Art. VII.—The Early History of Man.

We propose briefly to consider three points connected with the early history of man: the first respects his antiquity; the second his primitive condition; and the third the method of studying his early progress.

I. The Antiquity of Man.—Our proposition is that the antiquity of man is very great—the popular chronology entirely wrong. The point to be cleared is, Whether all the races of men can have had their progenitors in the members of a single family 2348 B.C.,—the date of the deluge? If we can show that to be impossible our proposition will be proved, since the chronology which asserts it is the only obstacle to our believing man to have been on the earth for any length of time. It is commonly supposed that this chronology is founded on Scripture; but in the Old Testament there is no connected chronology prior to Solomon. "All that now passes for ancient chronology beyond that fixed point is the melancholy legacy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; a compound of intentional deceit and utter misconception of the principles of historical research."[1]

In the earliest historical times great and highly civilized nations existed in different parts of the world. This is what we should expect, because history begins with records, and before a people can bring to perfection the arts which make enduring records possible, they must have made great progress in civilisation. Of the ancient communities we select for consideration three—the Egyptian, the Chinese, and the Indo-European "mother-tribe." The facts ascertained respecting the antiquity and ancient condition of these communities establish our proposition.

(1.) *Ancient Egypt.*—Those entitled to have an opinion respecting the commencement of history in Egypt differ from one another, but agree in referring it to a time precedent to "the dispersion of mankind." Lepsius assigned to the accession of Menes the date 3893 B.C., which nearly agrees with that given by Kenrick and Humboldt; Bunsen fixed it at 3643 B.C.; Pickering, Lenormant, Champollion-Figeac, and Böckh, referred it to dates varying between 4400 and 5867 B.C. It is unnecessary to insist on the correctness of any of these computations: sufficient for our purpose are the computations of such men as Wilkinson and Poole. Wilkinson had in 1835 assigned a comparatively recent date to Menes, saying, "I have not placed him earlier, for fear of interfering with the deluge, the

[1] Bunsen's *Egypt's Place in Universal History* (Lond. 1848), Pref. p. 1.

date of which *is* 2348 B.C." He remodelled his chronology at a later time, and assigned to the accession of this king the date 2320 B.C., being twenty-eight years *after* the flood, and ninety-six *before* the dispersion of mankind.[1] Mr. Poole's view is thus represented by the Duke of Argyll:—"The most moderate computation carries the foundation of that [the Egyptian] Monarchy as far back as 700 years before the visit of the Hebrew Patriarch. Some of the best German scholars hold that there is evidence of a much longer chronology. But seven centuries before Abraham is the estimate of Mr. R. Stuart Poole, of the British Museum, who is one of the very highest authorities, and certainly the most cautious, upon questions of Egyptian chronology. This places the beginning of the Pharaohs in the twenty-eighth century B.C. But according to Usher's interpretation of the Hebrew Pentateuch, the twenty-eighth century B.C. would be some 400 years before the Flood. On the other hand, a difference of 800 years is allowed by the chronology which is founded on the Septuagint Version of the Scriptures. But the fact of this difference tells in two ways. A margin of variation amounting to eight centuries between two versions of the same document, is a variation so enormous, that it seems to cast complete doubt on the whole system of interpretation on which such computations of time are based. And yet it is more than questionable whether it is possible to reconcile the known order of events with even this larger estimate of the number of years. It is true that, according to this larger estimate, the Flood would be carried back about four and a half centuries beyond the beginning of the Pharaohs. But is this enough? The founding of a Monarchy is not the beginning of a race. The people amongst whom such Monarchies arose must have grown and gathered during many generations. Nor is it in regard to the peopling of Egypt alone that this difficulty meets us in the face. The existence in the days of Abraham of such an organized government as that of Chedorlaomer, shows that 2000 years B.C. there flourished in Elam, beyond Mesopotamia, a nation which even now would be ranked among 'the Great Powers.' And if nations so great had thus arisen, altogether unnoticed in the Hebrew narrative—if we are left to gather as best we may from other sources, all our knowledge of their origin and growth, how much more is this true of far distant lands over which the advancing tide of human population had rolled, or was then rolling, its mysterious wave?"[2] Nothing need be added to the case as here so well put.

