

THE BOOK OF CENTURIES AND HOW TO KEEP ONE.

By G. M. BERNAU.

THE question of historical perspective and the possibility of bringing it before their scholars is much in the minds of teachers just now, and the teaching of universal history, linked together by time charts of various kinds, is being considered by educational authorities generally. The P.N.E.U. has always advocated the teaching of universal history and the Parents' Union School has had, for thirty-seven years, foreign and ancient history as well as English, upon its programmes. A few sentences from *An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education*, by Miss C. M. Mason, sum up the reasons she had for advocating this wide study of history:—

"I have already spoken of history as a vital part of education and have cited the counsel of Montaigne that the teacher 'shall by the help of histories inform himself of the worthiest minds that were in the best ages.' To us in particular who are living in one of the great epochs of history it is necessary to know something of what has gone before in order to think justly of what is occurring to-day.

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"The study of ancient history . . . we approach through a chronologically-arranged book about the British Museumⁱ (written for the scholars of the P.U.S. by the late Mrs. W. Epps, who had the delightful gift of realising the progress of the ages as represented in our great national storehouse) . . . Miss G. M. Bernau has added to the value of these studies by producing a 'Book of Centuries' in which children draw such illustrations as they come across of objects of domestic use, of art, etc., connected with the century they are reading about. This slight study of the British Museum we find very valuable; whether the children have or have not the opportunity of visiting the Museum itself, they have the hope of doing so, and, besides, their minds are awakened to the treasures of local museums.

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"It is a great thing to possess a pageant of history in the background of one's thoughts. We may not be able to recall this or that circumstance, but, 'the imagination is warmed'; we know that there is a great deal to be said on both sides of every question and are saved from crudities in opinion and rashness in action. The present becomes enriched for us with the wealth of all that has gone before.

"Perhaps the gravest defect in school curricula is that they fail to give a comprehensive, intelligent and interesting introduction to history.

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To leave off or even to begin with the history of our own country is fatal. We cannot live sanely unless we know that other peoples are as we are with a difference, that their history is as ours, with a difference, that they too have been represented by their poets and their artists, that they too have their literature and their national life. We have been asleep and our awaking is rather terrible. The people whom we have not taught rise upon us in their ignorance and 'the rabble',—

'As the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

They cry,—“Choose we!”—*Hamlet*.

Heaven help their choice for choosing is indeed with them, and little do they know of those two ratifiers and props of every present word and action, Antiquity and Custom! It is never too late to mend, but we may not delay to offer such a liberal and generous diet of History to every child in the country as shall give weight to his decisions, consideration to his actions and stability to his conduct; that stability, the lack of which has plunged us into many a stormy sea of unrest.”

Every child’s “Book of Centuries” should bear witness to “a liberal and generous diet of History.” From ten years old and onwards the P.U.S. children make these books, “putting in illustrations from all history studied during the term (Bible, English, French, General History).” Their books also bear witness to some special study in museums each term. The children should be free to enter on their pages events and drawings which have interested them in their wide general reading of History (that “inexhaustible storehouse of ideas”) and of Literature. As time goes on the pages become fuller, and fascinating historical facts are discovered which shed light on contemporary and consecutive history in each century. Children get accustomed to treating their “Books of Centuries” as companions to all their reading. They use the local resources of museums, they find information in newspapers, bringing cuttings and illustrations which bear on the special period they are studying. Present day discoveries are watched with interest and noted in the twentieth century page or in the early century with which they are concerned. Thus History, in a “Century Book,” is a live thing of the present, past and future tense. Each book is an individual work of intelligence and very often, of art.

Though “The Book of Centuries,” as such, has only been part of the P.U.S. programme since 1915, its earlier form of a “Museum Note Book” dates back to 1906. The late Mrs. Epps advocated in her *British Museum for Children* the keeping of a note-book, each page representing a century, in which one could draw sketches of objects in the museums, and write notes of the principal events.

