

THE ARYAN VILLAGE

IN

INDIA AND CEYLON

SIR JOHN B. PHEAR

First Published (London) 1880

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii

MODERN VILLAGE LIFE IN BENGAL.

I.	
INS AND OUTS OF THE VILLAGE	3
II.	
ZAMINDAR AND MAHĀJAN	47
III.	
DOMESTIC LIFE	68
IV.	
GRAVE AND GAY	88

	V.	
		PAGE
RURAL CRIME		102
	VI.	
ADMINISTRATION AND LAND LAW		124
	VII.	
WAYS AND MEANS		160

THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY IN CEYLON.

	I.	
THE VILLAGE ECONOMY		173
	II.	
LAND TENURE AND STATE ECONOMY		197
	III.	
CEYLON AND BENGAL		206
	IV.	
THE GRAIN TAX		214

*EVOLUTION OF THE INDO-ARYAN SOCIAL AND
LAND SYSTEM.*

		PAGE
FROM THE JOINT FAMILY TO THE VILLAGE		232
APPENDIX—NOTE A.		275
„ NOTE B.		285
GLOSSARY		289

INTRODUCTION.

DURING the last forty or fifty years an immense wealth of facts, previously unascertained, has been amassed within the provinces of archæology, philology, and geology. By inference from these, and by reasoning upon the data furnished by them, the conviction is arrived at that man made his first appearance upon the earth very many ages ago, during a period of time when probably the physical conditions of the world were in important respects considerably different from those which obtain at present.

So far, also, as can be judged from these materials, the human race at its commencement was in the lowest conceivable condition of civilization. Its

progress upwards to that state of comparatively advanced culture, which is observed to generally prevail at the dawn of history, must probably have passed through at least three or four principal well-marked stages.

It is almost stating an axiom to say that human life can only be maintained by the continued use and consumption of material products of Nature, prepared, fashioned, and modified for the purpose by the application of human labour and skill.

Moreover, during man's lowest or least developed stage of civilization the animals and vegetables on which he feeds are both alike in a wild condition; he has not yet succeeded in domesticating either. The instruments, also, by which he catches and battles with the one, and gathers or roots up the other, are rude and inefficient—wooden clubs, bows with flint-tipped arrows, creeper-made cords, springes of fibre, stone-flakes, and such like things. His clothing is furnished from the skins of the beasts which he slays. His dwelling is a cave, or other natural

shelter, supplemented by branches of trees, skins, and clay or stonework. His fire, if any, is produced in a most laborious manner by friction. The family group is the limit of his society; and it is not too much to say that under the foregoing conditions the daily subsistence and protection of that group is only ensured by the incessant labour and anxious attention of every member of it, male and female.

In this state of things it is obvious there is little to favour improvement. The manner of life is necessarily erratic. As the jungle gets exhausted of its edible products, and the wild animals are killed down before their human persecutor, he must move on to new grounds. There is doubtless unity of purpose and co-operation inside each family circle. The father and the mother fight the battle of life for their progeny, as the lion and lioness for their cubs; and the children, as soon as may be, participate with them in the struggle. Collateral descendants from a near common ancestor, or even wife-connections, may sometimes be included in the

community. But all others are enemies—little better, if at all, than the beasts of the forest—competitors for the necessaries of existence, and therefore to be avoided, kept at a distance, destroyed. From such circumstances ensued chronic hostility to all outsiders, as well as exigencies of self-defence, which gradually, though perhaps very slowly, led to the aggregation of families of the same blood into tribes.

There seems good reason to believe that for many ages man lived, sparsely scattered over the face of the earth, very much in the manner just attempted to be sketched. Small tribes of hunters, skin-clad and ill-armed, wandered from place to place, winning by their own strong arms a hard and precarious subsistence from the forest and the plain.

Evidently, the greater the advance made by any tribe through the means of superior intelligence and physique, and the improvement of arms, and the greater, consequently, its success in war and the chase, the larger in proportion would be the

extension of its hunting-grounds and the diminution of any other outside population.

For any further material progress of civilization the introduction of a new element is required, and apparently this first came in the shape of domesticated sheep and oxen. With this addition the hunter became changed into the pastoral nomad; the means of subsistence was better assured; life was less hard; the idea of property developed itself; there grew to be those who had much—many cattle—and those who, having little or nothing, necessarily become attached, as dependents, to those who had. The care of flocks and herds gave rise to the relation of master and servant—owner and dependent—superior and inferior. Small crafts sprang out of the needs of cattle-tending, the requirements of the camp, and the textile capabilities of wool. The incidental manual labour fell to the dependent and the younger members of the pastoral group; the superintendence and control to the family chief; and the differentiation

of the propertyless worker from the leisured capitalist commenced.

