

THE ORIGIN OF WOMAN.

BY THE EDITOR.

PLATO'S Symposium is perhaps the most poetical discussion in Greek philosophy and one of the most interesting. It tells of a banquet to which Agathon has invited his friends, among whom we find the philosopher Socrates, the poet Aristophanes, the disciples of Socrates, Pausanias, Phaedrus and some others. After dinner Phaedrus proposes to make speeches in honor of love, and Pausanias begins by drawing a distinction between heavenly and earthly love, extolling the former and giving scant praise to the latter. Aristophanes is the next speaker, but, being prevented by a severe hiccup from taking up the discussion, gives precedence to Eryximachus, the physician. This speaker approves the distinction made by Pausanias, but generalizes the conception of love by regarding it as a universal principle bringing about the harmony that regulates nature in the course of the seasons, in its relations of moist and dry, hot and cold, etc., and whose absence is marked by diseases of all sorts. Aristophanes, having recovered from his hiccup, proposes to offer a new explanation setting forth a novel theory of the origin of human nature. We quote extracts from the translation of Jowett:

“Primeval man was round, his back and sides forming a circle; and he had four hands and four feet, one head with two faces, looking opposite ways, set on a round neck and precisely alike; also four ears, two privy members and the remainder to correspond. He could walk upright as men now do, backward or forward as he pleased, and he could also roll over and over at a great pace, turning on his four hands and four feet, eight in all, like tumblers going over and over with their legs in the air; this was when he wanted to run fast. . . . Terrible was their might and strength, and the thoughts of their hearts were great, and they made an attack upon the gods; of them is told the tale of Otys and Ephialtes who, as

Homer says, dared to scale heaven, and would have laid hands upon the gods. Doubt reigned in the celestial councils. Should they kill them and annihilate the race with thunderbolts, as they had done the giants, then there would be an end of the sacrifices and worship which men offered to them; but, on the other hand, the gods could not suffer their insolence to be unrestrained. At last, after a good deal of reflection, Zeus discovered a way. He said: 'Methinks I have a plan which will humble their pride and improve their manners; men shall continue to exist, but I will cut them in two and then they will be diminished in strength and increased in numbers; this will have the advantage of making them more profitable to us. They shall walk upright on two legs, and if they continue insolent and will not be quiet, I will split them again and they shall hop about on a single leg.' He spoke and cut men in two, like a sorb-apple which is halved for pickling, or as you might divide an egg with a hair; and as he cut them one after another, he bade Apollo give the face and the half of the neck a turn in order that the man might contemplate the section of himself: he would thus learn a lesson of humility. Apollo was also bidden to heal their wounds and compose their forms. So he gave a turn to the face and pulled the skin from the sides all over that which in our language is called the belly, like the purses which draw in, and he made one mouth at the center which he fastened in a knot (the same which is called the navel); he also moulded the breast and took out most of the wrinkles, much as a shoemaker might smooth leather upon a last; he left a few, however, in the region of the belly and navel, as a memorial of the primeval state. After the division the two parts of man, each desiring his other half, came together, and throwing their arms about one another, entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one, they were on the point of dying from hunger and self-neglect, because they did not like to do anything apart; and when one of the halves died and the other survived, the survivor sought another mate, man or woman as we call them, being the sections of entire men or women,—and clung to that."

This ingenious theory of primitive man as a union of two human creatures is perhaps older than Plato and may not be original with him. At any rate the Biblical passage in Gen. i. 27 and Gen. ii. 21-22 may also have been given the interpretation of man's creation as a union of Adam and Eve. The oldest texts read plainly: "And God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them"; but it has been pointed out that the same primitive man is here spoken of, first in

the singular as "him," and then at the end of the verse in the plural, "them." The idea that originally Adam comprised in himself the nature of Eve as well has been suggested by the story that Eve was taken out of the side of Adam, and was formed from one of his ribs.

