

truth in them or not, he cannot leave out of consideration if he is going to understand history or civilization. Their beginning came from Palestine and so surely Wells' statement is absurd that nothing of any importance ever happened in Palestine. In addition to that certainly one of the greatest factors in history is the ability of people to express themselves in such a way that others can know what they say who are far away from them either in space or in time. Now writing, of course, ~~xxx~~ did not begin in Palestine. Writing began in Mesopotamia, and the ~~influence~~ <sup>influence</sup> from Mesopotamia was taken across the desert westward to Egypt and eastward to China and distinct systems developed in both of those lands which received their start from the impulse that originally began in Mesopotamia. But while that is true of writing in general, a very large portion of the world ~~xxx~~ had a type of writing which is much simpler than the writings of ancient Babylonia, of ancient Egypt, or of China--what we call alphabetic writing. There are many systems of alphabetic writing in the world. There is the Hebrew system of which you are familiar; there is the Greek system from which the word "alphabet" comes, "alpha beta"; there is the Arabic system of writing; there is the Russian system of writing; there are many alphabetic systems of writing which are in use. The least useful of any perhaps is the system we use here because it has departed from the original idea of an alphabet in which a letter is supposed to ~~xxx~~ stand for a sound and every sound has one letter, and each of our letters usually has at least five or six different sounds, and each sound has at least five or six different letters from which you could write it and so it is not much good as a method of representing sounds. But it is at least ~~to use~~ use on the typewriter or something like that than if you had several thousand characters instead of less than thirty. So alphabetic writing has been of great value in the countries which have had ~~xxx~~ a real alphabet and is of tremendous convenience even in the very poor form <sup>in</sup> which we ourselves use it.