a fundamental principle, the avenger being transformed into an accuser. In Gaul and Ireland, though justice was administered by Druids or Brehons, their judgments seem to have been merely awards founded upon submission to arbitration, the injured person being at liberty to take the law into his own hands and redress himself. In the preface to the Senchus Mòr, we read that retaliation prevailed in Erin before Patrick and that Patrick brought forgiveness with him. Among the clans of Scotland, as is well known, the blood feud has existed up to quite modern times; in the Catholic period even the Church recognized its power by leaving the right hand of male children unchristened, that it might deal the more unhallowed blow to the enemy. In England it was at least theoretically possible, down to the middle of the tenth century, for a manslayer to elect to bear the feud of the kindred of the slain, instead of paying the *wer* (the price set upon a man according to his rank); and long after the conquest we still meet with a law against the system of private revenge. In Frisland, Lower Saxony and

parts of Switzerland, the blood-feud was practised as late as the sixteenth century. In Italy it prevailed extensively even among the upper classes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Corsica, Albania, and Montenegro it exists even to this day." Among the early Teutons, the family of the slain man theoretically could choose between revenge and compensation. The latter alternative they were generally obliged to accept.

In summarizing the evidence, Westermarck says: "Thus the exaction of life for life, from being a duty incumbent on the family of the dead, becomes a mere right of which they may or may not avail themselves, as they please, and is at last publicly disapproved of or actually prohibited." The death penalty for murder he says, is almost invariable among civilized and semi-civilized people. It has survived after this penalty for other crimes has been abolished. It may be suggested that the reason for this is that it was a substitute for blood revenge. The death penalty for murder, on this view, is a result of sublimation of a primitive instinctive feeling.

Among the ancestors of European races, certain customs appear to have originated in an attempt to regularize and limit blood feuds, for instance the institution of "ordeal by battel". This custom

which strikingly illustrates the brutality of our forefathers, is thus described by Steinmetz:[1]

"When, in capital cases, the duel was fought by champions, the parties of the suit were placed where they could not behold the battel; each was bound with the cord that was to be used at his execution, in case his champion was overcome. If a champion was chosen, that he might have a stronger interest in defending the party in whose behalf he appeared, his hand was cut off if he lost the battel.

"In process of time before battell was entirely abolished by law, it was restricted to the following four cases: First, that the crime should be capital; secondly, that it should be certain the crime had been perpetrated; thirdly, that the accused must, by common fame, be supposed guilty; and fourthly, that the matter was not capable of proof by witness."

According to Steinmetz, this ordeal was first abolished by the Icelanders. It was done away with by St Louis of France in 1260, but, in England, traces of it persisted on the statute book till 1818.

It is recorded that in a trial by combat in France in A.D. 880, the victor cut off the head of the

[1] *The Romance of Duelling* (London, Chapman & Hall, 1868), p. 20.

vanquished, which bleeding trophy he presented to the king.

Important evidence as to how law originated as an attempt to curb the brutal habits of our forefathers is given by Sir James FitzJames Stephen.[1] He describes "a period when the idea of public punishment for crimes had not become familiar." Such a condition gives us a hint of a "pre-moral era". This was a time when "a crime was still regarded to a great extent as an act of war, in which the object of the law-maker was rather to reconcile antagonists upon established terms than to put down crime by the establishment of a system of criminal law as we understand the term." To show the importance of the conception of private war in relation to early English law, he quotes the following authorities:

In the laws of Alfred it is enacted, "that the man who knows his foe to be home-sitting fight not before he demands justice of him. If he have such power that he can beset his foe and besiege him within, let him keep him within for seven days and attack him not if he will remain within." Several other delays having been provided for, the law proceeds, "if he will not deliver up his

[1] *History of the Criminal Law of England* (London, Macmillan, 1883), p. 59.

weapons then he may attack him." Liberal exceptions are allowed to the restrictions imposed by the law upon private war. "With his lord a man may fight *orwige* (*i.e.*, without committing war) if any one attack the lord: thus may the lord fight for his man."

In nearly all the laws provision is made for the breach of the king's, the lord's or the Church's peace or protection (frith-bryce, mund-bryce) in such a way as to show that peace was an exceptional privilege, liability to war the natural state of things. The king's peace was extended to particular times and places, or conferred as a favour on particular persons. . . . Several of the laws provide that if a stranger stayed three days in his host's house the host was to be answerable for him. . . . These rules are precisely analogous to the ancient identification between a stranger and an enemy as "hostes".

Sir James Stephen goes on to say: "A single step, but still a step, however short, from private war and blood feuds is made when people are invested by law with the right of inflicting summary punishments on wrongdoers whose offences injure them personally. . . . Of this right of summary execution the Saxon laws are full, as the following extracts show: "If a thief be seized let

him perish by death, or let his life be redeemed according to his *wer,'* say the laws of Ina, meaning apparently that the thief's fate was to be in the discretion of the captor. . . . A very obscure law of Ethelstan's begins thus: 'That no thief be spared who may be taken handhaebende above XII years and above eight pence.' Another law of the same king implies that the natural and proper course as to thieves was to kill them."[1]

An amelioration of blood revenge is to be found among certain Australian tribes. Although, as already mentioned, with some of them it is a sacred duty, with other tribes the "spear-throwing ordeal" exists as a substitute for a feud. With these tribes no offence is criminal except murder. "The criminal generally acknowledged his offence and was exposed to spear-throwing (which was rarely fatal) and after it was received again as quite innocent. Perhaps every fifth man had killed his man."[2]

According to Westermarck, duels are a remnant of the custom of exacting vengeance. Indiscriminate attacks by one man on another were replaced by formal combats under strict rules.[3] The use of duels in ending or replacing war is thus described

1 *loc. cit.*, p. 61.
2 Beveridge, quoted by Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg.
3 *loc. cit.*, p. 132.

as occurring among some tribes of Australians. In New South Wales "war often ends in a single combat between chosen champions. . . . In Western Victoria quarrels between tribes are sometimes settled by duels between the chiefs, and the result is accepted as final. . . . At other times disputes are decided by combat between equal numbers of warriors, painted with red clay and dressed in war costume; but real fighting seldom takes place unless the women rouse the anger of the men and urge them to come to blows.[1] Even then it rarely results in a general fight, but comes to single combats between warriors of each side, who step into the arena, taunt one another, exchange blows with the liangu and wrestle together. The first wound ends the combat."[2]

A similar practice of a combat between a definite number of warriors from each side, as a means of bringing a war to an end is known to have been employed among Greeks, Romans and Teutons. Tacitus tells us that the Germans had a custom of deciding a battle by a duel fought between one of their own men and a captive from the enemy.

Just as blood revenge has, in the past, been compulsory, so also with duels. This was the case

[1] *loc. cit.*, p. 497.

[2] *Australian Aborigines*, by James Dawson (George Robertson, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, 1881), p. 77.

with the ancient Swedes. Under the sombre influence of militarism a similar convention has persisted till recently in Germany.

Westermarck is of opinion that, among the Teutons, judicial combat developed out of the ancient habit of settling disputes by private duelling. "In most European countries," he says, "the judicial duel survived the close of the Middle Ages but disappeared shortly afterwards."

The occasional replacement of war by duels, which has just been mentioned, is a proof that before such replacement, war was more frequent.

During the period of the feudal system, not only could war be waged by the king against a neighbouring state but also each nobleman had the right to wage war on any other nobleman from whom he had received some gross injury. According to Westermarck, "in Scotland the practice of private war received its final blow only late in the eighteenth century, when the clans were reduced to order after the rebellion of 1745."[1]

It must not be thought that the habit of duelling and the carrying on of blood feuds are a prerogative only of uncivilized man. The tendency to such practices exists with such a virile and progressive race as the Americans. Fierce and terrible

[1] *loc. cit.*, p. 358.

duels have occurred in America within the memory of living persons. Colonel House has recorded that in Texas, during his boyhood, duels were frequent. He gives an example of two friends who, in consequence of a trivial difference of opinion about putting muddy boots on a bed, "went out, stood back to back, counted aloud, walking ten paces, wheeled, fired, and advanced upon one another. They fell dead almost in each other's arms, both having several mortal wounds. They were good friends a quarter of an hour before the duel."[1]

Less than a hundred years ago, "southern and western congressmen kept duelling pistols in their Washington outfits; some had special pistols inlaid with gold."[2]

A graphic account of a blood feud is given by Mark Twain in his book *Huckleberry Finn*. On enquiring from an American friend whether it was true that such feuds still existed in America, he replied that this was the case and that he had just read in a local paper of two men, between whom was a feud, meeting accidentally in the street and shooting each other dead.

[1] *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, by C. Seymour (London, Ernest Benn, 1926), p. 24.

[2] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Carl Sandberg (London, Jonathan Cape, 1926), p. 91.

Mention has already been made of the quarrels of the decadent Tasmanians, how they would stand opposite each other with folded arms, shaking their heads and using bad language till one or the other was exhausted. Contrast such feeble squabbles with the "rough-and-tumble fighting" by members of a virile race, described as occurring in Kentucky in the year 1825.[1] It included "gouging of eyes", "thumb chewing", "biting off noses and ears", and "the tearing of underlips with the teeth". That these brutal signs of rage were not isolated occurrences is indicated by the fact that travellers had a proverb that a tavern was hardly safe if the proprietor had lost his nose or an ear. It was a sign that he could not look after himself and apparently it gave a presumption that he would be unable to look after his guests. In a later chapter it will be shown how the immediate ancestors of these men, when fighting under their own leaders, had been distinguished by their admirable conduct.

Thus does social influence master our brute nature which is always ready to come out into the light of day when this influence is withdrawn.

One is naturally inclined to regard this use of the teeth as a weapon as "fighting under the Piltdown rules", or, in other words, to suspect

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Sandberg, p. 79.

that it is a reversion to habits of a very distant past. Among the Vikings, such use of the teeth had, at least, been heard of, for there was a law dealing with biting. With them, one could cut off a man's nose, or his ear with a knife or other recognized weapon and merely have to pay compensation. But a different fate awaited anyone who inflicted such wounds with his teeth: it was laid down in the laws of King Magnus that: "It is unfitting that men should bite each other like horses and dogs. When a man bites another the *syslumadr* (steward) shall have him taken and brought to the Thing and his teeth broken out of his mouth."[1]

Thus we see that the main object of primitive legislation, in countries so differently circumstanced as Great Britain, Iceland, Greece and Australia, was to limit the antisocial activities of the avenger of blood.

Had the evidence available been restricted to the facts of the present day, we might have concluded that the blood feud was an eccentricity of the inhabitants of such places as Corsica, Montenegro, Albania and perhaps also Chicago. But, thanks to historical evidence, we are aware that the blood

[1] *The Viking Age*, by P. B. DuChaillu (London, John Murray, 1889), Vol. I, p. 549.

feud was once widely prevalent among the most different races of mankind.

We are not however limited to evidence of previous blood feuds. According to ethnologists, various customs, such as ordeal by battel, duels and ceremonial fights, are social ameliorations and replacements of former blood feuds. Thus we have indirect evidence of a former still wider prevalence of blood feuds than is yielded by direct historical records. Such facts give colour to the suspicion that the blood feud was an institution common to the ancestors of all existing races of men.

So far as we know, it was never possible to abolish the blood feud suddenly. It had to be replaced gradually by less and less harmful customs. This fact affords a presumption that it is based on primitive instinctive feelings. It was a legacy from the past that was so firmly implanted in the minds of our predecessors that, despite its interference with social life and comfort, an effort lasting for many centuries, perhaps for thousands of years, has been required to bring it under control among civilized races.

CHAPTER IV

MURDER AS A HABIT

A DESIRE to illtreat other individuals of the same species who are strangers is frequently seen in animals. Despite their usual good nature and cheerful disposition, this tendency is strongly developed among chimpanzees. We may assume that our ancestors inherited it from the apes. Since the growing intelligence of our ancestors would make them superior to apes in understanding what was implied for their comfort when they saw others eating food that, if not eaten, might be of use to themselves or their families, the stranger-hating instinct would be likely to be exacerbated. Also, if there was a shortage of food, this instinct would have a survival value and might lead to a habit of committing murder for trivial reasons.

The stranger-hating instinct is still strongly marked among the Australian aborigines. As

already stated they have an instinctive desire to kill a stranger on sight. The Vedic hymns, according to Westermarck, are full of imprecations of misfortune upon men of another race. The instinct survives with us, in vestigial form, as race prejudice and race hatred. The ill-treatment of new comers by boys at school and college is another manifestation of the same vestigial instinct.

In the last chapter evidence has been brought forward of the frequency of murder among our early human ancestors. We now have to consider evidence yielded by the prevalence of murder for trivial reasons among existing primitive races.

The following facts are taken mainly from Westermarck:[1]

"In Fiji there is 'an utter disregard of the value of human life'. A Masai will murder his friend or neighbour in a fight over a herd of captured cattle and 'live not a whit less merrily afterwards'. Among the Bechapins, a Bechuana tribe, murder 'excites little sensation, excepting in the family of the person who has been murdered'; and brings, it is said, no disgrace upon him who has committed it; nor uneasiness excepting the fear of their revenge. . . . The early Aleuts considered the killing of a companion a crime worthy of death,

[1] *loc. cit.*, pp. 328 and 332.

but 'to kill an enemy was quite another thing'. To an Aht Indian the murder of a man is no more than the killing of a dog, provided that the victim is not a member of his own tribe. According to Humboldt, the natives of Guiana 'detest all who are not of their family or their tribe, and hunt the Indians of a neighbouring tribe, who live at war with their own, as we hunt game'. In the opinion of the Fuegians 'a stranger and an enemy are almost synonymous terms'. Hence they dare not go where they have no friends, and where they are unknown, as they would most likely be destroyed. . . . In Melanesia, also, a stranger as such was generally throughout the islands an enemy to be killed. In Savage Island the slaying of a member of another tribe—that is a potential enemy—'was a virtue rather than a crime'. To a young Samoan it was the realization of his highest ambition to be publicly thanked for killing a foe in mortal combat."

Among the Sioux Indians "the young Indian from childhood is taught to regard killing as the highest of virtues."[1]

The ancient Scandinavians considered it a disgrace for a man to die without having seen bloodshed. Darwin relates of the Gauchos that the

[1] *The Origin of Civilization*, by Lord Avebury.

most respectable of the inhabitants will always aid a murderer to escape.

The estimation in which murder is held results in the desire for trophies or proofs. A certain Indian frontier tribe has the custom of bestowing a particular kind of club on everyone who has committed three murders, much as, with us, a peerage might be bestowed on a public benefactor. Head-hunting and scalping are other examples of the same desire.

According to Perry,[1] in Borneo, "the less inhumane practice of head-hunting exists as a substitute for worse practices" which it must have replaced. "When a Borneo tribe," he says, "requires a head for agricultural or funeral ceremonies it forms an expedition, which goes to some other village near or far. The warriors wait in ambush, so as to strike off the head of the first passers-by. If they are successful they go away at once without fighting. Sometimes they are detected and fighting takes place, but it is never serious." Perry gives this description as part of his proof of the peaceable habits of primitive man, an advocacy which is the reverse of convincing. When these "peaceable" warriors return home they receive a reward for their booty. In some

[1] *The Growth of Civilization* (London, Methuen, 1923).

cases, at least, this consists in permission to wear a cowry shell as a decoration. This is if the retrieved head is of a man. But if the head is of a woman or child, a much higher reward is given, namely, the right to wear a monkey skull. The reason for this is that women and children never leave their fortified villages except when going along a carefully guarded path to fetch water. The would-be murderer has to lie in wait with a curved knife tied on to the end of a long bamboo. To hook this round the neck of a woman and get away without detection is difficult and amply explains his "peaceable" desire to return home without fighting.

If murder with our earliest human ancestors was prompted, as it probably was in a large degree, by a desire to fight and kill for the sake of taking property, one would expect this desire to be specially manifest against owners of property whether heads of families or leaders of hostile tribes. An example of this primitive stage of the war sentiment is to be found in the Bible—that valuable record of the customs of an ancient people. In Judges i, 6, we read: "But Adoni-Bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adoni-Bezek said, 'Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered

their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.'"

A similar instance of ill-treatment of an enemy is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 796. It says: "This year, Kenulf, King of the Mercians, laid waste Kent as far as the marshes, and took Pren, their king, and led him to Mercia and let his eyes be picked out and his hands cut off." Another example is from Egyptian history. A description exists of a Pharaoh returning from a war with seven kings hanging by their feet from the underside of the bows of his state barge and then being sacrificed. The Israelites, at the commencement of their conquest of Palestine, used to destroy men, women and children and even cattle ("everything that breathed") in each of the cities they captured. The kings of these cities were taken alive and afterwards hung. On one occasion the Israelitish leader Joshua made his men place their feet in turn on the necks of these unfortunate captives. Then his feelings overcame him and, instead of having the captives hung as usual, he slew them with his own hand. In modern times instances of special hostility against leaders are not easy to find. This is not the only instance in which, all over the world, among both civilized and barbarous races, there has been an amelioration

of primitive brute instincts within historical times.