Obviously the idea expressed here in this passage of Genesis is ultimately the same as that of the Greek poet Aristophanes, and from the standpoint of modern physiology neither man nor woman is an individual, but the combination of two, viz., the father and mother. Each one of them, man alone or woman alone, is but a one-sided half of human existence. Each, by itself alone, is doomed to die; both together are immortal.

The Genesis story of the creation of woman is portrayed in many of the artistic representations of the creation of Eve.

Suggestions made to explain the original story of the creation of man in the sense suggested by Aristophanes in Plato's Symposium, may not be tenable but they are not altogether senseless.

We must consider that primitive legends have originated from curiosity with regard to some problem that has presented itself to man in the childhood of the race. In our present case we have to deal with the question why the ribs of man's chest do not entirely enclose the body, but leave unprotected an opening in the middle, the so-called procardium, where they turn upward. The primitive answer to this problem was the story we have been discussing, and thence the notion seems implied that before Eve, the feminine portion of man, had been taken out of his side he must have been an androgynous being, and we will add that there is a scientific truth underlying this primitive idea.

Living substance is originally asexual, or rather bisexual,¹ and in its primitive state it is immortal. A moner does not experience what we call death; unless it is crushed, or destroyed by poison, it lives on and grows. When it outgrows its proper size it divides into two parts. It does not die; nor does it beget a young moner; it divides. There are two new moners, but there is not a mother and a child; the two are coordinate. Both are mothers and both are children. Death is not the original lot of life. Death comes into this world by birth. Life in itself can be destroyed by physical violence or by chemical means, but if it is not thus destroyed it is unending, or, in other words, immortality is a fact.

The differentiation of life into two sexes places a limit upon the existence of the differentiated parts. Each individual grows to

¹ See the author's *Soul of Man*, pp. 399ff.

a definite size and is limited to a definite span of duration: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow."

The story of the garden of Eden was given a symbolical interpretation at an early date. We read in Origen's refutation of Celsus (Book IV, Chapter XXXVIII):

"In the next place, as it is his object to slander our scriptures, he ridicules the following statement: 'And God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which he had taken from the man, made he a woman,' and so on; without quoting the words which would give the hearer the impression that they are spoken with a figurative meaning. He would not even have it appear that the words were used allegorically, although he says afterward, that 'the more modest among Jews and Christians are ashamed of these things, and endeavor to give them somehow an allegorical signification.'"

It is not an accident that in pagan antiquity the fruit of the tree of life in the shape of an apple or pomegranate was the symbol of Aphrodite. We must assume that the apples of the Hesperides which Hercules was requested to obtain, and also the apples of Iduna bestowing immortality upon the Teutonic gods, possess ultimately the same significance as the apple of Eve.

We do not mean to gather here all the traditions about the origin of woman, but we will quote two accounts from a modern book of Hindu tales, called *A Digit of the Moon and Other Love Stories from the Hindu*, and translated from the original manuscripts by F. W. Bain. Here we are told of a king who falls in love with a princess when he sees her picture. He leaves his kingdom in the hands of his ministers and travels out in search of his love, accompanied by his faithful companion Rasakósha.² The passage containing the story of the origin of woman reads thus:

"One day, as they rested at noon beneath the thick shade of a *Kadamba*³ tree, the King gazed for a long time at the portrait of his mistress. And suddenly he broke silence, and said, 'Rasakósha, this is a woman. Now, a woman is the one thing about which I

² Pronounce *Russakósh*. The name refers to the part he will play in the story; it means both "a ball of mercury," and "a treasure of taste, wit, literary sentiments or flavors," a sort of walking encyclopaedia. The King's companion is a salient figure in Hindu drama: he is a sort of Sancho Panza, *minus* the vulgarity and the humor.

³ "A tree with orange-colored fragrant blossoms."

know nothing. Tell me, what is the nature of women?' Then Rasa-kósha smiled, and said: 'King, you should certainly keep this question to ask the Princess; for it is a hard question. A very terrible creature indeed is a woman, and one formed of strange elements. *A propos*, I will tell you a story: listen.

