we are aware, any of the equivalent words in other languages, Aryan or otherwise, throw any light on the matter. We only know that swords are found from the earliest times of which we have any record among all people who have acquired any skill in metal-work. There are two very ancient types, which we may call the straight- edged and the leaf-shaped. Assyrian monuments represent a straight and narrow sword, apparently better fitted for thrusting than cutting. Bronze swords of this form have actually been found in Etruscan tombs, and by Dr Schlie­mann at Mycenæ, side by side with leaf-shaped specimens. λVe have also from Mycenæ some very curious and elab­orately wrought blades, so broad and short that they must be called ornamental daggers rather than swords. The leaf-shaped blade is common everywhere among the remains of men in the “ Bronze Period ” of civilization, and

this was the shape used by the Greeks in historical times, and is the shape familiar to us in Greek works of art. It is impossible, however, to say whether the Homeric heroes wore the leaf-shaped sword, as we see it, for example, on the Mausoleum sculptures, or a narrow straight-edged blade of the Assyrian-Mycenæan pattern. In any case, the sword holds a quite inferior position with Greek warriors of all times. We have not the means of pronouncing which pattern is the older. To a modern eye the Assyrian or Mycenæan sword looks fitter for thrusting than cutting. The leaf-shaped sword, so far as we know from works of art, was used with a downright cutting blow, regardless of the consequent exposure of the swordsman’s body; this, however, matters little when defence is left to a shield or armour, or both. The use of the sword as a weapon of combined offence and defence—swordsmanship as we now

understand it—is quite modern. If the sword was de­veloped from a spearhead or dagger, one would expect it to have been a thrusting weapon before it was a cutting one. But when we come to historical times we find that the effective use of the point is a mark of advanced skill and superior civilization. The Romans paid special atten­tion to it, and Tacitus tells us how Agricola’s legionaries made short work of the clumsy and pointless arms of the Britons when battle was fairly joined.@@1 The tradition was preserved at least as late as the time of Vegetius, who, as a technical writer, gives details of the Roman soldier’s sword exercise. Asiatics to this day treat the sword merely as a cutting weapon, and most Asiatic swords are incapable of being handled in any other way.

*Historical Types.*—The normal types of swords which we meet with in historical times, and from which all forms now in use among civilized nations are derived, may be broadly classified as straight-edged or curved. In the straight-edged type, in itself a very ancient one, either thrusting or cutting qualities may predominate, and the blade may be double-edged or single-edged. The double- edged form was prevalent in Europe down to the 17th century. The single-edged blade, or backsword as it was called in England, is well exemplified in the Scottish weapons commonly but improperly known as claymores, and is now exclusively employed for military weapons. But these, with few exceptions, have been more or less influenced by the curved Oriental sabre. Among early double-edged swords the Roman pattern stands out as a workmanlike and formidable weapon for close fight ; the point was used by preference. In the Middle Ages the Roman tradition disappeared, and a new start was made from the clumsy barbarian arm which the Romans had despised. Gradually the broad and all but pointless blade was lightened and tapered, and the thrust, although its real power was unknown, was more or less practised. St Louis anticipated Napoleon in calling on his men to use the point ; and the heroes of dismounted combats in the *Morte Darthur* are described as “ foining ” at one another. In the first half of the 16th century a well-proportioned and well-mounted cut-and-thrust sword was in general use, and great artistic ingenuity was expended, for those who could afford it, on the mounting and adornment. The growth and variations of the different parts of the hilt, curiously resembling those of a living species, would alone be matter enough for an archæological study. One peculiar form, that of the Scottish basket-hilt, derived from the Venetian pattern known as *schiavone,* has persisted to our own day without material change.

Quite different from the European models is the crescent- shaped Asiatic sabre, commonly called scimitar. We are not acquainted with any distinct evidence as to the origin of this in time or place. The fame of the Damascus manufacture of sword-blades is of great antiquity, as is also that of Khorásán, still the centre of the best Eastern work of this kind. Whoever first made these blades had conceived a very definite idea,—that of gain­ing a maximum of cutting power regardless of loss in other qualities,—and executed it in a manner not to be improved upon. The action of the curved edge in deliver­ing a blow is to present an oblique and therefore highly acute-angled section of the blade to the object struck, so that in effect the cut is given with a finer edge than could safely be put on the blade in its direct transverse section. In a well-made sabre the setting of the blade with regard to the handle (“ leading forward ”) is likewise ordered with a view to this result. And the cutting power of a weapon so shaped and mounted is undoubtedly very great. But

@@@1 *Agrie.,* 36: “Britannorum gladii sine mucrone complexum ar­morum et in aperto pugnam non tolerabant. ”