



## **Social Legislation and Social Activity: Being Addresses Delivered at the Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science of Philadelphia (Classic Reprint)**

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The progress of mankind in devising means of transportation embraces three distinctive stages. The primitive man traveled on foot and moved his scanty belongings with his own muscle; and we can only imagine the ages that elapsed before he secured any aid for the transfer of his person or his property other than his own bodily powers.

Probably the first contrivance for carriage was a rough-hewn plank or pole dragged upon the ground. Two connected planks doubtless formed the original sled. Finally the idea was conceived - some accident suggesting it - of lessening friction by the use of rollers. The rollers gradually developed into wheels, and when at last the wheels were made in pairs which revolved upon an axle the essential feature of all subsequent vehicles was devised and employed.

The earliest movement on water, we may suppose, was equally crude and simple. Some observant savage noticed that wood did not sink, and later found out by experiment that a floating log would remain on the surface even when his own weight was added. The rude dug-out followed the discovery. The stick or limb by which the dug-out was pushed and turned shaped itself at length into the lighter and more effective paddle; the hollowed log was succeeded by a framed and covered structure, the paddles became oars; and thus was evolved in prehistoric times the type of all later boats on lake and stream. It was centuries after this - no one knows how many - before the force of wind was utilized by the invention of sails, and when that immense advance was achieved the enduring era of ship-building commenced.

Roughly speaking, then, we may assign to the first stage in the development of transport such results as were obtained by the muscular strength of man, whether applied directly to the articles carried or used in propelling the clumsy vehicles and water craft which he had constructed.

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