"In the beginning, when Twashtri⁴ came to the creation of woman, he found that he had exhausted his materials in the making of man, and that no solid elements were left. In this dilemma, after profound meditation, he did as follows: He took the rotundity of the moon, and the curves of creepers, and the clinging of tendrils, and the trembling of grass, and the slenderness of the reed, and the bloom of flowers, and the lightness of leaves, and the tapering of the elephant's trunk, and the glances of deer, and the clustering of rows of bees,⁵ and the joyous gaiety of sunbeams, and the weeping of clouds, and the fickleness of the winds, and the timidity of the hare, and the vanity of the peacock, and the softness of the parrot's bosom, and the hardness of adamant, and the sweetness of honey, and the cruelty of the tiger, and the warm glow of fire, and the coldness of snow, and the chattering of jays, and the cooing of the *kókila*,⁶ and the hypocrisy of the crane, and the fidelity of the *chakrawáka*;⁷ and compounded all these together, he made woman, and gave her to man. But after one week, man came to him and said: Lord, this creature that you have given me makes my life miserable. She chatters incessantly, and teases me beyond endurance, never leaving me alone: and she requires incessant attention, and takes all my time up, and cries about nothing, and is always idle; and so I have come to give her back again, as I cannot live with her. So Twashtri said: Very well: and he took her back. Then after another week, man came again to him, and said: Lord, I find that my life is very lonely since I gave you back that creature. I remember how she used to dance and sing to me, and look at me out of the corner of her eye, and play with me, and cling to me; and her laughter was music, and she was beautiful to look at, and soft to touch: so give her back to me again. So Twashtri said: Very well: and gave her back again. Then after only three days,

⁴The Hindu Vulcan, sometimes, as here, used for the Creator, *dhatri* = Plato's *δεμιουργος*. Sanskrit literature is the key to Plato; much of his philosophy is only the moonlike reflection of Hindu mythology.

⁵Hindu poets see a resemblance between rows of bees and eye-glances.

⁶The Indian cuckoo. The crane is a by-word for inward villainy and sanctimonious exterior.

⁷The *chakrawáka*, or Brahmany drake, is fabled to pass the night sorrowing for the absence of his mate and she for him.

man came back to him again, and said: Lord, I know not how it is; but after all, I have come to the conclusion that she is more of a trouble than a pleasure to me: so please take her back again. But Twashtri said: Out on you! Be off! I will have no more of this. You must manage how you can. Then man said: But I cannot live with her. And Twashtri replied: Neither could you live without her. And he turned his back on man, and went on with his work. Then man said: What is to be done? for I cannot live either with or without her.'

"And Rasakósha ceased, and looked at the King. But the King remained silent, gazing intently at the portrait of the Princess."

Another story, of like character, is told in the same book, on pages 372-374, only with the difference that it points out a lesson for woman that she must cleave to her husband because she possesses no independent existence by herself. (The same, however, in the Indian story is not true of man.) This is the explanation the faithful wife Wanawallari gives to the Brahman who tempts her to leave her husband. She says:

"Once there was a time when there were neither men nor women, but the universe existed alone. And then one day, when the Creator was meditating with a view to further creation he said to himself: 'Something is wanting to complete the Creation which I have created. It is blind, and unconscious of its own curious beauty and excellence.' Thereupon he created a man. And instantly the creation became an object of wonder and beauty, being reflected like a picture in the mirror of the mind of the man. Then the man roamed alone in the world, wondering at the flowers and the trees and the animals, and at last he came to a pool. And he looked in, and saw himself. Then full of astonishment, he exclaimed: 'This is the most beautiful creature of all.' And he hunted incessantly through the whole world to find it, not knowing that he was looking for himself. But when he found that in spite of all his endeavors he could never do more than see it on the surface of pools, he became sad, and ceased to care about anything. Then the Creator, perceiving it, said to himself: 'Ha! this is a difficulty which I never foresaw, arising naturally from the beauty of my work. But now, what is to be done? For here is this man, whom I made to be a mirror for my world, snared in the mirror of his own beauty. So I must somehow or other cure this evil. But I cannot make another man, for then there would be two centers to the circle of the universe. Neither can I add anything to the circumference of Nature, for it is perfect in itself. There is necessary, therefore, some third

