

# A BRIEF SURVEY OF HUMAN HISTORY

BY

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### THE MYSTERIOUS SPHINX

This figure symbolises for all time  
the emergence of Man from the Brute—  
the beginning of Human Civilisation.

is divided, and has always been so divided, there are other fundamentals which are common to the human race.

There is such a phenomenon as Progress ; call it culture, civilisation, or by any other name. There may be setbacks here and there, or retrogression now and again, in the long course of human history. But with all these, Man has evolved out of the brute-creation. He has risen above the mere animal. He has ever toiled to make his lot better than his inheritance in every age. And, whatever may be his ultimate Destiny, an eternal urge keeps him striving after Utopias. The Vision beckons and recedes before our faltering steps. Yet Faith keeps us steadfast on the thorny upward path. This is one of the fundamental human traits which are universally true. There is no West and East here. Man, the universally progressive creature, is the one subject of World History. Europe may be his workshop and Asia his dormitory for the time-being ; but time was when the reverse was the case. The Sun may shine on only one side of the globe at a time ; but no part of the earth is left in darkness for ever.

Political power is the engine which quickens the pace of progress. Sometimes it also retards the even march of man. Politics, therefore, is an important lever, but it is not the be-all and end-all of human existence. Political history may form the basis, or rather supply the bony skeleton of our treatment, but it must be clothed with the flesh and blood of all-sided human activity, and animated by the indefatigable aspirations of man. Our aim, in this little volume, will therefore be to hold the mirror up to the whole pageant of man's life, and not merely to chronicle his political career. We shall try to follow up the 'living past' of the *genus homo* in all parts of our planet, in all ages and climes, to the extent that space will permit.

Rich and alluring as our theme is we must necessarily submit to certain limitations. Where much is to be left out what is actually included must be governed by the judgment of the selector. Here I have been guided by no other principle than the choice of the significant. Whether what has appeared to me significant has been really vital to human history or merely spectacular without being significant, it is for discerning readers to judge. I shall have at least succeeded in evoking some interest in what is usually, though wrongly, considered a dry if not also a useless subject. It is my earnest hope that I may have raised the curtain on a scene in the drama which I have found extremely engaging.

It is obvious that such a work could not be carried out without laying several writers under contribution. My indebtedness to them is both general and specific, and I have acknowledged my sources in relevant places. It is my hope that these references may guide the interested reader to more extensive as well as intensive study. I have found it more useful to quote from my authorities verbatim rather than do them the injustice of indirect quotation through paraphrase.

I regard each of my chapters as an essay and have not therefore broken its homogeneity by marginal or inset headings. It is expected, however, that the descriptive 'contents' will serve to acquaint the reader with the core of each chapter though the analysis is neither detailed nor exhaustive.

Finally, it is my hope that, though the book is primarily intended for College under-graduates, it may not be without interest to the general reader as well as the High School student as an Introduction to higher studies.

1st June, 1938

S. R. SHARMA

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## SECTION ONE

Herein is unfolded the Great Adventure of Man. Chapter I describes the *First Steps* in Man's emergence from brute creation and his giant struggle against Nature in the course of 50,000 years during which period he forged the first instruments of his ultimate triumph. Chapter II describes the wonderful *Gift of the Nile* which constitutes one of the most fascinating episodes in man's 'conquest of civilisation.' Chapter III reveals the glory of the *Land of the Twin Rivers*, Euphrates and Tigris, comprising the three great cultures of Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria. Chapter IV discloses the mysterious *Indus Civilisation* of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Chapter V reveals the *Heart of Asia* in Mongolian China, Aryan India, and Semitic Asia-Minor. Chapter VI appraises the wealth of a *Medley of Cultures* that comprised the legacy of Asia to Europe. And Chapter VII recapitulates and evaluates the entire field of *Progress in Antiquity*.