

ANTHROPOLOGY

Neandertal Man Dumb?

Writer of new book on human ancestors suggests Neandertal Man wasn't as ape-like as originally supposed, according to more recent discoveries.

► NEANDERTAL MAN, whom people in general have been treating like a kind of ne'er-do-well great-uncle for a couple of generations, may not have been such a dumb brute after all, Prof. Raymond W. Murray of the University of Notre Dame suggests in a new book, *Man's Unknown Ancestors* (Bruce). The popular picture of him as a squat, hairy, shambling, clumsy-thumbed creature with dull eyes and a rather vacant expression was based on early finds of skeletal remains, which left some gaps that were filled by conjecture.

More recent discoveries, filling in the gaps, have changed scientists' ideas of how he stood and walked and used his hands. He apparently had a straighter posture and more adeptness with his fingers than we have been accustomed to give him credit for. Moreover, several anthropologists have pointed out that his half-gorilline eyebrow ridge was a mark of the older males only; Neandertal women and children lacked it. And as careful a student of human bones as the late Dr. Ales Hrdlicka has shown that massive, slope-chinned jaws of Neandertaloid type can be found on modern skulls of Eskimos, Melanesians and other primitive peoples.

Culturally, it has been known all along that Uncle Neandertal did fairly well, considering the times in which he lived. He was solidly established in possession of the two things that most characteristically differentiate man from even the cleverest of the beasts: fire, and the use of tools. And he buried his dead

with carefully arranged funeral gifts, which is strong evidence that he believed in a future life—that is, that he had a religion.

For the several groups or species of prehistoric men, now diversely named under such titles as *Pithecanthropus erectus*, *Sinanthropus pekinensis*, *Eoanthropus dawsoni*, etc., Prof. Murray adopts the simplified classification proposed by Franz Weidenreich, leader of studies on Peking Man, who drops all the polysyllabic generic names and lumps them all with living mankind in the single genus *Homo*. This system sets up three species: *Homo erectus*, which includes Peking and Java Man; *H. neanderthalensis*, sweeping in a rather wide range of ancient peoples, and *H. sapiens*. The latter species takes in not only modern men of all races and that aristocrat of the later Old Stone Age, Cro-Magnon Man, but also *Eoanthropus* or Piltown Man, who appears to have been a contemporary of the Neandertalers and was once considered to be very primitive indeed.

Science News Letter, October 2, 1943

PHYSIOLOGY

Signs of Eye Trouble To Look for in Children

► IF YOUR CHILD stumbles frequently or trips over small objects instead of stepping over or around them, don't scold him for being clumsy and let it go at that. The tripping and stumbling may be a sign that he does not see as well as he should. Take him to an eye doctor or consult your family physician or baby specialist.

Other signs which alert parents will regard as a warning that a child may have eye trouble needing the attention of a doctor are given by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness as follows:

1. Difficulty in reading or other school work requiring close use of the eyes. This may first show up in poor marks at school.
2. The child frowns or rubs his eyes as if trying to brush away a blur.



KNOW HIM?—This is the way our Neandertal Man ancestor might look if he were dressed in modern clothing for a ride on the subway.

3. Blinks more than usual, cries often or is irritable when doing close work.
4. Holds a book or small toys close to his eyes.
5. Shuts or covers one eye or tilts his head or thrusts it forward when looking at playthings.
6. Is uninterested in distant objects or unable to take part in games such as playing ball.
7. Holds his body tense or screws up his face for either distant or close work.
8. Is sensitive to light.
9. Is unable to distinguish colors.

Tell-tale signs in a child's appearance which may mean eye trouble are: red-rimmed, encrusted or swollen eyelids; repeated styes; watery or red eyes; and, of course, crossed eyes.

If a child complains of dizziness, headache or sick stomach after using his eyes in close work in studying or working at a puzzle, or if he says things seem blurred or he is seeing double, he should be taken to the eye doctor.

Science News Letter, October 2, 1943

MATHEMATICS DICTIONARY

Invaluable in reading any book that uses mathematics.

THE JAMES MATHEMATICS DICTIONARY, the only such book now published, provides standard definitions of the terms and phrases from arithmetic through elementary differential equations, the technical terms ordinarily used in the applications of these subjects, and more advanced basic terms. Easy examples, many illustrations and all sorts of formulas are included. The appendix contains tables of weights and measures, a list of mathematical symbols and the tables ordinarily used in handbooks.

This dictionary is a great deal more than a collection of definitions. It explains, illustrates and correlates, stressing especially those operations that are hardest to understand. One reader has called it "Ten texts in one."

Available in flexible or non-flexible binding, for \$3.00, from the Digest Press, Dept. 3-B, Van Nuys, California, or Science News Letter.

Books

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER will obtain for you any American book or magazine in print. Send check or money order to cover regular retail price (\$5 if price is unknown, change to be remitted) and we will pay postage in the United States. When publications are free send 10c for handling.

Address Book Department

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

1719 N St., N. W. Washington 6, D. C.