The French revolutionaries showed special hatred of men prominent either in wealth or ability, owing to an emergence of primitive instincts for a reason to be investigated in a later chapter. Blücher, the Prussian general, also, wanted to shoot Napoleon out of hand after the downfall of the latter but was prevented by Wellington. But usually, in modern times, and in civilized races, respect for authority combined with sympathy for the fallen seems to extend to leaders of the conquered foe.

The institution of war is so deeply ingrained in our nature that it is only in modern times that we are beginning to be ashamed of it. War is not a modern invention. A battle of archers is depicted in a palæolithic rock painting in Spain. With civilized races to-day, war is only tolerated when some advantage is to be gained. With uncivilized races a hatred to be indulged is a sufficient excuse. A state of war is the normal condition of many of the tribes of the Indian frontier. Katharine Mayo gives the following description of the life of the tribesmen through whose territory runs the road of the Khyber Pass:

"They may not shoot across the road, it being

the highway of the King-Emperor. But on either side of it they shoot as they please, the country being their country. Their whole life is war, clan on clan, house on house, man on man, yet, for utter joy, Muslim on Himdu. Hills are bare, food is scarce, and the delight of life is stalking human prey."[1]

A similar state of affairs existed, till modern times, among the New Zealanders. Darwin relates the following anecdote about them:

"A missionary found a chief and his tribe in preparation for war; their muskets clean and bright, and their ammunition ready. He reasoned long on the inutility of the war, and the little provocation which had been given for it. The chief was much shaken in his resolution, and seemed in doubt: but at length it occurred to him that a barrel of his gunpowder was in a bad state, and that it would not keep much longer. This was brought forward as an unanswerable argument for the necessity of immediately declaring war: the idea of allowing so much good gunpowder to spoil was not to be thought of; and this settled the point."[2]

[1] *Mother India,* by Katharine Mayo (London, Jonathan Cape, 1927), p. 67.

[2] *A Naturalist's Voyage on the Beagle* (London, John Murray, 1882 Edition), p. 419.

In Scotland, in the year 1424, an Act of Parliament was passed to the effect that "na man play at the fute ball". A later Act of the same reign laid a ban upon golf for the same reason as football, namely, "because they are esteemed to be unprofitable sports for the common gude of the realm and defence thereof". Edward III, in the fourteenth century, prohibited under pain of imprisonment, "handball, football or hockey, coursing and cockfighting or other such idle games", on the avowed ground that they drew men away from the butts where they should be practising the long bow. Such edicts furnish evidence that the authorities of that period regarded preparation for war as a far more serious matter than is the case to-day.

Not only have we advanced beyond such a frame of mind but also a strong dislike of war has been developing in recent years in European countries. So much is this the case that, in the years before 1914, the German militarist party thought it advisable to subject their countrymen to an intense militarist propaganda in order to predispose them to war. If, as they would probably assert, such propaganda was necessary as a precautionary measure, for their purpose, we may reasonably anticipate that, in the absence of such propaganda,

and especially with the help of peace propaganda, reason and education will, at length, make war between civilized peoples a thing of the past. There can be no doubt that, despite the small amount of direct political power as yet possessed by the League of Nations, its influence on the side of peace is already exerting a powerful effect on the intercourse of the peoples of Europe.

In view of the existence of race prejudice and race hatred, it is mere waste of time to preach the universal brotherhood of mankind, a conception arrived at without any reference to psychological realities. Experience gained during the war period gives ample ground for asserting that, with ordinary people, ordinary intercourse and acquaintance with men of another race is apt to stimulate rather than assuage race prejudice. Reasons given for such prejudice are usually inadequate. Let us take an example. An American Intelligence Officer, in a diary kept by him during the war, makes several references to what he regarded as the serious question of ill-feeling between English and American troops. Describing English food, he says: "Unquestionably big cause for dislike of English. Came over on English transports, boiled fish, boiled everything, no salt, dough pudding, with bill-poster paste for sauce. And ham sand-

wiches and hot dogs sold at high prices by concessionaires! No wonder they arrive sore. Stomach the seat of all emotions. No American can ever kiss hand that feeds him 'bubble and squeak' (An English pudding peculiarly without taste)."[1] The triviality of reasons often given for race prejudice is an indication that we are here dealing with one of those "secondary instincts" that, we are now beginning to realize, play their part in determining human conduct.

Thus the idea of universal brotherhood is a broken reed. On the other hand there is nothing irrational or contrary to psychological principles in the idea of a perpetual truce between civilized nations. We may reasonably hope that this will happen and that military departments will ultimately evolve into organizations dealing with Boy Scouts, ceremonial parades and other harmless sublimations of the war spirit.[1]

[1] *Wine, Women and War,* Anonymous (London, W. Heinemann, 1927), p. 209.

[1] If Boy Scout activities have any effect on primitive instincts, it must be to provide for them a harmless and healthy sublimation in the form of scouting, tracking, parading in uniform and so on, which, however interesting they are to the boy, are certain to be regarded by him as puerile when he grows up. On the other hand, the development of athleticism, in the form of gymnastic displays carried out with military precision, as, at the present day, are popular in several European nations, deserves no such commendation. Such exercises involve no sublimation of primitive feelings. They are military drill in everything but name. Their object seems to be to turn youths into slaves to a military machine.

It is possible to call to mind instances of an animal getting pleasure by teasing another of its own species. In the case of man, this tendency has developed into a cruelty instinct which, with us, is partly vestigial and partly latent. With many races, legal punishments for crime, by exceeding in their ferocity what public opinion demands, yield a proof that the cruelty instinct was more developed among our forefathers than it is with us. The subject is not a pleasant one to pursue in detail. It will suffice to quote a few illustrative facts. The following is taken from a book of reminiscences:

"I think the happiest times of my childhood were spent in a large coal cellar. Into this I used to lock myself to read of the exploits of Harkaway Dick, who lived in a hollow tree, possessed a tame, black panther and a pair of Winchester repeating rifles, with which at one sitting he shot no less than forty-five pirates through a loophole in the bark of the tree. I think I have never since so fully tasted of the joys of life."[1]

Notice that this pleasure was not due to love of adventure or of facing or overcoming dangers. Harkaway Dick shot his pirates without any risk to himself. The pleasure was sheer undiluted love of

[1] *Ancient Lights*, by F. M. Hueffer (London, Chapman & Hall).

murder for its own sake. In my school days there was a boys' paper that published stories of this kind. One number came into my possession. It contained a chapter of a story at the end of which the hero had been caught by his enemies. Full details of the torture to which he was to be subjected were promised for the following numbers of the journal.

Such fondness for stories of murder and torture of enemies is not unknown among adults of European races, but usually not counting as the highest of the joys of life. It is, however, a significant and regrettable fact that the kind of news that, more than any other, is known to increase the sale of newspapers is not records of achievements of which humanity may be proud, but the evidence in a case of murder or the battles of a war.

It has been suggested that such enjoyments may serve the purpose of "securing a certain emotional discharge", and this relieving mental tension. But in the absence of artificial stimulation, the cruelty instinct is not so strongly developed as to need such relief. Its brutalizing effect on the mind, if indulged, is indubitable, and if it progresses beyond its normal latent condition apparently it tends to vitiate judgment.

There is no reason at all for thinking that we,

in England, are any the worse for no longer being able to witness public executions.

In the seventeenth century, according to Macaulay, our predecessors "arranged parties of pleasure to Bridewell on court days, for the purpose of seeing the wretched women who beat hemp there whipped"

In the eighteenth century, in certain trades in London, no work was done on "hanging days" as everyone went to see the executions which were very numerous and were carried out in public.[1]

In the nineteenth century, the public was debarred from attendance at executions, but, for some years, newspaper reporters were allowed to be present and their descriptions of what took place were published in the papers.

Public executions were put a stop to in England owing to scenes of brutality that had taken place at one of them. If it is right to curtail opportunities of indulging the morbid instinct involved, may we not hope that the privilege, if that is the right expression, of being present in court and of reporting such trials as pander to this instinct will in the future be greatly restricted?

[1] *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, by M. D. George (London, Kegan Paul & Co., 1925), p. 208.

An example of the deliberate stimulation of the cruelty instinct in a child is offered by the life of the Russian Czar Ivan the Terrible: "As a child, he was taught to be cruel, was taken to see people crushed to death by heavy waggons; was forced to witness executions, was encouraged to ill-treat animals, finding presently his chief pleasure in throwing cats and dogs over the high ramparts of the Kremlin walls."[1] The result must have been more than the tutors anticipated. When Ivan came to the throne, his first act of authority was to have his prime minister thrown to the dogs. Thenceforward, "his lust for blood, his pitiless delight in human suffering, his brutal punishment of small imagined offences made the Russians, cowering under the rule of terror, wonder whether they were governed by a man or a devil."

Now let us briefly consider instances of abnormal cruelty among adults. Lord Curzon wrote of the late Amir Rahman Khan:

"This terribly cruel man could be affable, gracious and considerate to a degree. This man of blood loved scents and colours and gardens and singing birds and flowers. . . . In this strange

[1] *Recollections of Imperial Russia*, by Merial Buchanan (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1923), p. 173.

and almost incredible amalgam of the jester and the cynic, the statesman and the savage, I think that a passion for cruelty was one of his most inveterate instincts. . . . He confided to an Englishman at Kabul that he had put to death 120,000 of his own people. After one unsuccessful rebellion he had many thousands of the guilty tribesmen blinded with quicklime, and spoke to me of the punishment without a trace of compunction."[1]

The same primitive hatred that makes men wish to fight and kill their enemies may lead their women folk to wish to torture the wounded and prisoners.

Hearne says of the Athapusco Indians: "It is too common a case with most of the tribes of Southern Indians for the women to desire their husbands or friends, when going to war, to bring them a slave, that they may have the pleasure of killing it; and some of these inhuman women will accompany their husbands and murder the women and children as fast as their husbands do the men. . . . Among the Iroquois, it is the women who take hold of the whips and lash the prisoners of war, and as a proof that the whipping is no child's play, the unfortunate

[1] *Tales of Travel* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1923), p. 50.

victims frequently succumb exhausted at the women's feet."[1]

Torture of wounded is said to be indulged in by Afghan women. In the Bolshevik invasion of Poland, Russian women are said to have been worse than men in this respect.

Evidence has been brought forward in this chapter that with many of the lower races of men, there exists to-day a habit of murdering for reasons that, judged by our standards, appear trivial. In the previous chapter evidence was brought forward that the further we go back in history the more prevalent was this habit of murder.

Slight evidence has also been adduced that liability to war and ferocity in waging war were greater in the past than at present.

Certain facts have been mentioned that point to the conclusion (already held by psychologists) that a tendency to cruelty exists in children of European races in the form of a latent instinct that, at least if not indulged in, will tend to atrophy as the child grows up. In a later chapter, reasons will be given for believing that, at some stage in our ancestry, this instinct was not latent but active. It then inspired cruel superstitions that led to cruel

[1] *Man, an Indictment,* by Ludovici (London, Constable & Co., 1927), p. 94.

deeds to an extent unmatched either among brutes or among any races of men of the present day.

CHAPTER V

MURDER AS A CEREMONY

THERE lived, not many years ago, a king of Ashantee who had the unpleasant habit of washing his hands every morning in human blood. If, after his death, such a king was deified, is it not possible that his worshippers might seek to gain his help by murdering human victims in his honour? Is it not possible that the deification of such kings is the reason why so many primitive gods have bloodthirsty desires and cannibal appetites?

If human sacrifice is thus connected with primitive pleasure in murder, we may anticipate that the observance might vanish or be modified in those peaceable races in which primitive instincts have partially atrophied. For instance, we should not expect it to occur among the Morioris with whom, as described in a former chapter, the instincts of pugnacity and self-defence had so far weakened that they were unwilling to defend

themselves when attacked by a warlike race. Neither should we expect human sacrifice to occur among the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego who were described by Darwin as so abject and miserable that "one can hardly believe that they are fellow creatures". He recognized that they were descended from the more civilized Indians living to the north of them and he ascribes their degradation to the effect of hostile conditions. It is likely that this degradation involved the loss of many religious beliefs and ceremonies.

The facts of the case are entirely in accordance with the above anticipations.

Whereas human sacrifice is comparatively rare among the simpler peoples, it seems to have been universal among the ancestors of more virile races.

Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg classify the simpler peoples and give the number of instances of human sacrifices known to occur among them as follows:

Lower hunters	P O
Higher hunters	5
Agriculture I	0
Pastoral I	0
Agriculture II	$13\frac{1}{2}$
Pastoral II	0
Agriculture III	$23\frac{1}{2}$

A very different result is obtained on studying the higher races of mankind. Human sacrifice was used by the ancestors of all the civilized races of northern Europe, whether Celts, Teutons or Slavs. It was a widespread custom among western Asiatic races, at least up to the fifth century B.C. It was formerly employed by Carthaginians, Phœnicians, Greeks, Romans, the Druids, and the ancient Dravidians.

Let us consider an example of the use of human sacrifice by the ancient inhabitants of Palestine.

It is related in the Bible that the King of Moab, after a defeat by the Israelites, retired to a fortified place. When the Israelites advanced to attack it, as we may infer from the account give in 2 Kings iii, 26, they found a fire lit at some prominent position on the wall in which a boy was being burnt alive. The King of Moab was offering up his eldest son "who should have reigned in his stead" as a sacrifice to his god Moloch. Probably the screams of the victim raised the anger of the Moabites and convinced them that their god was on their side for, on their making an attack, "there was great indignation against Israel" and the Israelites "returned to their own land",[1] apparently having suffered a defeat. Such an event

[1] Leviticus xviii 21, and xx 1.

would be regarded as a proof of the power of Moloch and may be the reason why, in after years, the Israelites showed a singular tendency to sacrifice their children by burning them alive before the altars of this god, despite the fact that the penalty for doing so was death by stoning. Even the great Solomon, in his old age, built a "high place" for Moloch.

Such an attempt to propitiate the gods by murder of one's oldest child, far from being an instance of exceptional depravity, was once a widespread custom. According to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Article Human Sacrifice), "the practice of sacrificing the first-born child seems to have been an article of ancient Semitic religions; the origin of the Passover is most probably to be traced to it. The practice is found, more or less systematized, in Australia, China, America, Africa and Russia."

The first amelioration of human sacrifice is likely to have been confining it to times of public danger or famine. For instance, the ancient Gauls used to sacrifice prisoners of war in case of a defeat. Both in ancient Japan and with the Teutonic races, human sacrifice took place on occasions of famine or danger. Formerly, before a Siamese army started for war, a human sacrifice took place.

Among the Aztecs of Mexico, in times of drought, "children, for the most part infants, were sacrificed".

The most terrible human sacrifices were those carried out by the Aztecs. Wars were waged by them solely with the object of capturing prisoners alive as victims. At the consecration of the temple of Huitzlopochtli, no less than seventy thousand were slaughtered. For this event, prisoners had been accumulated for several years. Under ordinary circumstances the number of victims throughout Mexico has been calculated at between twenty and fifty thousand yearly. These sacrifices on such a large scale are said only to have been adopted by the Aztecs early in the fourteenth century, but, according to W. H. Prescott, "the traditions of their origin have somewhat of a fabulous tinge".[1]

A proof that, throughout the world, in a bygone epoch, human sacrifice was still more frequent than in the period covered by historical records, is furnished by the fact that, in many places, ceremonies are employed that are obvious substitutes for human sacrifice. The following are a few examples of many such instances recorded by Frazer.[2]

1 *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, p. 36 footnote.
2 *The Golden Bough*, Part 3, p. 214.

In the East Indian island of Siaoo, in order to placate the spirit of a volcano, a child used to be stolen, every year, from a neighbouring island and sacrificed. The ceremony involved fiendish tortures and used to be carried out by a woman. To inflict such tortures, and still more to design them, the minds of these people must have been entirely dominated by the so-called "brute nature". Nevertheless, in modern times, this brute nature has so far lost its force that the sacrifice is carried out with a wooden puppet which is subjected to the same mutilations as once were inflicted on the living child.

At Luba, in Central Africa, a mock sacrifice of a little girl is carried out. A slight cut is made in her throat. She is then thrown into the river where men are ready to save her from drowning.

A similar practice occurs in other parts of the world.

The Indians of Arizona used to offer a human sacrifice at their Feast of Fire. This was abolished by the Mexicans, but, for long after, a modified form of the sacrifice was carried out in secret in which a man's throat received a slight wound from which he recovered.

In the ritual of Artemis, at Halae in Attica, a man's throat received a non-fatal cut.