thing: not real, for then it would disturb the balance of the universe; nor unreal, for then it would be nothing: but poised on the border between reality and nonentity.' So he collected the reflections on the surface of the pools, and made of them a woman. But she, as soon as she was made, began to cry. And she said: 'Alas! alas! I am, and I am not.' Then said the Creator: 'Thou foolish intermediate creature, thou art a nonentity only when thou standest alone. But when thou art united to the man, thou art real in participation with his substance.' And thus, O Brahman, apart from her husband a woman is a nonentity and a shadow without a



ADAM AND EVE CALLED TO ACCOUNT.

From the so-called Alcuin Bible (9th cent.)

substance: being nothing but the mirror of himself, reflected on the mirror of illusion."

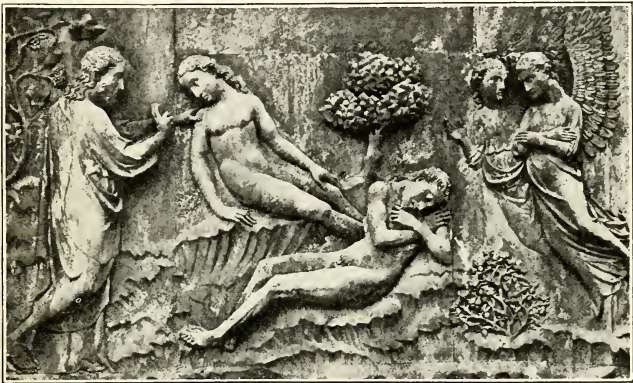
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Early Christian art took little or no interest in the parents of mankind. So far as we can discover neither the catacombs of Rome nor Christian sarcophagi are adorned with representations of Adam and Eve. Wherever they may occur they are rare exceptions. There is no trace of them in the *fondi d'oro* (gold-bottomed glasses), nor

in the mosaics. In painting they become more and more frequent in the beginning of the Middle Ages, and we reproduce here, as one of the oldest representations of the subject, a picture from the so-called Alcuin Bible preserved in the British Museum.

The name "Alcuin Bible" is not justified, for the work dates from some time after Alcuin; but, after all, it comes from his school and the book was *manufactured* in Tours about the middle of the ninth century, still showing the influence of the brilliant scholar of Charlemagne's court.

We will say here that the so-called Alcuin Bible is severely criticized by Anton Springer on account of "the ugliness of its figures,"



THE CREATION OF WOMAN.

Relief on the cathedral of Orvieto (14th cent.)

but there is more to be seen in this picture than mere awkwardness of style. Certainly we are at once impressed with the lack of technique; art is in its beginning; but the artist is apparently endowed with artistic talent, for the psychology of the picture here reproduced is exceedingly good. The eyes of Adam and Eve, and of the Lord in rebuking them, show real appreciation of the mental processes of the individuals. God walks into the garden with his finger raised, like a teacher who rebukes children caught stealing apples. God's finger is not straight, a fact which presupposes a close observation of life. His eyes express kindness as well as admonition, while Adam and Eve stand conscience-stricken by the side of the

tree. They do not dare to look into the face of God, and Adam, with his clumsy hand, points to Eve as the cause of the evil, while her face expresses admission, though in her turn she lays the blame on the snake which stands erect at her left.

It is true that the technique is abominable. The heads are ridiculously large, and the hands are out of proportion. The bodies



DETAIL FROM Ghiberti's DOORS.

