

THE COMING OF MAN *

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The speaker briefly reviewed the theory of evolution and the reasons which have led scientists to include man in this scheme. The testimony of embryology, of vestigial organs in living man, and of blood groupings, attest to the fact that man is related to the animal world and that his closest relations are to be found in the anthropoid apes.

It appears that man and the apes have a common ancestry far back in time. One is not evolved out of the other. A review of the geological evidence leads us to look for evidences of this common ancestor in the strata of Miocene times. The discovery of the Sivapithecus and Dryopithecus remains in India and Austria, and of the Taungs skull in Africa indicate a development toward man in those ancient strata.

Java furnishes the first being which appears to be so close to man and to the anthropoid apes as to constitute a missing link. The condition under which this discovery was made shows that we are here dealing with a being or beings which existed just at the end of Tertiary or the beginning of Quaternary time.

The recent finds of portions of ten individuals in early Quaternary cave deposits in China show conclusively that man had appeared there at least a half million years ago. These men—known as Sinanthropus—exhibit many characteristics of the lower anthropoids, yet fill the gap between the Java man and the later discoveries in Europe.

At this point the speaker reviewed the glaciations of Europe which serve as a time scale in reconstructing pre-history. The discovery of the Heidelberg jaw, of Piltdown man, and of the third interglacial skeletons near Ehringsdorf and Rome, were cited as proof of the early

* Synopsis of the address by the retiring president, Shoreland Hotel, Friday evening, May 6, 1932.

occupancy of Europe. The thousands of stone utensils found in strata likewise attest to the growth and change of human culture. With the coming of the last great glaciation man was forced to make his home in the caves. Here he built his fire, here he brought the game he had killed, here he fashioned his tools, and here he buried his dead. The record of his home life is now so complete that we can describe his culture with assurance. The forty-two skulls and parts of skeletons recovered from the early period of cave occupancy, give us a definite picture of the race which practiced this culture. We are dealing with man, yet his skeleton reveals so many ape-like characters that the scientific world is convinced that we have here a definite step in human evolution.

With changes in climate, new types of plant and animal life invaded Europe from the East and South. With them came a new species of mankind, closely related to modern man. Here the presence of seventy-four skeletal remains and of thousands of implements, take us from the field of speculation into the realm of observed fact.

With the waning of the glaciers, the ancestors of the modern races invaded Europe bringing with them the beginnings of the New Stone Age.

The balance of the lecture dealt with the development of culture in the Near East and its spread to modern Europe. There have been periods of set-back, but a review of this long story of the past has shown steady development toward modern man and our present-day civilization.