In a case from Minahassa in the island of Celebes, two stages are recorded in the replacement of the human sacrifice by a mock ceremony. The sacrifice having been forbidden by the Dutch authorities, at first the usual preparations were made. The victim was bound. The priest then approached and struck at him with his two sacrificial knives, one being held in each hand. The blows were intercepted by attendants who had to catch the knives in their hands. Owing to his religious ecstasy, the priest used to hit hard so, to avoid being wounded, the attendants had to have their hands protected by cloth bandages. After some time, when we may suppose the priest had become reconciled to being cheated of his human victim, the ceremony was further modified. The victim was replaced by an effigy made of the stem of a banana tree on which the priest could work off his religious feelings unrestrained.

In the City of the Sun in ancient Egypt, three men used to be sacrificed every day. This practice was put a stop to by King Amasis who replaced the human victims by wax effigies.

Human sacrifice used to be carried out at the graves of Mikados and princes of Japan. Nowadays clay images are used instead.

The Gonds of India sacrifice straw effigies

which represent the human victims of an earlier time.

The Kayans of Borneo used to kill slaves on the death of a chief. Now wooden figures are used.

In Samoa, any disrespect of a household god had to be atoned for by a mock baking of one of the family in an oven, which, however, was not heated.

Traces of former human sacrifices are to be found in several ceremonies of a caste of southern India whose name Westermarck gives as "Malayans" presumably by mistake for "Malay-álams".

It is a remarkable fact that traces of human sacrifice have persisted in the central highlands of Scotland, in the form of a mock ceremony, up to the eighteenth century.

In this locality, on the 1st of May, the Celtic New Year's day, a bonfire, known as the "Beltane Fire" was lighted. The Gaelic form of the word is "Bel-Tein" and means the fire of Bel or Baal. It used to be lit by fire produced by friction of a piece of wood in a hole in an oaken board. A cake was made and broken into pieces, which were placed in a hat. Each person present had to draw one out. One piece had been blackened with

charcoal. Whoever had this was regarded as the victim. A pretence was made of putting him in the fire and, for some time afterwards, people affected to speak of him as dead. Similar fire festivals, with similar traces of human sacrifice, have existed, till recently, in several parts of Europe.

Frazer points out the possibility that the "Hallowe'en Bonfires" of north-eastern Scotland are derived from a similar mock ceremony of sacrifice, as a boy is made to lie down as close to the fire as possible while others jumped over him.[1]

Another motive than placating the gods may serve as an excuse for the ceremonial slaughtering of human beings, namely, the desire to furnish the deceased with slaves or attendants in the other world. A striking instance of this is given by Mr C. Leonard Woolley in a description of discoveries made at the royal tombs of Ur in Mesopotamia dating from the fourth millennium B.C.[2] In a shallow trench near where a king was buried thirteen skeletons were found. One of them was crouched up against a harp—"the harpist playing for the last time"—the others "lay

[1] *The Golden Bough,* Part 7, Vol. II, by Sir J. G. Frazer, p. 25. Also Vol. I, p. 146, and *The Druids,* by T. D. Kendrick (London, Methuen & Co., 1927), p. 129.

[2] An article in *The Times* of 12th January, 1928.

stretched out in two parallel rows, their heads outwards, their feet to the centre; two of them were children, the rest apparently women", and wearing elaborate gold ornaments. There can be little doubt that these were the harem of the deceased king. The king's chariot was also found. In front of it were the skeletons of the two asses that had drawn it, and by each was a human skeleton, probably of a groom. Mr Woolley adds that wooden figures placed in certain ancient Egyptian tombs "may bear witness to the same primitive ideas finding expression in a humaner make-belief."

According to Professor Schrader, "it is no longer possible to doubt that ancient Indo-Germanic custom ordained that the wife should die with her husband. Sacrifice of widows seems also to have been a regular custom among the Scandinavians, the Heruli and the Slavonians." The Sythians also were accustomed to slay the wives and attendants of deceased chieftains. "Suttee" or the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands is the name of a custom whose abolition is one of the benefits conferred by British rule on India. It is another instance of this once widespread practice.

The custom has also existed in America. Among the Tacullios of North America, there still exists a

mock ceremony of burning the widow. She is compelled to lie on the funeral pyre of her husband while the fire is lighting and has to stay there till the heat becomes intolerable.

Just as with the evidence of the prevalence of blood-feuds, so also with human sacrifice, the evidence from the past indicates a wider prevalence of the custom than is indicated by its prevalence to-day.

In the case of human sacrifice, the evidence from the past consists not only in historical records of this custom but also in the widespread occurrence of replacements of such sacrifices by harmless ceremonies.

It is impossible to believe that primitive man first designed mock ceremonies of human sacrifice and followed these by real sacrifice of human victims. Consequently we must regard each mock ceremony as a proof that the ancestors of the people who use it indulged formerly in real human sacrifice. The mock ceremony can be nothing else than an amelioration. It furnishes a proof of the partial atrophy of the primitive feelings concerned.

It is highly probable that even these mock ceremonies do not tell us of the full range of the habit in the past. Such ceremonies, representing as they do a weakening of the original tendency,

may themselves have dropped out of use, as indeed has happened with the Beltane fires. Had it not been for the lucky chance that one or two observers have left us contemporary records of these fire festivals, we should have had no proof of any kind that the ancestors of the Scotch ever indulged in human sacrifice.

Thus, though we have no direct proof of this nature that human sacrifice was ever employed by the ancestors of those races among whom, at the present day, no trace of the custom exists, the possibility must be admitted that once it was of universal prevalence.

The facts described in this chapter, together with the evidence brought forward in previous chapters, leaves no room for doubt that our ancestors passed through a stage in which homicide, either as a result of quarrels or as a religious duty, was terribly prevalent, its prevalence must, for a long period, have acted as a serious check to human progress.

The facts that have been adduced go far to justify the belief held by psychologists that our morbid interest in murder finds its explanation in the bloodthirsty habits of our distant ancestors.

CHAPTER VI

CANNIBALISM

THE facts described in the preceding chapters leave no room for doubt that our early ancestors had a mental disposition that may fairly be described as unpleasant. My readers, from their own knowledge, are likely to be aware that yet more proofs of this statement are available than those above given. One more example may be added. An Australian woman may cut off one of the fingers of her new-born female child, merely to signify that when the infant grows up she will be a fisherwoman. This form of mutilation exists elsewhere. In Fiji, on the death of a king, it has occurred that orders have been issued for a hundred fingers to be cut off. Evidence, in the form of impressions of mutilated hands on the walls of a cave, indicates that the custom existed already in palæolithic times. In view of the unpleasantness

of our early ancestors, there can be no *a priori* objection to the opinion expressed by Sollas that the custom was derived from a common and prehistoric—presumably also, it may be suggested, from a pre-Aurignacian—ancestor of the Australian, Red Indian, Dravidian and other races among whom the custom still survives to-day.[1]

Similarly, there can be no reason, on *a priori* grounds, for doubting the assertion made by the leading authorities on the subject that cannibalism was once a world-wide habit indulged in by every branch of the human race.[2]

Much the same story is to be told of cannibalism as of human sacrifice. In the past it was a widespread practice. In modern times it has disappeared from many places where it once was prevalent, or it has been replaced by mock ceremonies, or lastly its practice has become restricted in various ways.

To-day it exists only in parts of Africa, in isolated South American tribes, in Malaysia, in some South Sea Islands and in Australia.

[1] W. J. Collas, *Ancient Hunters* (Macmillan, 3rd Ed., 1924), p. 417.

[2] Dr R. S. Steinmetz, "Endokannibalismus" in *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Geselleschaft in Wien,* Vol. XXVI, 1896, p. 1, and article on "Cannibalism," by J. A. MacCulloch, in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Most of the facts adduced in this chapter are taken from the latter.

Our predecessors were never at a loss in finding excuses for eating their fellow men. These have been classified by MacCullock as follows:

1. Cannibalism from hunger.
2. Cannibalism to obtain strength.
3. Medical cannibalism.
4. Magical cannibalism.
5. Animistic cannibalism (*i.e.* to obtain or control the soul of the deceased).
6. Blood covenant (depending on the idea that the eater and the eaten are one).
7. Honorific cannibalism (the sick and old being eaten that their souls may not weaken).
8. Morbid affection (the eating of bodies of relatives as a tribute of respect).
9. Revenge (the eating of enemies).
10. Legal cannibalism (eating of criminals).
11. Gluttony.
12. Religious cannibalism (usually the eating of enemies).
13. Political cannibalism (*e.g.* in coronation rites).

Just as with human sacrifice, it has been asserted that cannibalism is a late acquisition of humanity because it is absent from many primitive tribes. This argument is even less cogent than in the case of sacrifice, for those who give up cannibalism are

apt to develop a feeling of shame at the practice and, though in some cases it has been replaced by mock ceremonies, one would anticipate that this feeling of shame might often bring the mock ceremonies to an end. For reasons which are by no means obvious, a tribe may become ashamed of the practice; if this happens, they may drop it, and deny that they were ever cannibals, while accusing, it may be, their neighbours of the habit, or they may have their cannibal feasts in private, or otherwise surround the practice with restrictions.

Some races show no trace of cannibalism to-day and we should have no proof that their ancestors ever indulged in it, were it not for the chance that some traveller had visited them, perhaps two or three centuries ago, and found with them either cannibalism in full swing or traces of its former prevalence in some harmless rite.

So far as cannibalism connected with killing and eating enemies is concerned, it is obvious that one would not expect it to be present in those tribes which have become pacific from loss of primitive pugnacity.

Some other motives than shame appear to be the source of various curious restrictions on cannibalism, of which the following are examples:

In Araucania, Ashanti, Dahomey, Cameroon,

the Philipines, the Sandwich and Society Islands and in North American cannibal societies, cannibalism is nowadays restricted to the priest or king.

Of New Caledonia it is related that a cannibal feast is " mainly a privilege of the chiefs who sometimes cause a tumult to be raised in order to eat the offenders as a punishment."

In the Marquesa Islands, cannibalism, to a great extent, is reserved for the chiefs and priests.

In another class of restriction, only a part of the corpse is eaten. The following are instances:

The Eskimo eat part of the liver of a murdered man to insure themselves against being annoyed by his ghost.

In East Prussia, murderers used to eat part of their victims probably for a similar reason.

In modern Italy there is or was a superstition that the murderer will not escape unless he tastes the blood of his victim.

In the Philipines the heart of the enemy used to be eaten flavoured with citron juice. Later a further restriction arose and eating the heart was confined to the priests.

The early Arabs used to eat the liver or blood of an enemy.

In Micronesia, cannibalism is restricted to eating part of any renowned warrior.

Head-hunting is regarded as a restricted form of cannibalism.

In Ashanti, cannibalism has become a mere formal rite.

In Dahomey, human sacrifices in old times, were accompanied by a cannibal feast. But by the year 1772, this was restricted to the king dipping his finger in the victim's blood and licking it.

We now have to mention certain folk customs that either exist or have existed till recent times which are supposed to represent a further "regression" of cannibalism.

In Albania, at a funeral, special "corpse cakes" used to be eaten. They bore the impression of a human form and were made from dough that had been laid on the body.

In Bavaria, similar corpse cakes were eaten. They were made from dough that had laid on the body but did not bear any impression of the human form.

In Italy, sweetmeats having the image of a skull used to be eaten on All Saints Day.

In Abruzzi, food was eaten on the table where the corpse had been placed.

In England, there used to be a custom of eating food across the table where the dead had lain.

Greeks and Romans had a habit of eating food at the grave.

In Wales a "sin-eater" was appointed who had to eat food that had touched the body.

The Greeks had many myths of cannibal gods. In Europe there are folk tales of ogres, ghouls, and of witches stealing children in order to eat them.

Owing to the native Australians being physically nearest to primitive man, their customs in respect of cannibalism are specially deserving of attention. Whereas, with Australians, their primitive pugnacity has so far diminished that they are often content with ceremonial fights, it need not surprise us if cannibalism with them has lost its primitive form.

Certain of their tribes have the very curious habit of eating the flesh of their friends "as a mark of affectionate respect". They only do so if the corpse is in good condition and not disfigured by more than three spear wounds. With the Dieri tribe, the father may not eat the child, nor the child his or her father, but a mother may eat her child and the child may eat his or her mother. Brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law mutually eat each other as occasion arises.[1]

It would be absurd to suggest that primitive man

1 *Australian Aborigines,* by James Dawson (George Robertson, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, 1881).

invented cannibalism as a means of showing respect to his relations. Such rules as the above, about which relatives may and which may not be eaten, can only have been formulated after a long course of evolution of primitive beliefs.

The eating of relations is not universal with these aborigines. Some tribes take an entirely different view and eat their enemies as a sign of contempt. It is likely that this last variety of the custom is nearest to the original practice.

How did cannibalism arise? Why should primitive man be distinguished from apes and monkeys by his addiction to this repulsive practice?

In seeking for a possible answer to this question, let us first make a guess as to early man's mode of fighting. It is recorded of the Irish Celts that they used to eat their enemies while keeping the heads as trophies. Also it is said that " In some cases the victor tore the features with his teeth as did the Prince of Leinster in Fitzstephens's time." Similarly, according to Dr N. A. Dyce Sharp, an angry gorilla has been known to tear a man into ribbons. Our earliest human ancestor, if he lacked the gorilla's strength, probably rivalled both him and the Prince of Leinster in his capacity for hating his enemies. We can imagine him biting and tearing his enemy, and even his dead enemy, with

his teeth. He had not yet elaborated flint weapons and, for a certain period, his teeth must have been his chief weapon of offence, as is the case with children of to-day. He had a very serviceable lower jaw, far larger than ours, if we may judge from the Piltdown and Heidelberg fossils. The use of his teeth in biting and tearing the enemy would naturally lead to tasting blood and thence, by an easy transition, to eating human flesh.

If cannibalism had this origin, and if a man was chosen to be a leader owing to his proficiency in brutal fighting, and if such a leader after his death was deified, his followers might honour him by putting enemy prisoners to death in front of his grave or shrine in the way that he did when fighting. The following facts supply very slight evidence in favour of this suggestion as to the origin of human sacrifice:

In Greece, a vase painting has been discovered that shows a Thracian tearing a child with his teeth in the presence of the god.

In Crete, "in the Dionysic rites . . . in order to be identified with the god who had himself been torn by Titans, the worshipper tore and ate the raw flesh of a bull or goat. But occasionally a human victim represented the god and was similarly treated."

In India, with the Khonds, "a girl representing the goddess Tari was sacrificed and torn limb from limb by the worshippers."

According to Porphry: "In Chios likewise they sacrificed a man to Omadius Bacchus; the man being for this purpose torn in pieces; and the same custom, as Euelpis Caryotius says, was adopted in Tenedos."[1]

It may be explained that originally the sacrificed man or animal was merely a victim. Later, the sacrifice came to be regarded as sacred or even as part of the god.

The fact that religious cannibalism is almost always confined to eating enemies is in favour of the above suggestion.

Another suggestion may be made. If, as is highly probable, primitive man suffered from a restricted food supply, cannibalism may have appealed to him as a welcome means of avoiding hunger. Hunger may well have been the cause of occasional cannibalism but it is difficult to see how it could have led to it as a permanent institution with religious sanction.

[1] *De Abstentione*, Book II.

CHAPTER VII

THE WANING OF THE CAVE MAN INFLUENCE

IT will be worth while, at this point, to retrace our steps, to summarize the evidence that has been brought forward and to consider the conclusion to which it points.

A very large amount of evidence has been adduced that our ancestors indulged in a variety of barbarous practices, to an extent not parallelled by the most degraded races of the present day. These included frequent murder for trivial reasons, blood-feuds, human sacrifice, sacrifice of first-born children and cannibalism. The frame of mind that originated and tolerated such practices may, with convenience and in accordance with a popular phrase be described as the cave man influence.

The evidence of this stage of moral degradation appears conclusive in the case of the more prominent races of mankind. Reasons have been given for suspecting that the ancestors of the simpler races

also indulged in such practices, although, in many instances, no direct evidence of this is yielded by their present customs.

The very remarkable fact is also clear that, during the period covered by tradition and history, all over the world, with people of the most diverse races, differing in their social institutions, their religions and in their environments, a tendency has developed to restrict and then to abolish the above-mentioned practices.

This waning of the cave man influence has occurred among races of every degree of culture.

The first rise of intelligence above the brute level was, with little doubt, at least a part cause of the moral degradation in question. Jealousy, hatred, the desire for revenge, and indeed all the more unpleasant qualities of the mind, seem to be of a kind likely to be developed by the first increase of intelligence. But the further increase of this intelligence is likely to have had an opposite tendency. Practical reasons, for instance, would become apparent for the abolition of human sacrifice and blood-feuds. Such customs were obviously social evils. Their observance tended to weaken the tribe by diminishing the number of its fighting men. There is, in fact, a certain amount of evidence that occasionally tribal leaders have

played a part in curtailing such practices. But one suspects that, besides recognition of practical disadvantages, there was a change of mentality that led the leaders to such action and that predisposed their subjects to acquiesce in the change.

