

metal. In a country like Egypt, the seat of an advanced civilization which threw out arms of communication and trade in all directions, some of the materials and some of the secrets of the metal-worker must have been early known. But the country itself was poor in metals, and until the time of the Middle Kingdom they were used for articles of ornament and luxury, or for tools of exceptional quality and cost. Gradually they were put to commoner use, but it was not until the XVIIIth Dynasty that bronze was cheap enough to oust stone; and although iron is the most abundant of African metals, and now is freely used by the natives of the interior, the difficulty of smelting and working it so long prevented its employment that the first examples known to exist in Egypt date from the XXIIInd Dynasty. By the time of the XXVIth Dynasty iron had become common.

M. de Morgan begins with a chapter explaining how North Africa rose out of the Eocene seas, and after various vicissitudes the Nile valley was formed. Egypt, as we know it, came into existence in the Pleistocene epoch, and then began the alluvial deposit to which the richness of the soil is due. But before the formation of the Nile valley, palaeolithic man was on the ground, and he has left us, both on the surface of the desert and among the gravels, records of his presence in well formed axes of flint of the same type that are met with in England as far north as Yorkshire, in France, in Germany, and even in India and South Africa.

Of the obscure period of transition from palaeolithic to neolithic man, nothing as yet can be recorded from Egypt; and in dealing with the neolithic period it is difficult to know what to exclude as belonging to the bronze period. M. de Morgan boldly gathers the whole mass of the later stone implements together, attributing them to the Stone Age, and would apparently deny that any but a very exceptional survival of flint is to be found in the historic period and contemporary with bronze. This is a high-handed proceeding, and one hardly to be expected of a professed student of prehistoric times. It must, however, be admitted that in Egypt stone implements have as yet rarely been discovered in tombs even of the earliest historic age, and this is a fact which lends some colour to M. de Morgan's hypothesis. On the other hand, flint knives are regularly figured in XIIth Dynasty scenes of sacrifice, and flint-headed arrows are found in tombs of about the XIth Dynasty. The observations of explorers are distrusted by M. de Morgan, but these at least are facts that he cannot ignore. And Mr. Petrie's observations, referred to in a complimentary manner on more than one page of the