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“The Book of Centuries” should be fully drawn up according to the following directions before any illustrations are made. This will then prevent future mistakes which may arise through leaving too few or too many pages. The book consists of forty-eight *blank* leaves, i.e., ninety-six pages, for *drawing*, and a corresponding number of lined pages.

We must start at the beginning of the book and head the first lined page “Prehistoric Periods.” Under this it is as well to write a list of the four Periods—Palaeolithic or Old Stone, Neolithic or New Stone, Bronze, and Early Iron—explaining what is meant by each. As the time of the Prehistoric Periods varies in each country, it was thought better to group them all together at the beginning of the book, although there are peoples such as some in the Pacific Islands, who are still in the Stone Age. On the other side of the lined page write “Palaeolithic Age,” and there enter any suitable notes describing this period, which can be gleaned from the *Guide to the Stone Age*, published by the British Museum.

So much for the lined pages of descriptive notes. Now let us turn our attention to the blank pages for the illustrations. On the first page put the words “River Drift,” on this can be drawn a copy of the fine specimen of a flint implement found with some elephants’ bones in

Gray's Inn Lane, London, at the end of the seventeenth century, which find was the cause of the study of prehistoric remains. On the next drawing page write "The Caves" (see specimen page), and here put illustrations of the harpoons, tools, needles, etc. On the next page put "Kitchen Middens," and here we shall draw the oyster shells, knives, etc., found in the huge refuse heaps accumulated on the sites of early settlements. On the next page "Flint Workings," with the chalk lamps, miners' picks, and sections of a chalk mine. Head the next page "Palaeolithic Art," illustrations for which are plentiful, *e.g.*, the pebble engraved with a stag, a dagger with a carved handle in the shape of a mammoth. On the next page "Neolithic Age," showing the more elaborate and polished implements of the Later Stone Age. Then on the next page "Bronze Age," with illustrations of bronze implements, etc., and a section of a "Round Barrow."

Now we must turn to the last ten *blank* pages at the end of the book. These should be kept for small maps of countries mentioned in the main part of the book, such as the N.W. coast of Europe in the Palaeolithic Age; Egypt; Babylonia and
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Assyria, including Syria and Persia; Greece and Asia Minor with the north coast of Africa, a plan of Athens; the Roman Empire, a plan of Rome; Roman Britain, plan of Roman London; a map illustrating the English Conquest of Britain; Anglo-Saxon England; and so on, ending with maps of Europe, before and after the Great War. On the *lined* pages opposite the maps could be written a small description of history as illustrated by the maps, or a mention of the centuries in which reference to these countries can be found. The choice of what maps should be included rests with the owner of each separate book. These are only suggestions.

Then we must turn to the twelfth *lined* page from the end. Between the two top lines write a large "20th Century, A.D."; from here work backwards, writing at the top of each lined page respectively, "19th Century, A.D.," "18th Century, A.D.," etc., till the "1st Century, A.D." Continue then from the "1st Century, B.C." till the "54th Century, B.C." We have now only five pages left, and as there are so few known dates so far back in the history of the world, there is no harm in grouping ten centuries together on each page, *i.e.*, the one after the 54th would be the "64th to 55th Centuries, B.C.," then "74th to 65th," "84th to 75th," "94th to 85th," "104th to 95th." I understand that there have been discoveries of objects made as far back as the 100th Century, B.C., so this will cover that period and leave a margin for discoveries perhaps still to be made of a yet further back period. We have now—except in the last few pages mentioned—for each century a *lined* page on which the facts are to be put according to date, and a *blank* page for the illustrations of that century. As there are twenty-three lines on each page and two have been taken up by the heading, a line must be drawn on the eleventh line from the bottom of the page to divide the upper half from the lower half, so that there are only twenty lines left for the dates. This will mean that each line stands for five years, and so an event which happened in the third year of an A.D. century would be put on the middle of the first line; one which happened in the forty-second year will be put on the ninth line down, the second place in, and so on (see specimen 16th Century, A.D. page).