In a large number of cases, it is difficult to ascribe the change to increase of intelligence.

In many instances it can be shown that the changes have taken place without any influence from outside or any alteration in religious belief beyond what was implied in the amelioration itself. Primitive religion is more likely to have opposed than to have favoured the changes in question, for there are grounds for believing that, at first, religion was neither humane nor beneficent: on the contrary, under the rule of the cannibal gods, it is probable that the sole duty inculcated by religion was the torture and murder of innocent victims. Some ancient religions seem to have risen but little above this level. The Druids, in Europe, employed human sacrifice. This was carried out by imprisoning their victims in wicker cages and burning them alive. They usually sacrificed criminals, but, if they ran short of criminals, they had no hesitation in using innocent victims. Any influence that such a custom may have had on public morality appears as accessory and accidental. The Scandinavians

and Anglo-Saxons worshipped Odin and Thor. These were deified warriors, not yet accorded immortality for, according to this belief, they were destined, at length, to perish in "the twilight of the gods". This creed held up to admiration the virtue of loyalty in fighting, but it was a religion that offered no prospects of a future life and seems to have made little or no attempt to influence human happiness or morality.

The frequent and easy alliance between religion and the cruelty instinct in comparatively modern times is curious and remarkable. To take an example, in the year 1547, the Lord Chancellor of England condemned a protestant lady, Anne Askewe, to torture, in the hope of extorting confessions. So far was his sense of humanity and propriety vitiated by his feelings that he and the Solicitor-General went together to the Tower of London and, with their own hands, turned the levers of the rack on which the lady was being tortured. In the Inquisition, in Italy, it was the practice not to tell the accused the nature of the accusation, lest he or she should offer an explanation and so cheat the tribunal of their pleasure in witnessing the torments. Witch-hunting in England and Scotland offers yet another example of the same unholy alliance.

Even to-day modern society is not entirely free from the blemish of allowing innocent persons to suffer in order to keep intact the observance of some moral principle.

The dying out of the custom of cannibalism is especially noteworthy. No obvious practical advantage was to be gained by its abolition. In times of war, a disadvantage accrued, as the habit of eating one's enemies simplified commissariat problems and, as has been observed in recent years in Africa, is likely to have been an actual stimulus to the desire to fight.

Whereas, in the case of human sacrifice, curtailment of the custom was occasionally due to the intervention of the tribal leader, in the case of cannibalism, the leaders have played a different rôle. There has been a tendency, before its complete abolition, to restrict the practice to chiefs and priests.

Not only has cannibalism over the greater part of the world been abandoned, but also, in some instances, an active dislike of the practice has arisen. Why this should be so is by no means clear. Cannibals have asserted that no food is so good to eat as human flesh.

In certain South Sea Islands, where cannibalism is practised, some of the inhabitants regard the

custom with disgust. It is difficult to understand why this feeling should spontaneously arise in a cannibal population.

The Fanti tribe in West Africa has peaceable habits. Its men are lazy and inefficient. They appear to be degenerate as compared with their warlike neighbours. Travellers, who use them as carriers, report that on meeting and recognizing a cannibal, these carriers assail him with abuse. It is by no means clear why this active dislike for cannibalism should have developed.[1]

In certain parts of West Africa, the inhabitants dislike eating their relatives. But they have no objection to their relatives being eaten by strangers. Consequently neighbouring villages exchange corpses, or if a death occurs when no such exchange is practicable, the corpse is sold for cash. This strange custom is said not to be due to squeamishness, but to a totem restriction.

We are therefore led to state as a fact that *Homo sapiens* has passed through a stage in which, differing from his monkey ancestors, he enjoyed cannibalism and human sacrifice and that he is now in a stage in which he is losing his taste for these observances owing to a spontaneous atrophy of

[1] *Round the World for Gold*, by H. W. L. Way (London, Sampson Low).

primitive feelings. This conclusion permits an optimistic view of the future. There is no reason for thinking that we have reached finality in this matter. We may hope that the change for the better will continue and that, in the future, *Homo sapiens* will revert to the innocence of his monkey ancestors in respect of these and also of other unpleasant customs.

The dying away of the cave man influence affords a presumption that it does not come to us from distant animal ancestors, but rather that it is due to some temporary and exceptional condition that supervened at an early stage of human evolution. This possibility will be discussed in the next two chapters.

The evidence we have considered supports the view held by psychologists that one factor that affects our conduct is the presence in our minds of certain vestigial instinctive feelings. This view has an implication that deserves attention. You, my reader, no doubt have passed the day in commendable and virtuous conduct. But, when you were reading your newspaper at breakfast time, why did you linger so long over the sordid details of a sensational murder? Let me quote an explanation of this that has been given by a psychologist:

"Most of us, especially the more refined, live in

a world of convention, in which the wild upsurgings of instinctive impulse is repressed. But the primitive brute is still deep down within us, chafing at the fetters with which our social codes and we ourselves have bound him. And he finds in a recital of such crimes the vicarious enjoyment of committing them."

No doubt some carnivorous animals will kill other animals for the mere pleasure of killing. But their victims are of another species and are their natural prey. What brute among our ancestors, whether ape, or monkey, or lemur, or other quadruped, was so brutal that he would gloat over the murder and torture of his fellows and "find in the recital of such crimes the vicarious enjoyment of committing them"?

Thus the explanation of our brute nature current among psychologists seems to imply that our ancestors, at about the time when they were attaining human status, passed through a stage in which they descended to a depth of brutality and ferocity not met with among the anthropoid apes of to-day. The evidence brought forward in the preceding chapters goes far to prove that our ancestors did in fact pass through such a stage. Our natural and amiable tendency to whitewash historical characters in this case must be restrained.

We must consider the probable course of evolution of the human mind and see whether it may have been subjected to conditions likely to produce the brutality that early man appears to have possessed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HUMAN MIND

MR H. G. Wells, in his *Outline of History,* has suggested, without giving reasons, that man evolved from a "running ape". Arguments that occur to me in favour of this view are as follows:

In the first place, there can be little doubt, from what we know of existing anthropoid apes, that the monkey that was destined to be our ancestor, when he first climbed down from the trees, was superior in brain power to all the animal competitors or enemies he could meet with on *terra firma.* Where he was inferior, where we may say he was certainly inferior, was in his powers of progression on the ground. Hence the need for the evolution of the human type of foot, with its great toe adapted for running rather than for climbing, is far more

obvious than the need for the evolution of the human type of brain.

In the most primitive members of the human family yet discovered, the *Pithecanthropus* from Java and the Rhodesian cave man, the leg bones show no important differences from those of modern man. Keith says of the skull *Pithecanthropus* that had it not been for the discovery of the femur, it might possibly have been regarded as that of an anthropoid ape.[1] However surprising it may appear at first glance to find such modern leg bones belonging to so early a type, a cogent reason for this may be suggested. An improved power of locomotion was needed and hence probably was the first important change to occur. When acquired, this power may well have been the key that unlocked the door to evolution in a new direction. An ape with a little more brain might still be an ape with an ape's outlook on the world. An ape with a great toe parallel to the others and not opposed to them, had a foot better suited for running than for climbing. Not only would he have new ways of avoiding his enemies; there would be a radical difference in his mental outlook, in the main demands made by the nervous system

[1] *The Antiquity of Man*, 2nd Ed. (London, Williams & Norgate, 1925), p. 433.

on his muscles and also a change in many of the activities of his daily life.

Further evidence is yielded by the skull of Rhodesian man, another very primitive type of humanity. As compared with the skull of modern man it is misshapen. Instead of its roof being rounded, it rises to a point at a position that indicates a disproportionate development of the part of the brain that has to do with movements of the legs.

The above-mentioned characters of these two fossils suggest that human evolution was initiated, not by an abnormal development of the brain, but by the development of the great toe. Besides being changed in disposition, the great toe underwent an increase in size. This is a proof that its evolution was caused by the development of the power of running. In animals like the horse and ostrich, the power of fast running is connected with a reduction in the number of toes. With man we only see the first stage of such reduction in that the size of the outer toes had been diminished and that of the first toe increased. If a more primitive type than *Pithecanthropus* is ever discovered, it will be by the leg bones, rather than by the size of the brain case, that its human affinity will be estimated, if Keith's above-quoted dictum is correct.

Another acquisition by our ancestors that accompanied, if it did not precede, the increase of the brain to human status was the elaboration of the power of speech. Markings on the interior of the skull of *Pithecanthropus* indicates that the part of the brain concerned in speech was at least twice as large as it is in the orang-utang or chimpanzee. Other primitive human skulls indicate a further development of this part of the brain. We therefore have to conclude that our anthropoid ancestors, at a very early stage, were not solitary animals but that, for some purpose, they found it necessary to act together and that the power of speech was used for some better purpose than giving concerts, as with gibbons and howling monkeys, or merely for expressing emotions of anger, fear, etc.

Thus we must picture to ourselves the ancestral apes beginning their progress towards human status by two developments: first, by learning to run and, secondly, by acquiring an increased power of speech.

There is a third character that we are probably safe in ascribing to them, namely a greater degree of fertility than is possessed by the apes of the present day. Take, for instance, the species of gorilla *(Gorilla Beringei)* that lives in the Kivu

Mountains. The very interesting account of it given by Mrs H. M. Bradley is as follows:

"We estimated that not more than seventy-five or a hundred of the gorillas exist in these mountains. . . . It is extraordinary that the gorillas are not more numerous in this area for, until the last few years brought the hunters I have mentioned, the great apes were entirely unmolested. They breed undisturbed, but evidently they do not breed very fast—or else some unknown cause of mortality keeps the numbers down. That can hardly be credited, for there was not a hint of disease in any gorilla dissected; nor was a solitary parasite found in any gorilla, nor yet on a gorilla. Their hair was as soft and pure and free from insects as a freshly tubbed young kitten. It is all the more astonishing when you think of the literal millions of ticks that are on lions and elephants and buffaloes and rhinos, and apparently every other jungle creature. Famine seems as much out of the question as disease, for if the food of the upland meadows failed, the gorilla had only to descend to the bamboo forests below where he would find plenty of fresh shoots. The fact that the gorilla had never gone down to the native shambas showed that food had not been a problem. Lacking any other factor in the situation, it must simply

be that the rate of increase is extremely slow. As far as is known the births are always single. . . . The tremendous strength of the gorilla is a mystery. Where does he get it and why does he have it? Not in the necessary circumstances of his life does he use it now. Those great shoulders and bulging arm muscles that could crush a lion have no more arduous work than breaking off wild parsley and scratching together branches for a nest."[1]

Whatever may be the nature of the natural birth control that this species of gorilla enjoys, it must be exempt, like other rare animals, from the misery of a struggle for existence between adults. If natural selection ever played a part in producing its gigantic strength and its habits of life, this factor must have done its work ages ago. Now, to all appearance, it is completely adapted to its environment and no further evolution is occurring. So long as it retains such limited fertility, it is more likely to become extinct than to change into a new species. Conversely, an ape capable of such a change is likely to have a much higher degree of fertility than this gorilla if natural selection and the survival of the fittest is to be the cause of its evolution.

There are strong grounds for believing that a

1 *On the Gorilla Trail* (London, Appleton & Co., 1922), p. 132.

second factor may favour or initiate evolution, namely, a change in environment. Now a change in environment, in an intense and remarkable degree, was occurring in Miocene times in and to the north of the locality now occupied by the Himalaya Mountains. There are grounds for suspecting that in this zoological region and at this time began the divergence of the human from the anthropoid stock. Let us consider the nature of the changes in question.

If one looks at a map of the world as it existed in Eocene times, one sees southern India depicted as a large island. The plains of northern India were then occupied by a shallow sea which extended from there across the place where the Himalayas now stand right up to the region of the north pole. In a westerly direction this sea extended across the greater part of what is now northern Africa. Since Eocene times, the greater part of this sea has been transformed into dry land. The change began at the end of the Eocene by a crumpling of the earth's crust which, in later epochs, culminated in the elevation of the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Himalayas. The change was intensified towards the end of the Middle Miocene, by which time the shallow sea north of India was "cut up into a series of disconnected lagoons or inland seas which

finally disappeared in the last great upheaval of Pliocene times."[1]

Thus at this time, to the north of India an enormous area of new land came into existence which is now known to have been the site of the evolution of the greatest collection of mammals that has ever existed. This remarkable fauna included a dozen species of Mastodons and intermediate forms leading on to elephants, many species of *Sivatherium*—huge ruminants nearly as large as elephants, five species of hippopotamus with ancestral or primitive forms of these animals, the earliest known bison or cattle, many species of pigs, some of which were of gigantic size, also gazelles, antelopes, giraffes, a horse, three or four species of rhinoceros, sabre-toothed tigers, five species of hyæna, otters, pangolins, civets and smaller animals. Lastly, this area, according to Osborn, was the seat of origin of the anthropoid apes, of which already about a dozen species have there been found.[2] One of these, *Anthropopithecus,* had teeth more human-like than those of any existing ape.[3]

1 *A Summary of the Geology of India,* by E. W. Vredenburg (London, Thacker & Co., 1910), p. 103.

2 Presidential address at the Meeting of the *British Association for the Advancement of Science* of 1927, by Sir Arthur Keith.

3 *The Age of Mammals,* by H. F. Osborn (New York, Macmillan, 1910).

Now let us return to the puzzling question of the origin of man. We have just mentioned that a dozen species of anthropoid apes are already known to have lived to the north of India in Miocene times. This is probably only a fraction of the total number of kinds of apes that then existed and that shortly became extinct. We may suspect that there was competition between these different kinds of apes and that our ape ancestor owed his survival and his progress to his having been driven to some mode of life that was not commonplace in that it differed from that of his competitors.

It has recently been stated that man probably evolved in Himalayan jungles. Apart from the probability that Himalayan jungles did not exist at the time when man began to evolve, it may be objected that a jungle is no suitable place for acquiring the accomplishment of running. The power of running must have developed in some place where is was possible to run, not, that is to say, in a dense impenetrable jungle but in open spaces such as the seashore or on plains not yet invaded by forest trees. The suggestion that the evolution of man from his monkey ancestors took place on the sea shore was put forward by Cherry some years ago, but the arguments

he relied on were very unconvincing.[1] All that we can safely say is that this evolution must have occurred in open spaces rather than in dense jungle or high grass.

Why did our ancestor learn to run? The accomplishment, even when fully acquired, could not have been, of itself, of much use either for avoiding beasts of prey or for catching animals that he might want to eat. On the other hand, running, even in its very earliest stages, would aid him in fighting enemies similarly handicapped, namely, other anthropoid apes or members of his own species.

We have suggested that competition probably led our ancestor to adopt a mode of life different from that of other apes. We may guess that this competition was mainly for food. We may further guess that, in his new environment, he still had to endure a restricted food supply and, if so, he would have to fight his fellows for his daily bread.

If our ancestor lived in open spaces where there was opportunity for running, there was more chance of his actions being observed by his fellows than would be the case if he lived in jungle or in trees. More opportunities would accordingly occur for stimulation of the instinct of sexual jealousy.

[1] *Science Progress* for 1920, Vol. XV, p. 74.

Fighting between individuals may therefore have been largely due to this cause.

A habit of constantly fighting, whatever its source, offers a plausible reason why he should learn to run. A habit of fighting and the resulting need of being constantly on his guard offers one reason why he should adopt the upright attitude. The hypothesis also offers a reason why he should learn to throw stones with good aim, why his intelligence should increase and lastly why he should develop a habit of hating his fellows to an extent unknown among animals.

So far as is known to me, Atkinson was the first anthropologist to recognize that a period of unmeasured pugnacity must inevitably have resulted from the first increase of intelligence of the ancestral apes. He conceives them as living in "one continuous uproar". He finds in this stage an explanation of the wide-spread custom of exogamy. He criticizes Westermarck for asserting that exogamy is chiefly due to the aversion to close intermarrying. To say that this custom is due to aversion is, from the psychological standpoint, merely begging the question. It is the aversion that needs to be explained. Atkinson supposes that our ape ancestor, when evolving in the human direction, at first lived in groups consisting of one male

with his wives and children. As the young males became adolescent, the father, urged by jealousy, expelled them from the group. Accordingly they had to live apart until, either they were strong enough to murder their father and usurp his harem, or, alternatively, on further increase of intelligence, owing to danger from external enemies, the father allowed them to rejoin the group. This family reunion could only be permitted on the understanding that they should have nothing to do with the females already in the family. The young males, therefore, had to take as wives females captured from elsewhere.[1]

From an *a priori* standpoint it must be admitted that this theory offers a plausible explanation of the custom of exogamy. Atkinson goes on to suggest that it also explains such customs as father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance and avoidance between a brother and a younger brother's wife. Such codes of etiquette may well have originated as a means of avoiding family quarrels due to jealousy. But it is rather difficult to believe that such etiquette dates back to anywhere near the anthropoid stage of our evolution. It is more probable that what was inherited from that stage was not the customs in questions but the state of

[1] *Social Origins and Primal Law*, by A. Lang and J. J. Atkinson.

mind that favoured their inception. Some years ago an Indian government report contained the curious information that railway thieves in southern Madras territory had developed into a caste with exogamous marriage customs. This example shows us exogamy as a recent acquisition.