It is worth while to compare for a moment the two stages of human culture which have just been touched upon.

In the hunter stage man only barely manages to appropriate such and so much of the products of nature (or in other words, materials not produced or modified by human agency) as he needs for existence, and no more; and the attainment of this end calls for the unintermittent exertion of physical labour and anxious care on the part of every member of the hunting society.

By the advance to the pastoral stage man's dominion over natural products is largely extended. Better and more plentiful food, greatly improved clothing and articles of various degrees of fabrication enormously ameliorate his condition of life, and conduce to his welfare. Yet the labour requisite for these results is sufficiently furnished by a portion only of the community; and

proprietors, as distinguished from non-proprietors, are at least partially relieved from it.

A third great step in the course of human progress is distinguished by the cultivation of cereals, which obviously necessitates the more or less permanent sojourn of the cultivating community in one place, the prehension and clearing of a definite tract of ground, and some communal arrangements for tilling and depasturing it. Out of these circumstances grows a village organization embracing independent households and characterized by differences in social status, privilege, and occupation. With the ancestors of the peoples who are the principal subject of the following papers, there is in the cultivating group the leading man of the community, or village chief, having his share of the communal land, and maintained in a position of pre-eminence, authority, and leisure by the variously rendered service of the other members of the commune; there is the depositary and expounder of ceremonial rules and observances, who has similar

advantages, only less in degree; there is the husbandman cultivating his plot, and discharging his measure of duty to the chief: and the craftsman, no longer an ingredient in each family, but become by division of labour a distinct entity of the village, exchanges the results of his handywork and specially acquired skill against a share of the produce on the threshing-floor of his neighbours.

In regarding a social system of this kind one cannot fail to recognise the great advance which has been made upon the preceding stages in the economic application of human labour and intelligence to the reducing of natural products into possession, and the manufacturing or adaptation of them to the use of man. The aggregate of the articles brought within the reach of man and made available for his use and requirements is greatly larger in proportion to the numbers of the community than it was under either of the preceding conditions of life. This aggregate—in modern phraseology the wealth of the community—is distributed by a

process of exchange, which may be deemed in a certain sense the beginning of trade, but which yet is not trade. The cultivator, the miller, the carpenter, the potter, the weaver, each does his part in maintaining the out-turn of usable products, raw and manufactured, and so far as he produces in excess of his own household's wants he does so for the benefit of his neighbours, on the understood but not expressed consideration of getting in return for it shares of their respective productions.

It is especially to be observed that in its earliest form this peculiar sort of barter is regulated by custom, and is not a system of bargaining. It may be conceived of as having grown naturally out of the prior order of things. Antecedent to the times of the village settlement, those members of the nomad family group, who did the weaving, or the carpentering, or the tent-work, or kept up the cattle furniture, &c., simply performed the tasks which fell to them in ordinary course, and participated each according to his status in the

community of goods, which was the product of their joint labours. After the cultivating settlement had come into being, the tilling of the soil and the various artizan crafts became, probably by a slow process of gradual change, the separate occupations of independent households; but the old family principle only thereby experienced a new development: each occupation was directed to and limited by the wants of the whole village, and each craftsman in return for the results of his labour and skill in his own specialty received a customary share of all the other villagers' productions. The miller, for example, ground the corn of the village chief, and perhaps of the religious teacher, or wisdom man, upon an obligation of duty to a superior; he ground the corn of the watchman in return for the benefit of his service; of the potter for the needful supply of cooking and domestic vessels; of the cultivator for an ascertained quantity of grain at harvest time. In like manner the cultivator contributed a share of the produce of his threshing-floor to the chief

and other privileged persons of the village (if any) as a duty, to the watchman in return for his service, to the barber for his shaving, to the miller for his grinding; while the barber on his part shaved the miller's household for his grinding, the carpenters for a portion of the grain which the latter earned from the cultivators. And the other links of the village nexus, if pursued, yield a repetition of these illustrations.

It is a principal feature of this form of primitive village communism that the just-mentioned interchange of benefits or distribution of commodities is not effected through any process of competition, but is regulated by custom, which, in case of question, is determined either by the village chief alone, or by a village assembly.

And the spirit of enmity to all outsiders, which marked alike the hunter's family and the nomad camp, animated in a still greater degree, if possible, each separate village society. Except so far as community of blood, or other strong influence,

favoured the defensive combination of villages against common dangers, and so led practically to an enlargement of the commonwealth, each village community stood alone, self-sufficient and unyielding in its hostility to all that lay outside its own pale.