It must be remembered that while in the A.D. centuries the earlier numbers are at the *top* of the page (*i.e.*, in the 1st Century, A.D., the two *top* lines represent years 1 to 10 A.D.),
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in those of B.C. it is the reverse, and the earlier numbers are at the *bottom* of the page (*i.e.*, in the 1st Century, B.C., the two *bottom* lines represent the years 10 to 1 B.C. Care must be taken,

too, to place the dates correctly, *e.g.*, the Magna Charta would be placed at the end of the third line of the 13th Century, A.D. Unless this is pointed out, children often make the mistake of putting it in the 12th.

There are about five double blank pages in the latest “Books of Centuries.” These can be used for drawings of the ancient gods in the earlier part, and architecture of the period in the later part of the book, or for collections of drawings, the owner may wish to make.

Indian ink (waterproof) should always be used for the drawings, and occasional coloured illustrations are very effective. It is permissible to paste in good engravings, or photographs, where the subject is too difficult to be drawn, but this should be done only occasionally, as it is apt to make the book too bulky. As the book should be a life-long interest, children had better leave the more difficult subjects till they are old enough to do them justice. Naturally one page is a very small space in which to illustrate the whole of a century, and yet it is a mistake to leave two pages for some centuries, as I have seen done in some books, as it does away with the whole idea of the book; therefore each should choose what she considers the most characteristic events, planning out the arrangement of the page, as far as possible, before drawing. In this way no two books will be alike, and there is great interest in comparing them. It has been found a good plan for each to carry out one idea of illustration throughout the book, *e.g.*, one will illustrate ships; another, weapons; another, musical instruments, costumes or ornaments of different periods; these over and above the usual illustrations of the various events in each century.

As few boys are able to continue a “Book of Centuries” after leaving the home schoolroom, I should suggest that they should keep a “Book of Periods” instead, giving a page to the Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, Roman, Ancient Briton, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, etc.

I often wonder whether it would answer to keep a “Family Book of Centuries” where most of the children are away at boarding school, letting each add his or her contribution while they are at home for the holidays initialling it and dating it.

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I have kept a “School” Book to which each child, who has her own “Book of Centuries,” adds her contribution during her last term.