Havelock Ellis is another author who has recognized the probability that sexual jealousy was stimulated by the first increase of intelligence towards the human level. In this and in the brutal habits of our ancestors at this stage he finds an explanation of the sexual modesty that we now possess. He suggests that those of our ancestors who failed to conceal feelings connected with sex would arouse jealousy and be killed by stronger individuals.

Let us now consider why increase of intelligence above ape level is likely, at first, to have caused moral retrogression as judged by our standards.

One sees two chickens fighting. Something distracts their attention. In an instant, the cause of the quarrel is forgotten and the trouble is at an end. With animals higher in the scale, such easy ending of a quarrel is less likely to occur. The effect of intelligence must be to make quarrels last longer and occur more often. Imagination will originate grievances. Memory will keep grievances alive.

Both the desire for revenge and energy in indulging in it must have been increased by the developing imagination and powers of realizing possessed by our anthropoid ancestors. Not only the traits mentioned, but also several other of the more unpleasant features of the mind, such as jealousy, hatred, envy, conceit, and the tendency to bully, presuppose a certain amount of intelligence. Each of these qualities would inevitably be stimulated by and conversely act as a stimulus to a further increase of intelligence.

Current psychological beliefs as to the origin of our brute nature are almost meaningless unless they imply that our ancestors have, at some time in the past, suffered from a degree of pugnacity and a tendency to bully their neighbours that has no parallel among any of the races of mankind of to-day.

In defending the psychologist's view point, we have been led to make three assertions:

(1) that many brutal customs were indulged in by the ancestors of all the more prominent branches of the human race;

(2) that a period of moral degradation occurred, most probably at the stage when our ancestor began evolving in the human direction;

(3) that the mentality that produced these brutal

customs was derived from this period of moral degradation.

The evidence in favour of the first of these assertions consists of very numerous facts and appears incontrovertible.

The considerations as yet brought forward in favour of the other two assertions are of a less simple nature and their value as evidence is less easy to estimate. The possibility does not appear to be excluded that other sources of moral retrogression have been operative or that other periods of such retrogression have occurred during the history of humanity.

CHAPTER IX

THE ORIGIN OF MORALITY

AN antidote to the condition of moral degradation described in the preceding chapters was at hand and, indeed, must have begun to act from the very beginning of the first advance of our ape ancestors in the human direction.

Arguing from the analogy of apes and monkeys, we may infer that at this stage of development our ancestors were not solitary animals but were already aggregated into families. Two neighbouring families would find advantage in uniting together to attack or repel a common enemy whether human or animal. Such uniting would be impossible unless individuals, to some extent, controlled their natural desire to fight each other. Without such control communal life would be impossible. Selfishness, hatred, and pugnacity must obviously have been gradually checked, as regards members of one's own community, as communal life

developed. It is commonly believed that such checking was due to survival of the fittest; individuals who showed power of curbing their primitive instincts survived, while those who lacked such power died out.

This is the view usually held. Modern psychology permits a slight elaboration of it, which, as we shall see, throws a new light on the motives of human conduct.

We now know that instinctive desires cannot be suppressed without resulting nervous strain. The mind avoids such strain by changing or deflecting these desires into other channels. If the change is one socially advantageous, the instinct is said to have been "sublimated". It is a reasonable inference that our ancestors, when they restrained their natural desire to quarrel with their fellow tribesmen, found a vent for their feelings in an increased desire to fight with and kill members of other tribes in order to steal their property, whether food or women or both.

As stated in the last chapter, the idea of a period of abnormal pugnacity for our ancestors has already been put forward by Atkinson. We owe to Mr H. G. Wells the idea of connecting this pugnacity with the desire for property and the property-instinct. He has said, in his *Outline of*

History, that "The Old Man of the family tribe of early palæolithic times insisted upon his proprietorship in his wives and daughters, in his tools, in his visible universe. If any other man wandered into his visible universe he fought him, and if he could slew him. . . . Human society grew by a compromise between this one's property and that. It was largely a compromise and an alliance forced upon men by the necessity of driving some other tribe out of its visible universe. . . . Ownership in the beast and in the primitive savage was far more intense a thing than it is in the civilized world today. It is rooted more strongly in our instincts than in our reason."

The view put forward by others that we have now to consider, as to the course of development of human morality, virtually amounts to this: that morality originated because A and B entered into an agreement not to loot one another in order that they might loot C with greater efficiency. The emendation of this view now suggested is that A and B succeeded in this mainly because their natural desire to loot one another was sublimated into an increased desire to loot C. Let us consider some implications of this theory of the origin of morality.

(1) In the first place, intertribal fighting would necessarily result in respect for property belonging

to the community, namely the territory on which its food was produced. The ferocity with which a gang of monkeys will attack a strange monkey that trespasses on its preserves was parallelled, we suggest, in the habits of our ancestors. Thus arose the feeling of primitive patriotism, originally as an instinctive desire to kill strangers who trespassed on land belonging to the community, with the resulting widespread identification, as "hostis", of a stranger as being the same as an enemy. This is not a theory unsupported by facts of experience, for, at the present day, patriotism in this primitive form still exists among the lowest members of the human race, namely the Australian aborigines. According to Curr,[1] with them, strangers invariably look on each other as deadly enemies. Wars between neighbouring tribes are frequent. But these wars are due to fear of sorcery and never to an attempt by a strong tribe to seize territory belonging to a weak one.

Such patriotism has, with the higher races, been sublimated into another form. We know it as love for one's country and being ready to fight for it.

It is therefore important to recognize that

[1] *The Australian Race* (London, Trubner & Co., 1886), pp. 64 and 85.

patriotism originally played a part in balancing the brute nature of our ancestors. To-day, when associated with militarism, it assumes a form which is rightly objected to by thoughtful men. But patriotism in the form of a sentimental love for one's country stands on a different footing. To take an example, Mr Ramsay MacDonald, being a Scotchman, is reputed to confess to a sentimental liking for Scotland and things scottish. This sentiment does not make him want to fight England; neither does it prevent him from acting impartially as a British statesman. His sentiment is a natural feeling that corresponds to a natural need. We have to recognize not only that the sentiment is harmless but also that, because it originated as a means of balancing our brute nature, it may still play some part in maintaining our mental equilibrium in political affairs.

(2) Instinctive hatred of trespassers on tribal land no longer exists with us in its original form. But such instinctive hatred would naturally be transferred to trespassers on private land when the leading men of the tribe began to arrogate to themselves parts of tribal territory. This may be a part source of the ill-mannered indignation with which land owners greet harmless trespassers on their property. Up to a little more than a hundred years ago, land

owners in England used to guard their lands with a notice "Beware of man traps and spring guns". Nowadays, such a notice, which virtually meant that "Trespassers will be killed" is replaced by a notice that "Trespassers will be prosecuted", although no law exists in England that could be used for this purpose.

(3) Instinctive hatred of strangers must depend on the recognition of a stranger as such by his showing in his appearance or conduct certain characters different from those possessed by oneself or one's family. Such hatred, therefore, is essentially intolerance. As the minds of our ancestors developed, it is probable that hatred of strangers led to dislike of the traits that marked them out as strangers. This may be the source of the irrational dislike of novelty so often met with among savages. For instance, "the Dyaks of Borneo were not accustomed to chop wood, as we do, by notching out V-shaped cuts. Accordingly when the white man intruded among them with this among other novelties, they marked their disgust at the innovation by levying a fine on any of their own people who should be caught chopping wood in the European fashion; yet so well aware were the native wood cutters that the white man's plan was an improvement on their own, that they

would use it surreptitiously when they could trust one another not to tell."[1]

(4) The checking of the desire to fight with, in order to steal the food of one's fellow tribesmen obviously must lead to an instinctive respect for their personal property.

It has recently been asserted by a writer who, in his arguments, makes very sparing use of facts, that "individual property is an economic convention rather than a psychological necessity." This statement was put forward without any evidence consisting of facts being adduced in its support.

On the other hand, Graham Wallas, the well-known psychologist and socialist writer, says of the desire for property that "there seems to be good grounds for supposing this to be a true specific instinct. . . . Those children who in certain charity schools are brought up entirely without personal property, even in their clothes or pocket-handkerchiefs, show every sign of the bad effect on health and character which results from complete inability to satisfy a strong inherited instinct."[2]

Thus Graham Wallas relies on facts in favour of his opinion. So does R. H. Thouless, who calls it the "instinct of acquisition", and says that data

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I, p. 71.

[2] *Human Nature in Politics* (London, Constable & Co., 1910), p. 36.

for studying it must be derived from "The hoarding behaviour in animals, from the development of this behaviour in childhood, from its crude and uncontrolled manifestation in mental disease, and from the comparative study of its occurrence in normal adults."[1] Mr. H. G. Wells has expressed similar opinions also relying on facts for evidence.

It is now suggested that with man the instinctive desire for property has assumed the form of instinctive respect for property whether belonging to oneself or to other members of one's tribe and that this respect for property was in its origin, as it now is in its nature, a factor in our mental make-up that serves to balance our brute nature. With primitive man the original commandment was not "Thou shalt not steal" but "Thou shalt not steal from members of one's own community." Honesty as regards the property of one's neighbour could be acquired without interfering with one's natural desire to loot one's enemy.

(5) We may test this idea by studying primitive punishments for theft.

If fighting and killing were originally, and to a great extent, a means of conserving the food supply, or, in other words, if killing was part of the process

[1] *Social Psychology* (London, University Tutorial Press, 1925), p. 134.

of looting someone else, one would expect a resolve not to steal to become associated with a resolve not to murder. If so, a fellow tribesman who stole your property would *ipso facto* deserve to be treated as an enemy. We may put this suggestion to the proof by seeing whether a thief is treated as an enemy in primitive communities.

All over the world, among many primitive communities, the penalty for theft is death. Also there is evidence that in the past this punishment was yet more frequently inflicted than is the case to-day. The following are examples:

In ancient Babylon the death penalty was freely awarded for theft.

In many of the islands of the Malay Archipelago, it is lawful to kill a thief caught in the act.

In some African districts a thief caught in the act may be killed with impunity.

In Hayti the punishment of a thief was to be eaten.

In Danger Island the penalty for stealing food was death by drowning.

Among the Ykoa, a Manchurian tribe mentioned by ancient Chinese chroniclers, theft of any kind was punished by death.

According to McCulloch, in the Wakamba tribe, the penalty for the second offence was death. The

death penalty for theft was also inflicted by the Fuegians, the Maoris and in old times in Wales.

An ancient historian of Denmark, Saxo Grammaticus, asserts that according to the Laws of Frode, a thief or an accomplice of a thief was hung up by a line passed through the sinew of his heel next to a wolf similarly suspended. But, according to the translator, this may be only a distorted tradition. Possibly it was the punishment prescribed for members of a conquered race.

In ancient Roman Law, the penalty for theft was based on the amount of vengeance the complainant would be likely to inflict if no law court existed. Hence the death penalty was especially used if the thief was caught red-handed.

In ancient Scottish law the punishment varied, according to the amount stolen, from corporal punishment to death.

It is implied in Anglo-Saxon law that the natural course with a thief was to kill him. There seems to have been little trouble about the evidence as we understand the term. It was the killing that was important and it was laid down that whoever did kill the thief " let him be twelve pence the better ". An Anglo-Saxon law existed to the effect that if a stranger leaves the highway and comes through the forest without blowing his horn " he is to be held

for a thief, either to be slain or redeemed", and it is implied that the penalty is to be inflicted by his captor personally without recourse to a court of law.

By the time of Aethelstan (A.D. 894-940), punishment for theft was no longer in the hands of private individuals. The death penalty was inflicted by law and the execution was carried out in a cruel manner. But feelings of humanity, in a feeble way, were beginning to have effect. In the *Judicia Civitatis Lundoniae* the king tells the archbishop how grievous it is to put to death persons of twelve winters for stealing. He afterwards secured raising of the age limit to fifteen. But in England, the death penalty for thefts above a certain value was not abolished till the year 1827.

It has been asserted that the severity of punishment for theft is a consequence of the capitalist system. This may be described as a yarn spun out of thin air without any reference to facts, for, as we now see, the most severe punishments for theft were employed in primitive communities where capitalists, in the usual sense of the word, were unknown.

Thus the evidence agrees with the suggestion that an instinctive desire to kill a thief was an important part of the mental make-up of primitive man.

An example of what may be regarded as an emergence of this primitive instinct was reported in the papers in January, 1927. At Moryn, a remote White Russian village in East Poland, the peasants having caught a thief, took the law into their own hands and sentenced him to death. "The whole village assembled, and when a huge pile of faggots with a stake in the centre was raised, the thief, bruised with stones, was chained to the stake. The mob then set fire to the pile and during several hours, while the victim was shrieking and burning, the whole village drank and danced madly."

There is a possibility that an emergence of the same instinct played a part in the wholesale execution of communists that took place after the fall of the Paris Commune. The fighting and executions together, during this revolutionary outbreak, are calculated to have caused between ten and twenty thousand deaths. Regarding this massacre, the communist Hyndman writes: "It was but too clear evidence that, when the rights of property are supposed to be imperilled, all sense of decency or humanity will be outraged by the dominant minority."

(6) Instinctive respect for property must have had an important result in leading to a recognition of the difference between *meum* and *tuum,* and

this again to the sense of fair play. The scales of justice were first needed for weighing loot—not evidence.

We speak of "playing the game" and "the sense of fair play". It is a truism to say that these conceptions, which we owe to athletics, are a useful part of our mental outfit.

The sense of fair play is obviously the source of the old law adjudging limited reprisals for injuries —"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". But this was only as regards members of one's own community. For members of other communities, primitive human nature was only satisfied with unmeasured reprisals: "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

(7) Our estimate as to what kind of "freedom" is best worth having varies according as reason or sentiment weighs most in determining our opinions. Reason alone, perhaps, would make us assert that that country has the best kind of freedom in which the poor man may take a holiday when he needs it without losing his job. Sentiment, however, urged by an innate bias, tells us that real freedom consists in being able to elect one's rulers. Such intrusion of this bias into a sphere where emphatically unbiassed reason would be preferable has some curious results.

This bias must owe its origin to the pugnacious habits of our ancestors, who, if they were to fight efficiently, needed to elect and then obey a leader. This custom, the offspring of many defeats and tragedies, appears to have resulted in an instinctive tendency which may either be latent, or may be satisfied by a mere pretence of a popular election. On the other hand it may be aroused into activity by political agitation and come to be regarded as a sacred cause for which men will willingly sacrifice their happiness and their lives. The presence of this tendency in our minds offers an explanation of the following facts.

We have a natural tendency to sympathize with the aspirations for home rule for any country that wants it and we often do so, at least if we are not politicians, without waiting to enquire whether home rule may not imperil the well-being or the safety of the inhabitants. Hence it often happens that those who are foremost in preaching the universal brotherhood of mankind are the first to discover that their own countrymen are not brothers but unwelcome strangers should they presume to govern and govern well members of an alien race who can only govern themselves badly.

It is also a matter of common knowledge that a people who, for generations, have been contented

under alien rule, may discover, as the result of agitation, that "good government is no substitute for self-government". They then insist on home rule though perhaps conscious that it will not be so efficient or cheap as the alien rule to which they have hitherto been subject.

The bias in question is one of the reasons why we regard democracy as the best possible form of government. For some races this no doubt is true. An instance to the contrary is the following.

For some time during the wars that followed the French revolution, Great Britain took over the government of Corsica. The English governor, wishing to introduce the blessings of parliamentary government, made an attempt to do so, with the result that a form of democracy was produced that consisted of one party in power and the other party in hiding. Those in power took advantage of their position to persecute and imprison their enemies. The Corsicans' idea of freedom, at that time, was that they should be free to choose their own dictator. Any other form of freedom was unsuited to their mentality.

(8) The primitive pugnacity of our ancestors must have made an instinctive respect for the leader a *sine qua non* for the survival of the tribe. This primitive virtue, with us, has gradually been

sublimated into respect for government, respect for the leader's son where the office became hereditary, respect for authority in general, respect for one's superiors and in part also of snobbishness.

(9) On the view we are considering, respect for the leader was originally connected with a suppressing of the murder habit so far as members of one's own tribe were concerned. This respect was part of the victory of the forces of law and order over primitive pugnacity. Hence one would anticipate that not only would death be regarded as the natural punishment for treason but also that rebels against existing authority would be liable to symptoms of excitement and undue enthusiasm which might lead to emergence of primitive instincts.

