

— R E V I E W —
The Bronze Age

BY V. GORDON CHILDE,
(*Cambridge University Press*, 1930. 8/6)

At the present moment the Bronze Age is, perhaps, the most difficult to master of all the Prehistoric epochs. This difficulty will be materially lessened for readers of Professor Child's new book.

In the first two chapters he makes clear the essential difference in the life of primitive communities brought about by the introduction of metal. This lies in the fact that the new material was an import, and had to be paid for by exports, and so led to a great development in trade, and therefore in intercourse with other communities, and the subsequent stimulus to all branches of life which intercourse is bound to bring. He then gives a brief sketch of the Bronze Age civilization of the Ancient, Eastern world. The third chapter is devoted to a classification and description of the chief bronze implements, specially of Central and North West Europe, while chapters 4, 5 and 6, are occupied with an account of the most important features of the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Ages in the same district. A short study of the present state of knowledge of Bronze Age Ethnology completes the book. The mass of information it contains is but another example of Professor Childe's wide knowledge, and the arrangement is so good that it is easy to find any fact that may be required. A map would be a great boon to those readers to whom such sites as Toszeg, Kivik, or the Matra Mountains are not household words; and the conscientious reader who turns up each reference to the illustrations would be saved much time and annoyance if the pages opposite to the figures were given with the references. The pottery of the period is dealt with far less fully than the metal artifacts, but that is unavoidable in a book of this size. Many of the problems which arise from a study of the period are also not considered, but this statement of what is actually known gives an excellent starting place for further investigations.

It seems a pity that such an excellent book should be marred by the personal point of view which is expressed on p. 25, where Professor Childe remarks that "The mighty stone monuments (of the Ancient Egyptians) have inspired the less stupid of the wealthy

European visitors to serious excavations as a diversion, and encouraged the rest to subsidize professional diggers." The intensive study of antiquity has always been a sign of a static or declining civilization, and it is a pity thus to stigmatise those whose interests are with the present or future rather than the past, as lacking in intelligence. It seems almost unnecessary, also, to explain that gold plating in the Bronze Age was not achieved by electrolysis (p. 220 note).

This book forms a most useful sequel to Mr. Burkitt's book on Neolithic Times ; and all those whose pleasures lie in looking backward will be grateful to Professor Childe for writing it.

Dina Portway Dobson.