These two early communistic principles, last mentioned, have survived very persistently into the later stages of society; and their influence can be unmistakably traced in the land-economics of modern Europe.

The hostility, in particular, ripening eventually into militancy (to use an apt term of Mr. Herbert Spencer's), was the means of bringing about the next great change in the evolution of human society. The individual primitive man, in like manner, as he killed and eat such wild animals as he could reach and overcome, appropriated, without being troubled by any notions of right and wrong in the matter, the goods of such men as he encountered outside his own circle and was able to overpower.

The one was as legitimate prey as the other. And the combined force of the village, under the leadership of its chief, or perhaps a member of his family, naturally acted in a similar way towards other villages. From this root sprang the domination of a fighting class over an aggregation of villages, and so initiated the formation and growth of political communities; while the acquisition of the better weapons and other advantages tending to the increase of physical force, led in the end to the diffusion and predominance of the stronger peoples, and to the development of national feeling and power as we see it manifested in history.

How remote from the present times was the apparent beginning of the human race, from which the foregoing, in large measure imaginary, course of evolution has been followed, can only be realized by briefly passing under review so much, little though it be, as is known of the successions of men which have since occurred.

The long series of ages which in geology is

termed the pleistocene period of the earth's history, is, it need hardly be remarked, distinguished from the periods which preceded it by the circumstance that a very large proportion of all the species of mammals prevalent during its currency have remained unchanged to the present day, and are at this time flourishing contemporaneously with man on the face of the globe. And only one species of mammal,¹ namely, the African hippopotamus, out of those few which survived from an earlier period into the pleistocene period, has succeeded in maintaining its place in the terrestrial fauna under the existing order of things. Moreover, no traces of man have yet been found which can certainly be attributed to any earlier date. And it therefore seems a fair inference to conclude that previously to the commencement of the pleistocene period the conditions of life on the globe were

¹ It will be seen that in the short survey of geological and ethnological facts which here follows, the views of Professor Boyd Dawkins and of the late M. Paul Broca, have been adopted.

not such as to favour the existence of man, while during that period conditions which suited a large number of the present contemporaries of the human mammal would probably offer no obstacle to his appearance.

The available geological evidence bearing on the point seems to establish man's existence at a time when enough of the pleistocene period had elapsed to suffice for the occurrence therein of considerable change in the physical circumstances of the earth and in the composition of its fauna and flora. In the earlier portion of the period the British Isles were a constituent part of the continent of Europe; and both Spain and Italy were probably connected with Africa. The climate of the European area was such as to enable the leopard to range as far north as the Mendip hills, the lion to frequent Yorkshire, and the porcupine to live in Belgium.

Then, as now, however, arctic conditions obtained in the polar regions; and as time went on

these spread southward. Several systems of glaciers grew up on the northern tracts of Britain, serving to cover Scotland and much of England under a sheet of ice. And this state of things prevailed for a long period of time. Afterwards, the rigour of the climate abated; temperate conditions came in; and the southern limit of ice and snow retreated northward.

Again, after an interval of the temperate *régime* which thus ensued, snow and ice once more resumed their sway over England and Mid-Europe for a period, which the effects produced by their agency prove to have been very considerable. And lastly, the ice and snow for a second time retreated from the south, giving place gradually to the temperate climate of historic days.

As the arctic climate, on the first occasion, came southwards, the hot country mammals left our latitudes for warmer regions, and were replaced by mammals of a temperate zone. These latter seem to have mostly come in from the east,

doubtless driven from Central Asia by the advancing cold on the north and finding the only practical outlets for them open towards the plains of Europe. These, too, in turn, were driven more southward as the arctic conditions continued to progress into lower latitudes. On the return of the ice-line the proceeding was reversed. And a like series of events, differing perhaps in degree, occurred at each oscillation.