First panel.

do not express the beauty generally credited to both Adam and Eve as the most perfect handiwork of God. The paints in the picture are reported to be no better than the drawing. The flesh is of a gray color shaded with maroon streaks. In contrast to the sickly and poverty-stricken appearance of the human couple the good Lord is dressed in gold, like a wealthy nobleman of the age, and the

scene is shown to be in Paradise by the trees too being overlaid with gold. Nevertheless the situation is very clearly a garden, copied from nature, and the very story, with all its details, could be reconstructed from this picture.

In time, with the advance of art, the figures of Adam and Eve come more and more to assume the artistic appearance of natural beauty. Adam and Eve represent mankind in its primitive state, devoid of spirituality but perfect in health and vigor. It is note-



THE CREATION OF WOMAN.

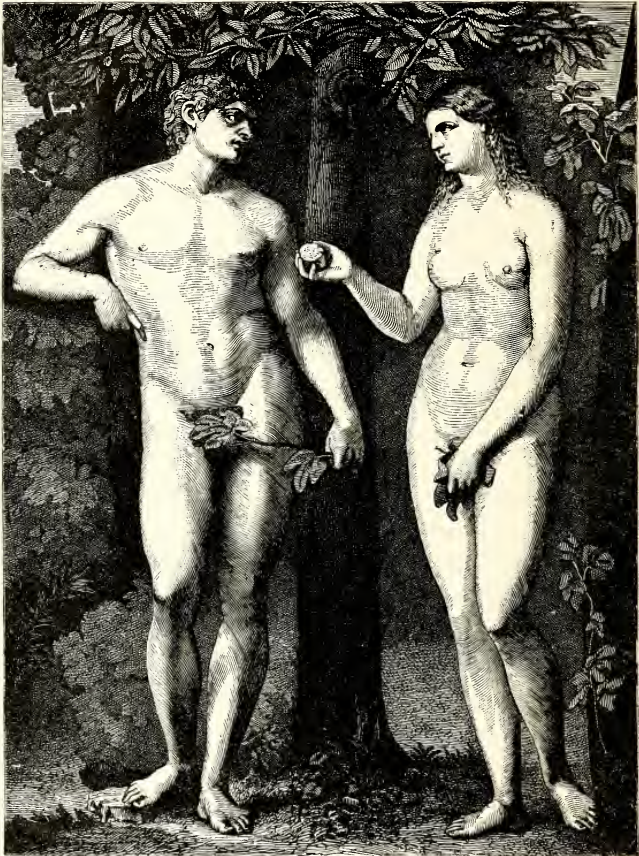
By Michelangelo (15th cent.)

worthy that they represent paganism in its rudeness and ignorance, and so acquire a certain relationship to Greek antiquity.

In the Renaissance we reach a perfection in the figures of Adam and Eve which attains the ideal of classical beauty, and the fall of man grows more and more indispensable in the history of Christian salvation. Almost every painter believed it his duty to represent the two fatal scenes, the fall of man and the expulsion from Paradise. Similar scenes also begin to appear in sculptured reliefs. A scene on one side of the large pillars in the front of the cathedral at Orvieto is devoted to the subject of Eve's creation.

The creation of man and woman is the first scene portrayed

on Ghiberti's great bronze entrance-doors of the baptistery at Florence. These beautiful reliefs represent the beginning of a new



THE FALL OF MAN.

By Palma Vecchio (15th cent.)

and greater period of art. It is Ghiberti's merit to have created an originally Christian conception quite different from the classical

reliefs of plastic art. It is noble and perfect, much fuller and richer than ancient Greek reliefs, and in a new style which we may call that of the Renaissance, or Christian plastic. We observe in it evidence