It is a fact that, in recent years, extremist politicians have been responsible for a very large number of murders of their political opponents both in Ireland, Germany, Bulgaria and elsewhere. One hears the phrase "murder as a political weapon". But it is doubtful whether this is a proper description. It seems more reasonable to suppose that the perpetrators were urged on by a primitive instinct that had been stirred into activity by lack of the mechanism by which it is normally controlled, rather than that they had any rational hope of achieving their political ends by means of

assassination. Apart from actual murder, the mental peculiarities of the extremist politician can best be explained as due to enfeeblement of judgment caused by a partial emergence of primitive and antisocial instincts.

(10) In primitive society there must have been ample reasons for dislike of anyone who disobeyed the leader and who therefore impaired the safety of the tribe. Usually only chance records exist of what form the punishment of such a person took. For instance, it is related of a king of France that, on suspicion of treason, he once kept a cardinal, for eighteen years, in a cage in which there was no room either to lie down or to sit up. The cage was suspended by chains and, when the court lacked any better amusement, they used to adjourn to give the cardinal a swing. Even worse punishments are known to have occurred in the case of oriental races. In England, the punishment for treason, which it is unnecessary to describe in detail, appears to have been derived from a custom of a head-hunting tribe of eating part of an enemy prisoner while he was still alive. This punishment was inflicted so late as the time of Charles II, when it was used by Cavaliers and by Roundheads.[1]

[1] The operation was commenced by partially choking the victim, presumably to prevent what followed from leading to premature death from shock or from loss of blood consequent on struggling.

In English law, dislike of treason led to unwillingness to allow what we now consider justice to the traitor. Up to the year 1696, no one accused of treason was allowed to be defended by counsel or even to see his indictment before his trial. He had no power to compel the attendance of witnesses and if any witnesses came forward voluntarily in his favour they could not be sworn.[1]

(11) If there was anything of an instinctive nature in respect for a leader, such respect would be likely, at least in the case of a very successful leader, to be continued after his death and might lead to his deification. If this is the origin of religious belief, it must follow that the tendency to indulge in religious feelings is instinctive. We are indebted to the Bolsheviks for a proof of the correctness of this supposition. Their anti-religious propaganda has, in many instances, had the extraordinary result of leading ignorant peasants to give up Christianity and to adopt paganism in its place. According to reports of a commission appointed by the Bolshevik government, "In many districts pagan sacrificial feasts have been revived: oxen and rams are slaughtered and the flesh is cooked in

[1] A bill has recently been brought before the British Parliament for raising the age of consent. One of the provisos of the bill is that proofs that the man was deceived by the girl as to her age are not to be admissible as evidence. Here again dislike of the crime inhibits the sense of fair play.

special cauldrons and eaten with peculiar rites." In the Kazan government, "the whole Kheremiss tribe officially renounced Christianity and returned to the old pagan faith. The same thing happened in the Belovzevsk district: "There too, part of the population is organized on atheistic lines, while the other part has gone over in a body from the orthodox church to paganism." According to a report published in a recent number of *Pravda,* owing to fear aroused by a visit of a doctor, a number of naked girls were yoked to a plough and made to draw a three-fold furrow round a village in Central Russia. This is described as a revival of a custom dating from a very distant past.[1]

The Brahmins in India, wishing to maintain religious belief, instead of trying to do so by force or by reasoned propaganda, regard with some amount of contempt those who teach religion to the masses and even threaten with punishment those who venture to expound the sacred books to members of the lowest castes.

It is a plausible suggestion that religious intolerance may have an origin, partly at least, of the same nature as intolerance of treason, but it seems to be

[1] These statements about the revival of paganism in Russia are quoted from *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism,* by Rene Fülöp-Miller (London and New York, Purnam's Sons, 1917), p. 218.

a subject that demands for its full explanation more attention that can here be devoted to it.

The "angelic doctor" St Thomas asserted that "In order that nothing may be wanting to the felicity of the saints in heaven, a perfect view is granted to them of the tortures of the damned." How strikingly does this quotation bring home to us the fact that, even in the mind of a saint, the cave man influence is still present, balanced but not eradicated by moral influence!

It will be of interest to briefly review the contents of this chapter.

Accepting the commonly held view that our moral character developed as a necessary result of communal life, we have attempted to realize how this took place.

We have found reasons for thinking that morals did not begin by learning to "turn the cheek to him that smiteth" or by "loving one's neighbour as oneself" or in charity or in good table manners. A more humble origin is indicated.

At about the time when our ancestors were acquiring human status and when they made their first approach towards communal life, their primitive pugnacity was so far restrained and modified as to leave them with certain instinctive desires of which two specially affected their conduct towards

their fellows. These were an instinctive desire to kill a stranger and an instinctive desire to kill a thief.[1]

These desires, which were indispensable, during a limited period, for the coherence of primitive society, led inevitably to the fundamental virtue of respect for property belonging either to one's community or to one's fellow tribesmen. This respect for property, which included the desire to defend it from enemies, led, in turn, to the virtues of loyalty, respect for authority, patriotism and the sense of fair play.

It has been suggested further that this fundamental virtue of respect for property and the trend that it gave to intercourse with one's fellows was the important factor that balanced and restrained the brute nature of our ancestors. If this view is correct, it must continue to do so at the present time. We may put this matter to a test by seeing whether discarding the fundamental virtue of respect for property, in obedience to a political creed, has any effect on judgment or conduct.

The events of the French Revolution and the

[1] If the views expressed by Atkinson and Havelock Ellis are correct, another instinctive feeling that affected their conduct towards their fellow men must be sex jealousy in a generalized form as intolerance either of sexual relations of others in general or of sex relations that might be regarded as taking property not yet formally allotted to the individual with customary and recognized ceremonies.

Paris Commune give us a welcome opportunity of putting this question to a test. We shall have to see whether the leaders in these upheavals, who discarded the idea of respect for private property, ever showed in their propaganda an unusual lack of the sense of fair play, whether they were not abnormally quarrelsome in their discussions and intolerant in dealing with political opponents and lastly whether the success of their policy was not imperilled by other symptoms of cave man influence when they got into power. In a final chapter we shall have to see what mental disturbances, if any, were exhibited by American Revolutionaries whose revolution was not an attack on but a defence of the rights of private property. The answers to these questions will be found to give the strongest possible proof of the general correctness of the views that have been here expressed as to the course of evolution of our moral nature.

CHAPTER X

CAVE MAN INFLUENCE IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

IT is unscientific to condone, or explain away, or ascribe to "spy-mania", the atrocities that accompanied the French Revolution in order to justify that event; it is equally objectionable to magnify these regrettable incidents in order to indulge a bias against political change.

We may admit with Thomas Paine that the task of the revolutionaries was to abolish "an augean stable of parasites and plunderers too abominably filthy to be cleansed by anything short of a complete and universal revolution."[1] We may admit, as was claimed at the time, that the revolution was "a triumph of pure reason" at its inception. It was, in the sense that the revolutionaries allowed no feelings or sentiments to stand in the way of accomplishing their aims. They were completely

[1] *The Rights of Man* (London, 7th Edition, 1791).

unscrupulous in their methods. We may doubt whether they would have succeeded had they not been unscrupulous.

But yet we must recognize that the discarding of sentimental restraints in political matters led to results unexpected at the time but which we shall see were inevitable and which are of great psychological interest.

The following is a brief account of those events of the revolution that bear on our subject.

The first serious move of the conspirators was to produce a famine by buying up and storing away large quantities of corn and, by spreading false reports, to impede the distribution and sale of the corn that they were unable to buy. This was in the year 1789. In the spring of this year, bands of bad characters came, or perhaps were brought, to Paris where they at once began to commit outrages, thus stimulating the feeling of unrest. In the country, messengers were sent to all the towns and villages to announce the approach of imaginary brigands with resulting panic and disturbance.

In July, 1789, a rumour was spread that certain troops were marching on Paris to arrest the members of the National Assembly and thus to destroy the hope of a free government. To check this rumour the troops were withdrawn. There-

upon another rumour was started that this had been done merely to unite with other troops and that, having done so, the army was to march on Paris. This, with other wild rumours, led to panic. The populace seized weapons from the arsenal. They then attacked and captured the Bastille, under the false impression that it contained further stores of arms.

About a week after the taking of the Bastille, "Foulon, the Minister, and his son-in-law Berthier were murdered under circumstances of horrible barbarity. The crime was not the result of an outbreak of popular fury; it had cost the revolutionary leaders large sums of money." This incident is quoted, not as evidence of homicidal mania, but as an example of the unscrupulous methods of the leaders of the revolution.[1]

At this time the King was living at Versailles some ten miles from Paris. Perhaps in order to cause him to lose prestige, perhaps also for other reasons, the conspirators decided to force him to leave that place and to live in the Tuileries in Paris.

A mob was thereupon organized that marched

[1] *The French Revolution*, by Von Sybel, Vol. I, p. 81. The above quoted statement of Von Sybel is based on a statement in Mirabeau's correspondence. Other authorities are also quoted. It may be regarded, therefore, as well substantiated.

to Versailles on the 5th October, 1789. The King was conciliatory and, acceding to their wishes, came back with the crowd to Paris. The conspirators, with great cunning, at once sent waggons laden with corn to join in the procession, thus giving colour to the rumour that the court had been monopolizing the grain. By this and other tricks of like nature, the yielding of the King was made to decrease rather than add to his popularity and prestige.

A new constitution was drawn up which the King accepted (21st September, 1791). The revolutionaries had thereby gained their ostensible object. In the elections that now took place, the Jacobins —men of extremist views—came to the fore.

The next event that we need notice occurred a year later when a rumour was spread that the prisoners in the Paris jails had formed a plot to murder the patriots. A massacre of the inmates of the prisons began on the 2nd September, 1792, and lasted for five days and nights. The first victims were a number of priests.

On the 21st September, 1792, the Convention passed a resolution abolishing the principle of monarchy in France. The King was then placed on trial and condemned to death by a vote of the Convention. The most important speech on that

occasion, which secured the votes of a large number of members, was that of Robespierre who distinctly stated that "it did not very much matter whether Louis was guilty of the specific charges against him or not; if it was for the good of the country that he should die, he must die. His death was an act of political necessity, not an act of strict justice." Robespierre also protested that if the penalty of death was odious to him, and if he had combated it consistently as a general principle of law, yet he did now support it for this exceptional case.

Thus Robespierre had thrown overboard all ideas of the rights of the accused, of justice and of fair play. Nothing mattered but what was expedient. It was "a triumph of pure reason" but it was short-sighted reason. He failed to anticipate the resulting storm of indignation that arose throughout Europe against the revolutionaries and the wars to which this indignation gave rise. The execution of the King took place on the 21st January, 1793.[1]

On the 5th September, 1793, a committee, the "Comité du Salut Publique" was formed of which Robespierre was a prominent member. Its object

[1] *The French Revolution*, by H. Morse Stephens (London, Longmans & Co., 1895), Vol. II, p. 214, and
Last Days of the French Monarchy, by H. Belloc (London, Chapman & Hall, 1916).

was to deal with so-called "counter-revolutionaries".

The first action of this committee that concerns us was the arrest and execution (in October, 1793) of all the members that they could catch of the political party known as the Girondins. This was an example of the insane intolerance of political opinions different from their own that now began to sway the minds of the revolutionaries.

Robespierre next conceived the idea of destroying his own associates—the very men who had elevated him to his position as leader of the Convention. The next party, accordingly, to share the fate of the Girondins was that of the Hebertistes. Robespierre did not venture to attack them directly. He instigated another faction—the followers of Danton—to do so. The Hebertistes were condemned on the 21st March, 1794.

Danton and his followers, having thus served Robespierre's purpose, were the next to be destroyed. The chief accusation against them was that they had been engaged in the Orleanist conspiracy. Robespierre instigated a friend to make this accusation. He could scarcely do so himself as he had been equally guilty in that respect. The Dantonists were executed on the 5th April, 1794.

Now every party of influence in the Convention

had been destroyed except the immediate associates and friends of Robespierre. He resolved to sacrifice them also to his lust for blood. As their policy was identical with his own, any accusation he could make against them might be answered by the reply that he himself was equally guilty. He therefore, before accusing them, persuaded them to pass a law to the effect that the accused before the revolutionary tribunal should have no right of defence. Even if this law was passed under duress, its enactment furnishes an interesting side light on their mentality. Why did they fail to see the use to which this atrocious law might be put?

After this, for about six weeks, Robespierre absented himself from the Convention and from the Public Safety Committee, but, at the Jacobin Club on the 1st July, he spoke of conspiracies against him among his colleagues. Thereupon he was summoned to the Convention and, as it were, forced to show his cards. On the 26th July, in the Convention using vague terms, he denounced the leading members of his own party. The Revolutionary Committee, he said, must be purged of traitors. The members retorted with accusations against Robespierre. Next day the discussion continued. One by one men who had been at Robespierre's beck and call now rose to attack him. In the con-

fusion Robespierre vainly tried to obtain a hearing. An obscure member proposed his arrest. This motion was carried unanimously.

An attempt to rescue him was unsuccessful. Next day he ascended the scaffold with twelve of his associates. The reign of terror was now at an end.[1]

It has often been stated that the events of the terror have been exaggerated. For this reason it has been thought advisable, in this account, to overlook the numerous massacres in the provinces that took place at the time, and, for the most part, to confine attention to murders of members of the revolutionary party about whose fate no doubt can exist. In view of the trivial nature of the accusations against them, their deaths supply ample proof that Robespierre and his associates were suffering from homicidal mania.

It is important to realize that, though the mob committed isolated outrages in Paris and many elsewhere, the Terror itself was the work of educated men. It was not a series of incidental results of riots or street fighting. It was the calculated policy of men whose minds had become deranged. In the history of the Terror, two names stand out

[1] *Paris in 1789-94*, by J. G. Alger (London, George Allen, 1902), and *The French Revolution*, by N. H. Webster (London, Constable and Co.).

prominently, namely Marat and Robespierre. Not only were they educated men; in their previous lives at all events they had shown ability above the average.

Marat was born in 1742. His father was a physician. From childhood, Marat was of an excitable disposition. He was quick at his books and, after doing well at classics and languages, developed scientific tastes. At the age of eighteen he was sent to study medicine at the University of Bordeaux. He started practice in London where he did well. While there he published his first book, a philosophical and physiological *Essay on Man*. In 1774 he wrote a political book, *The Chains of Slavery*. In 1777 he returned to France and developed a good practice in Paris where he gained much reputation by curing cases that had been given up by others as hopeless. He retired in 1783, resolving to devote himself to science. His scientific interests gained him the friendship of Benjamin Franklin. In 1789, the inception of the States-General revived his interest in politics. Of the tracts he wrote at this time, the most able was entitled *Tableau des Vices de la Constitution Anglaise*. In September 1789, he started his journal *Ami du Peuple,* which, from its commencement, was distinguished by the violence of its attacks on

everybody. When in the spring of 1792, the revolutionary government declared war on Austria, he criticized them violently, a course which led to his being prosecuted. According to the historian, H. Morse Stephens, "The numbers of the *Ami du Peuple* which treat of the question of the war are the most statesmanlike of Marat's writings. . . . Like all men of statesmanlike mind, he clearly perceived the course which events would take."[1]

Although at this time, according to Stephens, Marat had the mind of a statesman, his homicidal mania had already begun. For it is recorded that "The number of heads demanded by him increased steadily as the Revolution proceeded; in July of 1790 he asked only for 600; five months later no less than 10,000 would suffice him; later the figures grew to 20,000 to 40,000, until by the summer of 1792, he explained to Barbaroux that it would be a really humane expedient to massacre 260,000 men in a day. "Undoubtedly," adds Barbaroux, "he had a predilection for this number, for, since then, he has always asked for exactly 260,000 heads; only rarely he went to 300,000." That Marat was obsessed by such views does not depend on Barbaroux's statement alone, for Marat, in his

[1] *The French Revolution*, by H. Morse Stephens (London, Longmans Green & Co., 1897), Vol. I, p. 218.

pamphlet, *C'en est fait de nous,* wrote "Five or six hundred heads taken off would have secured for you repose, liberty and happiness." Also General Thomas Ward related to Paine that Marat had said to him "There are about three hundred brigands in the Convention; their heads shall fly off." Such opinions on the part of Marat were not mere arm-chair theorizing, for Barere, the chairman of the Committee of Public Safety, describes him—"that atrocious aide-de-camp of Danton"—as coming with others to the Commune and demanding "with threats and declamations" the immediate arrest of the Girondins.[1]

Marat was assassinated by Charlotte Corday in July, 1793.