During this long lapse of time new forms entered on the scene and the several successions of fauna backwards and forwards over the same ground gave rise to a very complex state of animal life. So far as the evidence at present extends, man was existing in England during the temperate interval which separated the two ice invasions. He was seemingly in the lowest stage of human civilization, possessing only the rudest and least effective stone implements and weapons. Professor Boyd Dawkins states¹ the effect

¹ *Early Man in Britain*, p. 137.

of the evidence to be that "man was living in the valley of the lower Thames before the arctic mammalia had taken full possession of the valley of the Thames, and before the big-nosed rhinoceros had become extinct"; and he adds:—

"The primeval hunter who followed the chase in the lower valley of the Thames, armed with his rude implements of flint, must have found abundance of food and have had great difficulty in guarding himself against the wild animals. Innumerable horses, large herds of stags, uri, and bison, were to be seen in the open country; while the Irish elk and the roe were comparatively rare. Three kinds of rhinoceros and two kinds of elephant lived in the forests. The hippopotamus haunted the banks of the Thames, as well as the beaver, the water rat, and the otter. There were wolves also, and foxes, brown bears and grisly bears, wild cats and lions of enormous size. Wild boars lived in the thickets; and as the night came on the hyenas assembled in packs

to hunt down the young, the wounded, and the infirm."

With the advance of the glacial climate man disappeared for a while from southern England; but after this had again given way to temperate conditions his vestiges become very plentiful, and serve to indicate that he was still in the lowest stage of culture. He lived by the chase of wild animals in the southern parts of England, in France and Spain, and throughout the Mediterranean area, as well on the African as the European side, in Palestine and in India—"a nomad hunter poorly equipped for the struggle of life, without knowledge of metals, and ignorant of the art of grinding his stone tools to a sharp edge."¹

His contemporaries in England, at this era, were the hippopotamus and the straight, tusked elephant, the reindeer, and other arctic animals; in Spain, the African elephant; and in Greece, possibly the pigmy hippopotamus. And there can be little doubt that

¹ *Early Man in Britain*, p. 163.

the period of time, for which this description is applicable, was of very long duration.

The progress of physical change which slowly and gradually led up to the historical state of things on the face of the earth, included change in the human species. The men whose remains are found under the circumstances above described are commonly spoken of as the river-drift men. During the latter part, however, of the pleistocene period these were apparently replaced by men of a somewhat higher type, whom it is convenient to distinguish by the name of the cave-men, and who not only added ingenious and efficient weapons and implements of bone to the rude stone weapons of their predecessors, but exhibited a remarkable talent for ornamenting their various weapons, tools, and implements, with graphic drawings of the animals they hunted and killed.

The geographical range of the cave-men was markedly less than that of the river-drift men. And there appears good ground for supposing that

the two groups sprang from different origins, and in particular that the cave-men were allied to, if not identical with, the Eskimo of the present day.

As in the case of the river-drift men the period of time covered by the generations of the cave-men was also very long, terminating only with the pleistocene age.

The era of time, which in chronological order immediately followed the days of the cave-men, and which itself reached to the commencement of history (in a certain manner, indeed, overlapping it), exhibits to us in the area of Europe man in three successive stages of culture, respectively denominated the neolithic, the bronze, and the iron age, all superior to that of the cave-men, and each forming a marked step of human progress in advance of the one which precedes it.

The men of the neolithic, or later stone age, had not discovered the use of the metals. As was the case with their predecessors, the river-drift

men and the cave-men, stone was their only cutting and piercing medium; and hence, notwithstanding the considerable interval of time which seems to have separated them from the cave-men, they strictly constitute a member of the stone-using group and are appropriately designated by reference to their position therein. They are, however, sharply distinguished from the earlier members of the same group by the fact that they managed, by grinding, to give polished surfaces and smooth edges to their tools and weapons of stone, thus rendering them greatly more efficient instruments than the rudely chipped instruments of the river-drift men and cave-men could possibly be. They lived in substantially constructed huts, and had attained to some proficiency in the arts of pottery and of weaving. The dog, the sheep, the goat, the ox (short-horn) and the hog, which had not before appeared in the fauna of the earth, were used by them as domestic animals. To some extent, also, they practised

agriculture. They cultivated wheat, barley, millet, and peas; and they had their orchards of apples, pears, and bullaces.

Notwithstanding, however, that the men of the neolithic age were thus very far superior to their predecessors, the cave-men, in regard to all the material means of life, they were yet greatly inferior to them in pictorial art; so much so that it seems almost impossible, in reason, to suppose them to be the same people in an advanced state of development. Their distribution over Europe was also much more extensive than that of the cave-men. And, judging from the characteristics of the domestic animals and cereals which everywhere accompanied them, we may safely conclude that they came into Europe from the regions of Central Asia, overpowering or driving out by force of their material advantages the cave-men, who seem to have either merged in them or to have disappeared before them—some of them, perhaps, falling back on the more northern and arctic

regions, where the Eskimo now contrive to maintain an unenviable existence.