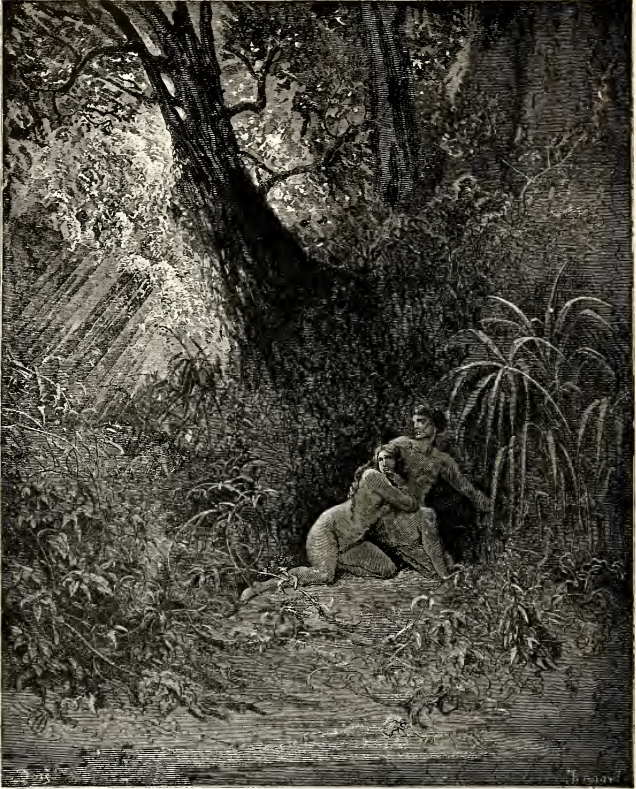


ADAM AND EVE IN PARADISE.

By Gustave Doré.

of a close study of garments and draperies, and the attempt to bring out not only bodily beauty but a spiritual expression and allegorical meaning. At the same time we can notice that not only Ghiberti

but also his successors follow nature, and most of the characters presented are plainly portraits of men and women who have served as living models.



THE SUMMONS.

By Gustave Doré.

We reproduce in our frontispiece the doors of the baptistery and here also, in a slightly larger form, the panel representing the creation of man and woman. In the lower left corner of this

illustration God is creating man. In the center he is raising Eve from the side of the sleeping Adam, who lies prostrate on the ground. God is here always surrounded and assisted by angels.



THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE.

By Gustave Doré.

who lift up Eve while the good Lord watches her rise. In the middle left part of the picture we see Adam and Eve taking the apple from the serpent which is entwined about the tree between

them. In the right corner our unfortunate ancestors are being driven out of Paradise. Eve stands in despair, while Adam is visible in the rear.

Michelangelo's Creation of Eve is represented on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, and is perhaps the most vigorous expression of the original strength of the mother of mankind. It will be observed that here too Eve comes forth from the side of man, although the picture seems to show her already in perfect body,



THE CREATION.

By Schnorr von Carolsfeld.

while the Ghiberti and other pictures show her still emerging from Adam's side. Palma Vecchio is one of Michelangelo's contemporaries who has painted the theme of Adam's temptation and fall.

From among the more modern pictures we reproduce here three drawings, representing Adam and Eve, by Gustave Doré. In the first we see them in their state of innocence, Eve being pictured as reclining on the ground, while Adam looks upon her in love and admiration. In the next we see them hiding in the dark recesses of Paradise, as they notice the arrival of the good Lord; it is the

scene representing the awakening of their consciences. In the third picture they are being expelled from Paradise by the fiery sword of the archangel, who stands in a threatening attitude in the background. Eve is leaning in despair against a rock by the wayside, and Adam in a somewhat firmer attitude seems to be meditating on his future fate.

Of the most recent pictures we will mention only those of Schnorr von Carolsfeld, who has succeeded most effectively in strik-