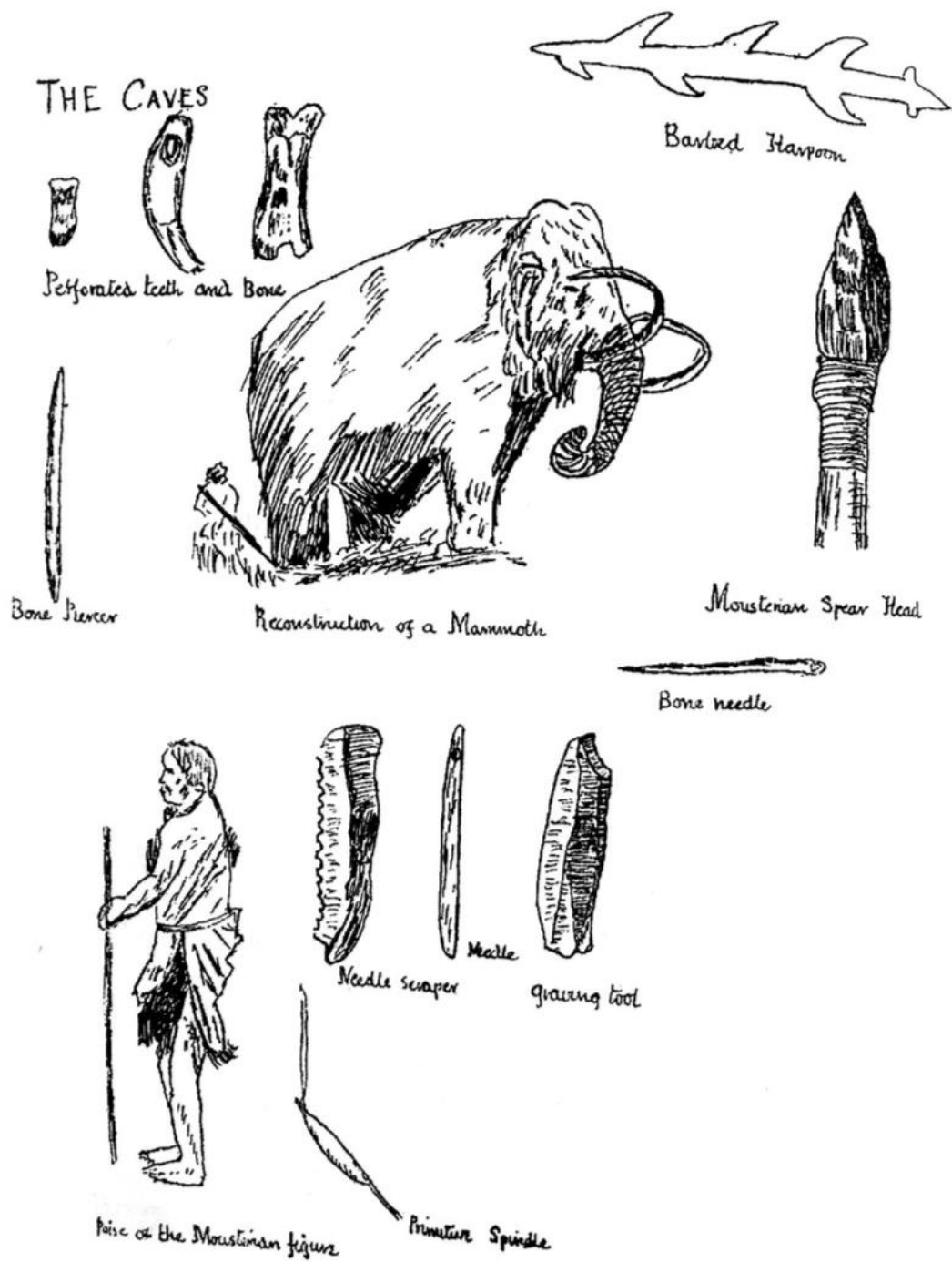
The “Book of Centuries” is a great joy to the owner, and even in these busy days it is possible to find some time, however short, to add an illustration from time to time. Children always take a keen delight in their books. There is no need to be an artist in order to have quite an interesting book—neatness and accuracy are essential though. Tracing should not be allowed, as the books then lose the individual touch. Museums will be clothed with fresh interest to keepers of these books, who will be able to recognise objects, which have already become familiar old friends through their “Books of Centuries.”

The accompanying reproductions are taken from three different “Books of Centuries.” The first—that of the page in the Prehistoric part headed “The Caves”—is by a P.U.S. pupil who has kept a book since 1920, when she was ten years old. The second—that of the “6th Century, B.C.” and its accompanying notes—is from an Ambleside Ex-student’s book. And the third—that “of the 16th Century, A.D.”—is from the book of a P.U.S. pupil who is now ten years old, illustrating the period studied in last term’s English History (Programme 109).

The following books, etc., are recommended for illustrations, though I am sure the reader will find many others on the bookshelves with suitable copies in them:—

Any of the Official Guides of the British Museum.
Outline of History, by H. G. Wells.
Webster's *Early European History*, *The Birth of History*,
The Dawn of History (all published by Harrap).
Piers Plowman Histories, Junior Book IV.
Illustrated Helps to the Study of the Bible.
Breasted's *History of the Early World*.
Pictorial History, by H. W. Donald, and *The "Suggestions" Historical Illustrations*, Sets A.,
B., C., D. (both published by Charles & Son, Paternoster Square).
A History of Everyday Things in England, by M. and C. H. B. Quennell.

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The Caves.

The majority of the cave-dwellings of palaeolithic men were recesses in limestone rocks, formed by subterranean streams. These caverns have been filled up with silt, thus preserving the remains of man and beast which are to be found in the breccia or solidified floor deposit.

Many specimens of implements and engraved bones have been discovered in these cave-dwellings as well as teeth & bones of extinct animals.

There are several objects from British bone-caves (such as Kents Cavern, Torquay, Creswell Crags, Derbyshire, Oldbury Camp, Kent) as well as from the French caves to be seen in the British Museum.