It is established satisfactorily by ample evidence that the people of at least the earlier portion of the neolithic age were, throughout the British Isles, Mid and South Europe, small in stature, with heads of the peculiar shape termed dolichocephalic—long-skulled. After a time, however, as the obscurity of the later stone age dawns into the grey light of history, it is perceived that there are certainly two very different sets of people in Europe under more or less the same neolithic state of civilization. The earlier long skulled folks seem to have been largely displaced by a tall, broad-skulled (brachycephalic) race, of no higher culture than themselves, who also came westward from the direction of Asia, and who are identified with the Kelts of history. By the greater physical strength, and probably the greater numbers of the latter, the little long skulled men were forced into the rougher and less

accessible localities, more or less isolated from each other; and there seems now to be a well-grounded disposition to believe that they are represented in modern times by the various dispersed branches of a family which has sometimes been termed Iberian, such as the Basques of France and Spain, the earlier Bretons, Welsh, Scotch, and Irish, the ancient Ligurians, Etruscans, &c.

Although both these early Iberians and the Kelts (as just distinguished) in their turn, the one after the other, but with a long unknown interval, appear to have come into Europe from Asia, yet the result of all the relevant evidence seems to be that they were radically distinct from each other in language, physique, and other characteristics, and must therefore be attributed to different sources. And the Kelts are now commonly looked upon as having been among the first of the numerous constituent peoples of the great Aryan family to sweep over and settle upon the European area.

The state of civilization, which has been termed

neolithic does not appear to have been materially modified by the ethnical vicissitudes just referred to. It was the civilization of the early Kelts, as well as of their Iberian predecessors; and it prevailed alike for a long duration of time with the inhabitants of Northern Africa, the whole of Europe and Asia, the two Americas, and the islands of the Pacific.

But after a time the knowledge of bronze, the first form under which the metals were used by man as a means of augmenting applied force, became general on the Continent of Europe; and it is noteworthy that when the tall broad-skulled Kelts invaded and swept before them the long-skulled (Iberian) people of the British Isles an event which was posterior—by a long interval of time to the displacement of the cognate people in France and Western Europe—they brought with them weapons and implements of bronze; and they possibly owed much of their success to the superiority over the stone-using islanders which these ancient “arms of precision” must have given them. With the use of bronze, for

some cause which remains as yet unexplained, the practice of burning the dead became customary instead of burying. As might have been anticipated, also, the employment of metal in the construction of implements and utensils gave rise to enormous improvement in the conditions of human life, and effected an immense advance in the welfare of man. Of this plentiful evidence remains in every part of Europe. The initial limit of the bronze civilization can, without much difficulty, be very generally ascertained, and it is plain that the date of its commencement is not for all places the same. Great progress, for instance, had been made in bronze industry in the south and south-east of Europe at a time when nothing better than the neolithic culture existed in the west and in the north. Originating in some outside centre-point, the art was probably brought into Europe by some invading people, and became gradually spread from east to west by the two ordinary means of diffusion, namely, commerce (elementary though it then was) and conquest.

The use of iron soon followed that of bronze, and served to mark a still more advanced grade of civilization. Like that of bronze, too, it came into Europe from the outside, and spread gradually from the south and east to the west and north.

At the commencement of the trustworthy history of Europe the small long-skulled pre-Kelts, bearing the locally differing names of Iberians, Vascones (or Basques), Ligurians, and Etruscans, were occupying the western portions of the British Isles and of France, the Spanish peninsula, the seaboard of the Savoy Alps, and the plain of Lombardy; the Kelts were pressing hard upon them in the eastern and northern districts of France; the Belgæ, again, were on the back of these; and the Romans and Greeks respectively inhabited the two Mediterranean peninsulas.

Those movements of the Kelts and Belgæ were then in progress by which the different tribes of the smaller pre-Keltic people were ultimately compressed into the restricted areas which their descendants still occupy. So far as anything was known of Middle

and Northern Europe, these regions were at that time sparsely inhabited by tribes in a low state of civilization relative to the Greeks and Romans, who were generally designated by the Latin writers Germans; while in the tract about the mouth of the Danube and the north shore of the Black Sea were an apparently altogether different set of people, called the Scythians. Somewhat later the group of Slavonians were recognised as a people distinct from the Germans; and we are all familiar with the subsequent westward and southward migrations of the German, Slavonic, and other little-civilized hordes, all proceeding as from the direction of Asia, which resulted in the subversal of the Roman empire, and led to the development of the many diverse nationalities which now cover the European area. The Latins themselves and the Greeks, as well as the Kelts already spoken of, are found, on examination of the relevant evidence, to be only the fruits of earlier migrations from the same quarter. And ethnologists seem to be generally agreed that