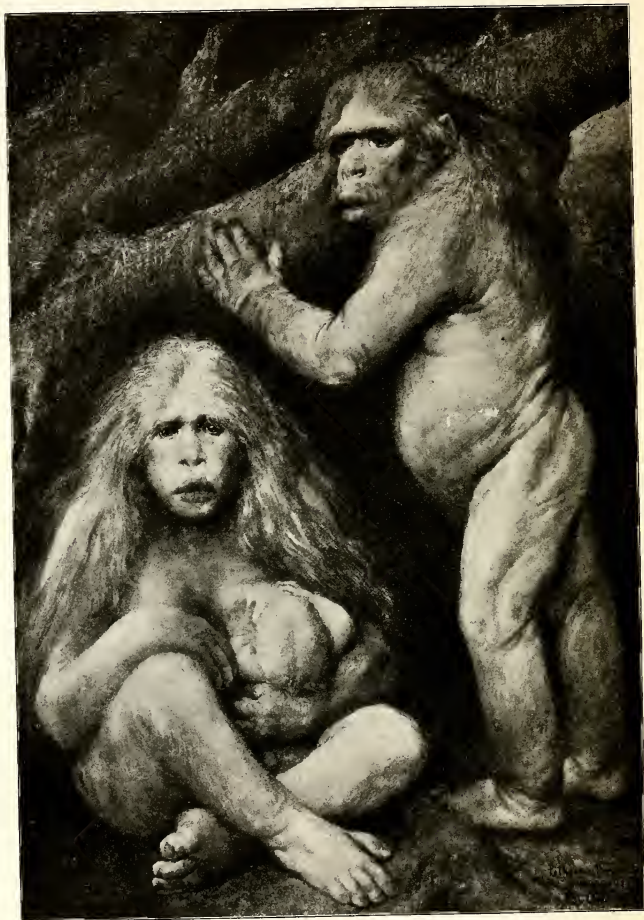


THE FIRST FAMILY.

By Schnorr von Carolsfeld.

ing the proper traditional note in Bible illustrations. He shows Adam and Eve as first created by God, when they are given dominion over all the rest of creation. The scene which shows Adam and Eve after their expulsion from Paradise expresses a more modern view, portraying the comfortable domestic scene of Adam's primitive home, where, leaning on his hoe, he rests from his labors while Eve sits in the background with a distaff in her hand, and their two sons are playing about them.

And now, in conclusion, the question as to the place of this



PRIMITIVE MAN.
By Gabriel Max.

theme in the art of the future. Has not the present generation lost interest in our ancestors? Since the legend is no longer believed literally our artistic imagination is not attracted so strongly by it. The story of the fall of man has become an allegory, an interesting tale, but it is no longer a truth. We believe now in evolution, and so Gabriel Max has pictured a new Eve for us which is the mother of modern man,—the mother who bequeathes to her son a deeper comprehension of life and a truer insight into the nature of things.

The picture is at first sight repulsive, but the more we look at it and the more we study the artist's intentions, the more it grows on us. Here is a primitive couple of the ape-man type, fossil remains of which have been found in the Neanderthal, in Cannstatt and in Spy. They must have been very savage, and we shudder at their appearance. How unpleasant it would be to meet such creatures in a lonely forest! The male is very brutish while the female shows traces of a dawning intelligence.

Verily, we discover a close resemblance of the scene represented by Gabriel Max to pictures of the holy family. And considered rightly, the similarity is by no means fortuitous, for here we have indeed a holy family. It is an uncultured primitive couple of a speechless tribe of forest men, yet the hope of progress and a brave determination to take up the battle of life for the sake of the babe that is born to them becomes visible in the mother's eyes.

After all, the wife of *homo alalus*, of the primitive speechless man, is still the same Eve. There is the same sacrifice of mother-love, the same determination of bringing to life the man of the future, the higher, better, nobler man, whose life will be much more worth living than was her own.

That is the secret of life, that we live not for ourselves but for others. If mankind were one great immortal being, how monotonous would life be; how egotistical would all our aspirations become. But nature renders all egotism futile. None of us finds an abiding home here on earth; we pass away and new generations fill the places which we leave vacant.

Daily the world grows older, and yet it remains ever young. There is the same happiness, the same bliss and joy that ever thrilled the heart of a mother. Christianity has abolished Venus, the great mother goddess, but Eve has taken her place; and if Eve too is to be deposed, mankind will still cling to the old idea of eternal womanhood, the patron of love and loveliness, of wifehood and of motherhood.