Robespierre, who was born in 1759, was the son of a barrister who had ruined himself by his prodigality. His grandfather had also been a barrister. Robespierre was sent to the college of Louis-le-Grand in Paris, where he greatly distinguished himself. One of the professors there "continually praised his vaunted love of independence and equality". Robespierre was qualified as barrister in 1781 and made a reputation at the Bar. In 1787 he was elected deputy for Arras to the States-General. When in Paris he lodged with

[1] *The French Revolution,* by Justin McCarthy, Vol. IV, p. 166.

friends who idolized him in a way calculated to foster his love of admiration. "In the retirement of an elegant cabinet, where his image was repeated in all possible ways, in painting, in engraving, and in sculpture, he devoted himself to assiduous study." Injudicious compliments had an inevitable effect on his character. According to Thiers, "It was particularly remarked that, silent in all companies, and rarely expressing his sentiments, he was the first on the following day to retail in the tribune the ideas of others which he had thus collected."[1] This habit of regarding as one's own an idea recently acquired from others is probably a usual symptom of a superiority complex.

A further symptom of a superiority complex shown by Robespierre was that "he soon began to detest the society of superior men, as he had detested that of his constituents." It is probable that this trait aided the development of his homicidal mania. Alger repeats a story, which he says sounds incredible, that Robespierre, who from May to August, 1792, had supported the monarchy under the reformed constitution, was, in the latter month, in treaty with the Court to be tutor to the Dauphin and that when this scheme fell through, Robespierre, thinking he had been duped, joined

[1] *History of the French Revolution*, by M. A. Thiers.

the Republicans. In view of his vanity, this is just the kind of incident needed to drive him to extremist opinions.[1]

It is of great interest to note that when Robespierre was appointed criminal judge of the diocese of Arras, in March, 1782, he resigned that post owing to his unwillingness to pronounce a sentence of death. In 1791 he proposed the abolition of capital punishment. His mentioning his dislike of capital punishment in the speech in which he demanded the death of the King has already been quoted.

Now let us seek for a psychological explanation of the Terror. Elsewhere stress has been laid by me on the view that our moral sentiments have another function besides making us moral, namely, that they help to keep us level-headed by balancing or curbing the selfish and anti-social sentiments that otherwise might obtrude and cut short our reasoning process.[2] In an earlier chapter reasons have been given for believing that the "running ape" who was destined to be our ancestor passed through a stage in which pugnacity, cruelty, intolerance and even a state of mind recalling homicidal mania were qualities which, at the time,

[1] *Paris in 1789-94*, by J. G. Alger (London, George Allen, 1902, p. 447.

[2] *Common Sense and its Cultivation* (London, Kegan Paul, 1926).

had a survival value and that gradually, owing to the exigencies of communal life, respect for the property and lives of one's fellow tribesmen developed and this, together with respect for the tribal leader, furnished the basis on which our moral character has developed. A temporary loosening of our habitual, though perhaps unfelt, respect for law and order may, on this view, be an explanation, or at least a partial explanation, of the excitement and disorder that so often accompany an ordinary election to the legislature in democratic communities. If, at a time of political change, there is also a throwing overboard of the fundamental moral sentiment of respect for property, then one would anticipate that there would be a tendency to a reversion to the conduct of the era of primitive savagery, if the above description of the evolution of our moral character is correct. Our study of the French Revolution offers a crucial test of the general correctness of this view. The test is the more striking in that the events of the Terror were mainly the work of men of education and even of marked ability. The irritability of Marat or the persecution he suffered and the vanity of Robespierre are obviously inadequate to explain the mental degeneration of these two men. The explanation is to be found in their fanatical

devotion to the cause of the revolution that led them, in their politics, to dispense with the restraining influence of normal ideas of right and wrong and especially that deep-seated respect for property which, according to Graham Wallas there are good grounds for believing to be "a true specific instinct". This statement applies to their political activities only. There is no reason for aspersing the conduct of their private lives. Robespierre had the reputation of being incorruptible and, though some of his associates may not have deserved such a description, no certain reason is known why Marat should not have merited the same compliment.

Apart from any theoretical explanation, the events of the Revolution become easier to understand if we recognize that the mentality of the revolutionaries passed through two phases.

In the first phase, they were guided mainly if not exclusively, by what their reason told them was expedient. In this phase their unscrupulousness gave them a power out of proportion to their numbers for three reasons:

Firstly, it gave them a liberty of action denied to those whose political conduct was trammelled by sentimental ideas of right and wrong. For instance, the revolutionaries made singular and extensive

use of untrue rumours. They were reckless as to the amount of misery caused by their actions as instanced by their staging of an artificial famine.

Secondly, since the sentiments they discarded were, in great part, of the kind that inhibit and restrain action, their unscrupulousness connoted a driving force that was completely lacking from the counsels of their opponents. It is a truism to say that enthusiasm is due to a lack of balance.

Thirdly, the concentration of their minds on one object, together with their blindness to side issues, gave them an abnormal, if short-sighted, cunning, as, for similar reasons, is met with in certain cases of delusional insanity.

In the second phase, the conduct of the revolutionaries was no longer guided by what might appear expedient to normal minds. Their reasoning was dominated by abnormal quarrelsomeness, intolerance and, at length, by a tendency to homicidal mania. No longer content with killing their enemies, they indulged in the murder of those who should have been regarded as their friends. Thus the cause of freedom was imperilled by difficulties which were largely the result of this perverse policy.

CHAPTER XI

CAVE MAN INFLUENCE IN THE PARIS COMMUNE

AS was the case with the French Revolution of 1791, the Paris Commune of 1871 was productive of some singular and interesting signs of mental disorder. Mr H. M. Hyndman, the well-known champion of communism, in referring to the Commune, says: "Men imbued with the highest conceptions of the future and personally quite honest in their conduct may utterly fail to apply plain common sense to the facts of the present. Dublin, Petrograd, Helsingfors, nearly forty years later, did but enforce the teachings of the Commune of Paris."

Let us first record evidence that "men imbued with the highest conceptions" and "personally quite honest" were among the communist leaders, Secondly, let us see that mental peculiarities they developed besides the lack of "plain common sense".

Varlin, one of the prominent leaders of the Commune, had been a workman in a bookbinding business. He had gained renown "by the earnestness and enthusiasm he had shown in promoting the welfare of the Parisian workmen". The proprietor of the shop in which he worked had once suggested to Varlin that he should marry one of his (the proprietor's) nieces, in which case the business would be settled on him. He refused, saying he would never enrich himself by the labour of working men, neither would he marry, "for his family—the oppressed—was ready to hand". Thus not only did Varlin possess a high moral character, but it is important to notice that he retained this character to the end. When the Commune collapsed he was heartbroken. He made no effort to conceal himself but wandered in the streets waiting to be captured. He was denounced and caught and, when on his way to execution, was greeted with insults and showers of stones and dirt thrown at him by women and children presumably of the class to whose interests he had devoted his life.

Another prominent leader was Delescluze, who previously had been an editor and who was at length chosen by the communists as "delegate for war". It is recorded of him that "In a long

career, he had never sought wealth or honours . . . ever honest and upright, stoical and austere, his past was without serious blemish, and his sufferings and sacrifices compelled respect and admiration." Like Varlin, he made no effort to escape on the collapse of the Commune. His end was equally tragical. On the 25th May, he left his colleagues for two hours and was supposed by them to have deserted. On his reappearance, he was taunted with his absence, insulted and even threatened with blows. He then left the house. Several of his colleagues followed him to see that he did not escape. One of them fired at him but the bullet only grazed his skin. Presently he fell mortally wounded by a shot from the government forces.

Jourds also, as Delegate for Finance, showed both honesty and ability. Though he had to make requisitions from the Bank of France, it is probably chiefly owing to him that this institution was not looted by his fellow communists. He made no effort to escape when the commune fell but wandered aimlessly in the streets for a day and a night before he was captured.

On the other hand it must be admitted that some of the rank and file of the communists were bad characters. Of 36,309 who were afterwards arrested and subjected to examination, no less than

7,460 had, prior to the commune, suffered punishments for crimes or had been under police surveillance. No doubt these latter were the authors of many of the thefts and much of the misconduct that took place during the communist regime. It is stated that "Complaints of Varlin as to the multiplicity of unauthorized 'requisitions', prove unmistakably the existence of an extensive system of pillage and pilfering for personal usage even were outside testimony wanting—which is not the case."[1]

Many of the misdeeds that occurred during the commune were due to mob violence and took place despite the efforts of the communist leaders to prevent them. For instance, on the 18th March, 1871, after the failure of an attempt by government to remove the artillery that was in the possession of the communists, Generals Lecomte and Clement Thomas were taken prisoners and killed by the mob, despite the efforts of their guards to save them. On the following day, two other generals, underestimating the danger, returned to Paris, were captured and, with difficulty, were saved from the rioters. The killing of hostages contrary to the wish of communist leaders furnishes some grue-

[1] *History of the Paris Commune of 1871*, by Thomas March (London, Swan Sonnenschein, 1896).

some instances of what mob violence may lead to if uncontrolled. It is related that, on the 27th May, "A young and pleasant-faced girl, holding a poignard in her hand, amused herself by pressing its point against the archdeacon's breast, causing him to recoil, whilst she continued to advance. Then the girl seized her revolver and fired it into the prelate's right temple."

Though the communist leaders cannot themselves be blamed directly for such incidents, it must be recognized that these incidents were the work of a mob that had been inflamed by communist propaganda.

There were some misdeeds for which the communist leaders themselves were actually responsible. But we must not overlook the fact that these leaders had received great provocation. For instance, the communists, having become masters of Paris in March, 1871, had to withstand the attack of the government troops in the following month. In a skirmish on the 4th April, fifteen hundred of the communists were captured. While being marched away to Versailles, they were met by General Vinoy who was in command of the government troops. He halted them and enquired whether there were any leaders among them. Three communist officers stepped forward. They were at once put against a

wall and shot. What wonder if this summary execution enraged the communists and led them to arrest the Archbishop of Paris and other prominent people with threats to shoot them if communist prisoners were not accorded such clemency as is usually given to prisoners in civilized warfare! No doubt General Vinoy was exasperated by the murder of the two generals by the mob three weeks previously. Presumably also the communist rebellion, with its incitement to French soldiers to desert their government in the face of the enemy, must have appeared to him as the blackest treachery. Whether punishing communist officers was right or wrong it is not our business to discuss. The above considerations are mentioned as reasons, but not as excuses, for the obvious folly of General Vinoy in shooting the communist leaders at this time and in such a manner.

After this preface we may go on to consider evidence as to the mentality of communist leaders. We shall see that they suffered from the same mental defects, though in different degrees, as were exhibited by the leaders of the French Revolution of 1789.

First, as evidence of abnormal intolerance of opinions different from their own let us quote evidence from a communist source, namely, Hynd-

man's description of the Commune. Clemenceau, who became premier of France in the last stages of the Great War, at the commencement of the Commune, was Mayor of Montmartre, the most radical district of Paris. He soon gave advice to the communist leaders that they resented. In Hyndman's actual words: "Pyat, Vermoral and others so strongly resented his moderate counsels that they issued an order for his arrest, with a view to hasty, if judicial removal. Failing to lay hold upon Clemenceau himself, they captured a speaking likeness of the radical doctor in the person of a young Brazilian. Him they were about to shoot, when they discovered that their proposed victim was the wrong man.[1] This proposed "hasty, if judicial, removal", is evidence of the same insane intolerance of opinions different from their own as was met with in the French Revolution. It appears from Hyndman's account that it would have been entirely to the interests of the communist leaders to have considered and followed the moderate counsel thus offered to them by Clemenceau. Their refusal to consider it is evidence of the same short-sighted judgment as occurred so often in the drama of the French Revolution.

[1] *Clemenceau the Man and his Time*, by H. M. Hyndman (London, Grant Richards, 1918) p. 43.

Let us take another instance. On the 28th March, when in view of the imminent government attack, many urgent matters demanded their attention, the assembly of the commune indulged in a disorderly discussion about the issue of a proclamation. In the course of the debate " Oudet started up and demanded in stentorian voice the arrest of Tirard, one of the former mayors, on the ground that he had been an accomplice in the capitulation of Paris by not having resigned his mayoral office in protestation against it." He was made to sit down by a saner member. It may be explained that the communists had been making capital out of the misfortunes of their country by using the surrender to Germany as a means of exciting resentment against the French government. But this appearance of patriotism was merely assumed for propaganda purposes. It was an example of the same lack of the sense of fair play as we met with in the engineering of the French Revolution. When the Communists had once become masters of Paris, they troubled themselves no more about the Prussians.

The short-sighted reasoning power which the communists of Paris had in common with the revolutionaries of 1791, is well exemplified in the remarkably frequent changes in the command of

their forces during the few weeks of their combat with the government troops. Their first commander-in-chief was Lullier, who received his appointment on the 18th March, with the title "Delegate of War." On the 24th March, he was arrested and replaced by Cluseret. On the 9th April a divisional commander named Bergeret was arrested and replaced by Dombrowski. On the 20th April, Cluseret was imprisoned and Rossel assumed command. On the 9th May, Rossel in turn was deposed and Delescluze took his place, but both he and his divisional commanders were provided with civil delegates to spy on their conduct. The killing of Delescluze on the 25th May, has already been mentioned.

As happened in the French Revolution of 1791, the communists of 1871 suffered from an abnormal desire to bully their neighbours. In support of this statement, the following extracts from March's History will suffice: "The ill example set by the Commune in making unjustifiable arrests and perquisitions was followed in many quarters of the city by persons of lower grade. The federates were armed—resistance to their demands was folly, and they had their way, supplementing their more legitimate income by extortions of wine, food, and clothes, whenever the officer commanding thought

necessary. Some over-active subordinates also made arrests, generally of former gendarmes, sometimes of spies and refractories, and, in one case, of a batch of priests." By the 19th May, it is recorded that personal liberty had fallen to such a pitch that scarcely any but communists dared to appear in the streets. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to read that, on the 24th May, "The non-communist population of Paris, in the parts of the city delivered from communal rule, now rose up in a frenzy of rage against the federates."

We have seen that the most salient abnormality of the minds of the revolutionaries of 1791 was a tendency to homicidal mania. We have now to consider whether there is evidence that the Paris communists suffered from a similar mental defect. The question is how far the various murders that occurred during the commune were due to a homicidal tendency and how far they may be ascribed to other causes.

We must first consider the facts relating to the killing of the hostages. On the 5th April, on hearing that communist leaders had been shot after surrender, the commune passed a resolution that, in future, three hostages should be shot for every communist leader who met his death in this way.

Thereafter no killing of hostages took place till the 23rd May. The immediate cause of this was that, on the 17th May, a story was related in the Commune that a woman engaged in tending wounded communists had been assaulted and killed by government troops. On the 24th May, the Archbishop of Paris and five other hostages were shot. On the following day, forty-seven hostages, while being transferred from one prison to another, were murdered by the mob in the Rue Haxo. Thus the original threat to shoot hostages was made under great provocation and the actual killing took place when the communists were in a state of despair and were expecting the final collapse of their cause within the next few hours. It is noteworthy that on the passing of the resolution about the shooting of innocent hostages, several members of moderate views resigned, not realizing that by so doing they left the field open to the extremists.

The communists indulged in no killing of the general population for the sake of "terrorism" in order to produce subservience to their rule. Neither was there any assassination of officials with the object of paralysing the activities of the government. But yet, their carelessness in the matter of precautions to prevent murder by the mob, so far as it was not due to the general inefficiency of their

rule, indicates that they suffered from a diminished respect for human life. The attempted shooting of Clemenceau for a trivial reason, as already described, is evidence to this effect and also of their lack of the sense of justice and fair play. In the following instances, however, the evidence indicates, more or less clearly, a definite tendency to homicidal mania as affecting single individuals.

On the 28th March and the 17th May, the communists' *Journal Officiel* contained articles advocating assassination of the members of former French ruling families. Such articles recall the equally short-sighted reasoning that led to the execution of Louis XVI during the French Revolution.

On the 22nd May, at a time when the attack by the government troops was proving irresistible and when several of the communist leaders were preparing to escape, the following incidents took place:

A communist shot a boy who was playing with a hoop because, as he said, the hoop irritated him.

A communist commander, after a quarrel on some trivial matter, shot a concierge.

A chemist named Koch had prevented some boys from stealing timber to make a barricade. He was arrested and condemned. While being

taken away to be shot, three men in the street called out to the mob not to strike the victim. These men were arrested, tried, and also shot. An order from Delescluze reprieving Koch arrived just too late.

On the 23rd May, a few of the residents of the Rue Royal, who objected to their street being burnt, were shot.

On the 24th May, Beaufort, a communist, was tortured and shot by his comrades because he was of superior bearing to themselves.

This last occurrence shows the effect of what is known as an "inferiority complex", a feeling of anger on realizing that one is inferior to others. An inferiority complex does not usually lead to such dire results. It is obvious that another factor must have been involved.