6th Century B.C.

90	Jeremiah	Daniel in Babylon.	Jehoiachin captive in Babylon
95	Solon of Athens		
90		Nebuchadnezzar carries the Jews to Babylon	
85			
80	Pythagoras	Servius Tullius of Rome	
75			
70	Amasis of Egypt		Aesop
65	Buddha of India	Croesus of Babylon	
60		Cyrus sets up Persian Empire	
55	Nabonidus of Babylon		
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50		Belshazzar of Babylon	
45			
40		Cyrus captures Babylon	Cyrus sends Jews back to Palestine
35		Tarquinus Superbus of Rome	
30		Cambyzes of Persia	
25			Darius of Persia
20			
15		Confucius of China	
10	Tarquins banished from Rome		
5			



*Captive Israelites in Babylon
(From a Babylonian tablet)*



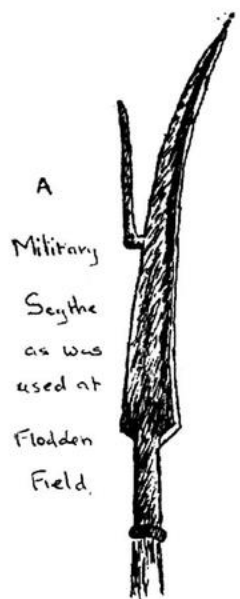
*A Greek Warship
(Puma painting on a Greek vase)*



A Statue of Buddha



The Burgon Panathenaic Vase



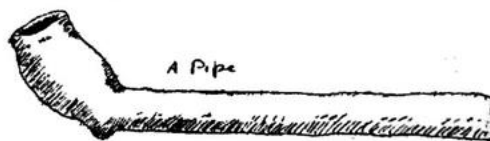
A
Military
Scythe
as was
used at
Flodden
Field.



A Helmet



King Henry VIII's
badge



A Pipe



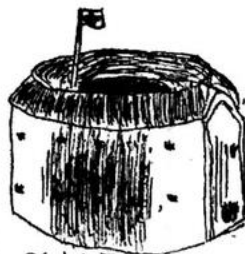
A Shoe



A shoe
of the
Elizabethan
time.



An Iron Candle Holder.



Globe Theatre.



The Block, the Headsman's axe, and mask

16th Century A.D.

Leonardo da Vinci. Henry VIII's Chapel at Westminster
 1. Coler Raphael. Perugino Alb. Dürer { Henry VIII
 11. Catherine of Aragon { Battle of the Spurs Cardinal Wolsey France
 16. Corregio Holbein Michael Angelo Titian Charles V Field of the Cloth
 11. Defender of the Faith Magellan Pizarro Battle of Tavia
 16. Tyndale Thos Cromwell Sir Thos More
 11. Martin Luther Anne Boleyn Cranmer. Canada discovered. Miles Coverdale
 16. Jane Seymour Cortes Suppression of Monasteries. Cranmer's Bible { Anne of Cleves
 11. Calvin Catherine Parr { Cath. Howard
 16. Edward VI Henry II { Gardiner Bonner Book of Common Prayer
 Francis Xavier
 16. John Knox { Mary I Ridley & Latimer burned
 11. Philip II Duke of Guise { Lady Jane Grey Francis II Charles IX
 { Loss of Calais The Huguenots
 16. Edmund Spenser French Wars of Religion Condé Coligny Sir Humphrey Gilbert
 11. Earl of Leicester Rugby School founded Arrest of Mary, Queen of Scots Francis Bacon
 16. Harrow School founded. Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Lord Burleigh. Henry III
 Martin Frobisher. Sir Walter Raleigh Drake's Voyage round the World. Shakespeare
 11. Gregory XIII corrected the Calendar Sir Philip Sidney
 16. Battle of Zutphen Mary, Queen of Scots, beheaded Spanish Armada Henry IV Battle of Ivry
 { Navarre
 11. Sir Richard Grenville St. Mark's of Venice built Earl of Essex
 16. Edict of Nantes

*Now out of print.