This other factor is to be found in the history of the evolution of our moral character. Human morality did not begin with the command to love one's neighbour as oneself. One first had to tolerate him. The capacity of tolerating one's neighbour involved a transformation of the primitive desire to bully and rob him. A "sublimation" took place whereby this primitive desire was changed into a wish to enter into a partnership with him in order, with his help, to rob strangers and

defend oneself from them with greater efficiency. From this rather disreputable origin, as has been shown in an earlier chapter, there arose respect for the neighbour's property in addition to respect for one's own. Thus respect for property, as it exists in our minds, is no product of sensible reasoning. It is an instinctive feeling and to this fact it owes its importance. It serves to balance and curb those other instinctive feelings that are latent in our minds, that tend to make us wish to bully and rob our neighbours or to kill them and that we refer to collectively as our "brute nature". The proof that the property instinct thus lies at the basis of those virtues that make social life possible—and it is a very strong proof—is to be found in the irresistible tendency to bully their neighbours, the insane intolerance of opinion different from their own, the complete lack of the sense of fair play in their scheming and lastly the greatly diminished respect for human life that were shown by the communists of the Paris Commune and also by the leaders of the French Revolution.

It may be asked how it was that a minority having certain mental defects, euphemistically described by Communist Hyndman as lack of "plain common sense", could oust government and make themselves masters of Paris?

In the first place it must be recognized that their mental handicap only developed gradually. At first the communists showed a high degree of cunning in the way in which they made political capital out of the misfortunes of their country and took advantage of the weakness of the French Government at the moment of defeat. It was only after their cunning had helped them into power that their further policy was handicapped by feebleness of judgment. Exactly the same sequence of events occurred in the French Revolution but on this occasion the revolutionaries were in power for a longer period and thus there was more time for the development of their mental peculiarities.

Another influence that aided the communists remains to be mentioned.

When Monsieur Thiers, the head of the French Government, heard of the threat of the communists to burn Paris, he exclaimed: "They will never dare do it!" This remark is of psychological interest. It expressed an opinion arrived at on the spur of the moment and without any conscious effort to balance evidence. We, looking at the matter from a detached standpoint, can see no sufficient reason why the revolutionaries, who were desperate and exasperated, should not take the chance, however slight it might be, of getting terms from the

government by means of such a threat, and even to commence, as they did, to put it into practice.

The explanation of this remark of Thiers is to be found in the existence of a faculty of the mind known as the "defence mechanism". This is the means whereby the mind protects itself from disagreeable impressions. For instance, we all have a tendency to overlook, to under-estimate or to explain away, facts that disagree with our pet theories or that run counter to our preconceived ideas. The suggestion that the public and historic buildings of Paris were to be burnt, if Thiers stuck to his policy, must have appeared to him as intensely disagreeable. Hence, with no more valid reason than is shown by a drowning man clutching at a straw, he tried to dispose of the unpleasant suggestion by hastily framing and accepting the rather rash theory that the communists would lack the courage needed for committing such an outrage. This is not the only instance in which responsible politicians have underestimated the danger from extremists. On reading the history of the French Revolution, one is impressed with the idea that the attempts of Louis XVI to conciliate the revolutionaries and the feebleness of the measures taken against them were partly due to the defence

mechanism of his mind blinding him to the reality of the danger with which he was confronted.

The two social upheavals that we have investigated happened in the midst of a people who have always stood in the forefront of European civilization. We have seen that the mental defects shown by the protagonists in each case are not explicable as due to an inferiority complex or as the result of excitement. In the light of psychological knowledge we see that they were the inevitable result of disturbing the balance of conflicting tendencies whose balancing is a *sine qua non* for the proper working of our minds.

CHAPTER XII

CAVE MAN INFLUENCE IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

IN the preceding chapters dealing with the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, it was suggested that the denial by the revolutionaries of the rights of private property had certain unlooked for consequences. Because this denial struck at a fundamental instinctive feeling, it led to a mental disturbance which was the source of certain regrettable incidents, including symptoms of homicidal mania, which characterized and disgraced both the events in question. The proof of this contention must now be carried a step further by seeing what mental disturbances, if any, accompanied a revolution whose participants respected the rights of private property. The revolution which freed America from British dominion is a case in point, for not only was there

no attack on the rights of private property: it was a revolution in defence of these rights.

This revolution is the more interesting in that its participants suffered from a possible mental handicap of another nature. It has been shown that the mass of tendencies popularly designated as "the cave man within us" is normally balanced and controlled by various factors besides the convention of respect for property. One of these factors is respect for authority. Civilized governments habitually stimulate this respect by various artificial devices. The self-respect of legislators, as well as the estimation in which they are held, is enhanced by the imposing buildings in which they carry out their duties. Their dignity is stimulated by titles, salutes, durbars, "state arrivals", gold lace and aide-de-camps. Advantage is taken of the inexplicable awe with which the public regards ceremonies, uniforms and processions.

Washington realized the importance of artificial aids to dignity in his position as Commander of the American Army. One of his first measures was to institute uniforms. He was known as "His Excellency" and, early in the struggle, he refused to accept a letter from the British Commander-in-Chief which was addressed simply to "George Washington, Esqr." But, otherwise, the members

of the new republic despised the above-mentioned pomps and vanities, regarding them, we may suppose, as symbols of subjection to an alien power and they rejected the advice by Hamilton that they should introduce an element of aristocracy into the constitution of the United States.

Now let us go on to consider the facts of the case. We may say at once that every influence or condition that has ever been urged in defence of the misdeeds or bad judgment of the French revolutionaries, was suffered, in high degree, by the American revolutionaries, but nevertheless their conduct throughout was admirable.

From the outset their position was regarded by themselves as desperate. They had received great and exasperating provocation. But yet they were guilty of no unfair propaganda; they exhibited no insane intolerance of opinions different from their own; they wasted no time in arranging secret assassinations. They achieved their purpose by hard but fair fighting in which there were no incidents at all to which Americans need look back with regret.

One of the first of their measures was the appointment of a "Committee of Public Safety". When a committee of identical name was constituted by the French revolutionaries it at once

became an instrument for indulging their homicidal mania. No trace of any such tendency was shown by the American Committee. It is recorded by the English historian Trevelyan that, in 1774, a month after its formation, "it had bought, in addition to the prescribed amount of ordnance, three hundred and fifty spades and pick-axes, a thousand wooden mess bowls and some peas and flour. This was their stock of material wherewith to fight the empire which recently, with hardly any sense of distress, had maintained a long war against France and Spain and had left them humbled and half ruined at the end of it."

We have seen that communists, under the stress of political excitement, are characterized by a singular lack of the sense of fair play. No such mental defect was shown by the Americans. Their sense of fair play had been stimulated by their attempts to avoid what they regarded as unfair taxation by the British Government. "Look into these papers," said an English Attorney-General in 1768, "and see how well these Americans are versed in the Crown Law. I doubt whether they have been guilty of an overt act of treason, but I am sure that they have come within a hair's breadth of it." An English bookseller, who was in

a large way of business, informed Burke, at that time, that "in no branch of his business, after tracts of popular devotion, were so many volumes exported to the colonies as those which related to the law." This appetite for law books may fairly be regarded as evidence of a fully developed sense of fair play.

In the French Revolution, the attempt by the royalist party to call in foreigners to their aid exasperated the revolutionaries and was one of the reasons for the execution of Louis XVI and his Queen. Similarly, the Americans were angered by the news that Great Britain, having few regiments of her own to spare, intended to employ German troops to subjugate them. These troops arrived and proceeded to make themselves highly unpopular by their proficiency in the art of looting. Nevertheless, the Americans, when they captured these Germans, treated them with exemplary kindness. After his victory at Trenton, for instance, Washington ordered that the luggage of the officers and knapsacks of the privates should be handed over to them unopened and unsearched.

After the British General Burgoyne had surrendered at Saratoga, in October, 1777, he reported that the treatment of both officers and privates, as prisoners, by the Americans had been "of an

extraordinary nature in point of generosity". The conduct of the inhabitants of the country towards British prisoners also was "seldom deficient in humanity or courtesy".

The Americans showed a natural irritation against those of their neighbours who refused to join in the rebellion. This feeling developed gradually and lasted long and, when it came to fighting, a vindictive feeling was shown. This is the usual happening in partisan warfare. The reason is simple. We are so constituted that to join with one's neighbour in fighting a common enemy makes no disturbance of the basis of our moral character, for this basis, in its origin, was virtually a contract in which fellow tribesmen agreed not to work off their evil passions on one another but to save them for dealing with their common foes. If neighbours act as enemies, this basis is disturbed. It will remain disturbed until the hostile neighbours, by migration to another country, come to be regarded as members of an alien community. This, in fact, happened after the American Revolution. So much hatred had developed on both sides that the majority of the loyalists migrated to Canada, the rest to Florida and the Bahamas. As regards fighting by these loyalists, it is related that "a legion that had been

recruited at New York from among ardent loyalists, who had been driven from their homes by the revolution, waged war with the vindictive spirit of political partisans. Their unchecked habits of plunder, and their occasional outbursts of merciless ferocity, injured the King's cause even more than it was helped by their undoubted valour." Thus the view that we have described of the means by which the cave man influence is being gradually mastered yields an easy explanation of these happenings of partisan warfare.

Thus both the American soldiers and the American populace behaved well throughout the revolution. Before the war began, the conduct of American leaders and politicians also was such as to invite our admiration. Their judgment was good. The communist Hyndman laments the want of "plain common sense" shown, with monotonous regularity, by revolutionaries in the outbreaks in which he was interested. No such criticism can be made of the Americans at the beginning of their rebellion. At this time, for instance, a congress in Philadelphia issued an appeal to Englishmen of which the British statesman Chatham asserted that "for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under such a complication of difficult circumstances, were

surpassed by no body of men, of any age or nation, who had ever issued a state paper."

Restraint, dignity and good sense characterized the action of the American leaders in the incidents accompanying the "Boston Massacre" of the 3rd March, 1770. A collision between soldiers and a crowd had resulted in five or six men being killed. On the news becoming known, there was a large influx of indignant Americans from the surrounding country. But there was no senseless rioting. Instead, a meeting was held which proceeded to appoint a committee. The latter interviewed the governor and insisted, with success that the officer who had given the order to fire should be put on trial.

The above evidence of the good conduct of the Americans during their revolution is the more striking when it is considered that it is taken entirely from sources which at the time, were either neutral or hostile. Hence there is no possibility of the description being coloured by any pro-American bias from any source.

It may be noted, on the other hand, that in the following remarks on the conduct of American politicians during and after the revolution the facts referred to have been quoted, for the most part, from American authorities.

Before passing on to this subject, it may be well to point out that the difference between Frenchmen and Americans in revolution can not be explained simply as due to racial differences. The revolution in Italy under Garibaldi made no attack on private property. Like the American Revolution it was characterized by hard but fair fighting. There was no enfeeblement of judgment due to emergence of cave man influence, no senseless outrages and no diminished respect for human life. Further, it is a fact that, in the absence of social restraint, Americans can show as much of the cave man influence as Frenchmen or any other virile race. A striking illustration of this fact has already been adduced in Chapter V, page 77.

Now let us consider the activities of American politicians during and after the revolution.

Whereas the fighters had been fighting for the rights of private property, the politicians, after the revolution had got under way, adopted a policy which involved a diminished respect for private property in that they attempted to avoid taxing themselves to pay the costs of the war. Let us see whether this attempted evasion of their liabilities gave any chance for emergence of cave man influences.

At the time, Pelatiah Webster, " an old-fashioned

patriot", according to Trevelyan, "had persistently endeavoured to shame his countrymen into defraying the expenses of the war out of the proceeds of taxation. His advice was rejected in favour of a less sound and self-denying policy" and, "in 1780, Congress passed a law enacting that 'forty dollars in paper were thenceforward to be the equivalent of one dollar in specie.'" This repudiation of their own currency notes had unpleasant consequences and soon Pelatiah Webster "had reason to express it as his sad and settled conviction that the scandals and iniquities of the currency had corrupted the public administration." As an example of the lack of the sense of fair play shown by Congress at this time we may mention their hesitation in paying the soldiers to whose efforts they owed their freedom.

This repudiation had been preceded by a repudiation of another kind as a sequel to Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga about which the opinion of the radical writer Cobbett may be quoted. Cobbett was very favourable to the American cause and was a strong critic of the English government. In his *Annual Register* for 1778, he recorded "his profound regret that they [the American politicians] had so widely departed from the system of fairness, equity and good faith which had hitherto

guided their actions, and which was particularly essential to the reputation of a new state." When Burgoyne surrendered, Congress soon found that their general had not been so successful in diplomacy as he had been in fighting. Repudiation of the terms of the capitulation had accordingly resulted.

In such incidents there was an exhibition of that form of short-sighted reasoning in which the reasoning process has been cut short by the intervention of a selfish or anti-social sentiment. Such cutting short of the reasoning process, in other cases, is due to a deficiency of the influences that normally repress or curb our brute nature.[1] We are therefore led to suspect that American leaders of the time were mentally handicapped by some influence that affected their conduct as legislators but without necessarily affecting the conduct of their private lives. The nature of this influence had perhaps better be left to American students to determine. It will be sufficient for our purpose to determine whether this influence was confined to the war period or whether it was of a more permanent nature.[2]

[1] As explained in my book, *Common Sense and its Cultivation*, p. 274.

[2] *Life of Alexander Hamilton* (London, Constable & Co., 1907), p. 116.

On the conclusion of the war, according to F. S. Oliver the politicians of the different American states "took the benefits of the peace which the efforts of Congress had secured for them; they accepted the advantages of the treaty which their representatives had signed; they watched and waited until the troops of King George were embarked in transports for England, and then proceeded to deny in a variety of tones, all power in the central government to bind them in the matter of the *quid pro quo*. . . . The thirteen legislatures vied with one another in the ingenuity of measures for defeating recovery of debts due to British creditors." Such measures recall the events of the French Revolution, in that lack of respect for the rights of private property was followed by an appearance of cunning in combination with short-sighted reasoning.

The short-sightedness of the reasoning was soon shown, and incidentally a proof given that the above description is not the result of bias on the part of the historian, for the United States, at this time urgently needed capital, credit and treaties of commerce with European countries, but "they called their wants to deaf ears. European bankers and ministers of state, mindful of these events, evaded—sometimes with less of courtesy and cir-

cumlocution than was agreeable—all proposals for co-operation. Even their politest messages were unflattering. They complained of the duality of a government that was one and indivisable when it desired to purchase a favour or an accommodation, but turned into thirteen recusants when it became a question of paying the reckoning."

The adoption of the constitution in 1799 was no sufficient remedy for this state of affairs. Similar incidents continued to occur. According to Oliver, "This doctrine of repudiation has had a singular vitality in American politics and has appeared on a variety of occasions in suitable disguises. Sometimes, as in the present instance, it was a moralist eloquent upon the unworthiness of the creditor; at others it was a strategist arguing in favour of dishonesty as a form of warfare, threatening nations who had incurred the displeasure of the United States with the cancellation of all public bonds and private debts due to their subjects. . . . According to the practice of demagogy, the doctrine of repudiation was in this way raised to a higher moral plane. In the twilight of words and phrases the seductive idea, like a lady of doubtful virtue and waning beauty, was arranged in a charitable and becoming shadow and honesty was insulted by her lovers."

A writer in the *North American Review* for 1884, gives striking instances of such misdeeds by towns and municipalities. "Everybody," he says, "has heard to the shift of Memphis, Tenessee, when it wanted to rid itself of its debts, in committing corporate suicide by having its city charter repealed by the Legislature of the State." "A certain city in Kansas," he tells us, "having incurred all the debts it could, it secured a section of the prairie adjoining its corporate limits, quietly moved its houses to it, and left the old deserted site to the mercy of its creditors."

According to the same writer, debts which were incurred, in almost all cases, for constructive works such as railways and levees, have been repudiated by the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississipi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. The total sum involved was said to amount to £61,815,800. A later authority, the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders, in its Annual Report for 1907, gives, with reserve, the total of repudiated bonds as 54,974,933 dollars owed by eight southern states.

The last news from America on the subject of repudiation is in a different key. In February, 1927, on the occasion of the two hundredth anni-

versary of the birth of Washington, a most distinguished member of the American Government made a speech which was broadcasted and portions of which, escaping the hostile effects of atmospherics, were overheard in Europe. Washington, we learnt, was praised because he was "an exponent of sound, honest public finance" and also because "he advocated the payment of our debts in full". It is interesting to notice that these somewhat singular reasons for admiring Washington were shot across the Atlantic as etherial waves at the very high speed of a hundred and ninety thousand miles a second. But they travelled through the air of the room in which they were spoken as sound waves having a velocity of about eleven hundred feet per second only. For the sake of accuracy it may be added that the speed varies slightly with the temperature. Hence, before his immediate audience could grasp his thoughts, his listeners in Europe were made aware that, at length, America has achieved sound views on the subject of repudiation.

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(By the same Author)

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