[1] See, for a discussion of these dates and computations, *Types of Mankind*, by J. C. Nott and G. R. Gliddon (Philadelphia, 1854), p. 671 *et seq.*

[2] *Primeval Man*, by the Duke of Argyll (1869), pp. 85-88.

As to the state of civilization in Egypt at the commencement of its history, we have the fact that the hieroglyphic system appears on the earliest extant monuments belonging to the fourth dynasty, and must therefore have been in use for centuries before. The monuments themselves are proof of some knowledge of the sciences of geodesy and astronomy, and of great skill in the mechanical arts; and, indeed, had the people not been excellent hydraulic engineers they could not have established themselves in towns in the Lower Valley of the Nile. "The pyramids and the sepulchres near them," says Kenrick, "remain to assure us that the Egyptians were then a powerful and populous nation, far advanced in the arts of life; and as a people can only progressively attain such a station, the light of history is reflected back from this era upon the ages which preceded it."[1] Reed-pens, inks (red and black), papyrus-paper, chemically prepared colours, beautifully executed bas-reliefs, a magnificent architecture, pyramidical and hydraulic engineering, are items in the proof that they were highly civilized. It is important to observe that the records show them to have been but one of several contemporary nations; that they believed themselves to be autochthones; and that many of their institutions were unquestionably indigenous. The hieroglyphics were their own; much was peculiar to them in manners, customs, and arts; their religion—there was a national priesthood—was in some particulars local; and every animal and plant delineated in their sculptures belonged to the land they inhabited. It is implied in what has been said, and is the fact, that the ancient Egyptians were agriculturists, and had a variety of domesticated animals.

(2.) *China.*—In China we see a mighty State, comprising about one-third of mankind, living under the same government and code of laws, speaking the same language, and enjoying the same culture. That State appears in a remote antiquity, with peculiarities that still adhere to it; its language, science, philosophy, industries, and marvellous administrative machinery, having features peculiarly its own. Of its origin, of the consolidation of so many races of men under a common government, we know nothing; but as well might we believe coal-beds and chalk-cliffs to be primordial features of the earth's crust, as the empire of China to have been the growth of a few hundreds, or even thousands, of years. When its authentic history commences is another matter. The beginning of its historical period is perhaps as well fixed as any such fact can be at 2637 B.C. The Hia dynasty, at least, beginning with Yu the Great, is well fixed

[1] *Ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs* (London, 1850), p. 131.

at 2200 B.C., little more than 100 years after the flood, according to Usher, and but twenty-four years after the "dispersion of mankind." Of the ancient civilization of the Chinese we shall give no details. The reader will consider how much progress is implied in the consolidation of a monarchy.

(3.) *The Indo-Europeans.*—The earliest date claiming to be historically established for any race of the Indo-European group is about 2400 B.C., which Mr. James Ferguson assigns to the entrance of the Solar Aryans into India.[1] We are enabled, however, to contemplate the Indo-Europeans at a time long before that invasion. The chief triumph of philology is the generalization which has brought to our knowledge the mother-tribe of the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans, the Persians, the Greeks and Latins, Germans, Sclaves, and Celts. In that tribe, before its disruption, the grammatical structure still seen in the languages of its derivatives had been developed, and many objects, acts, and processes had been named. The names given to these, being a portion of the vocabulary of the mother-tribe, have been ascertained by a process as simple as it is ingenious—the examination of the derived languages, and the reasonable inference that any word found in all, or nearly all, of them, is a part of the common inheritance from the mother-tribe. More need not be said of a generalization with which by this time most readers are familiar. Now, while philology, thus investigating the early history of the Indo-Europeans, can tell us nothing of the locality of the parent tribe, nor of *the date* of the dispersion, it assumes to fix with confidence *a date* before which the dispersion must have happened. Mr. Whitney in his excellent book on Language says, "To set a date *lower* than 3000 years before Christ for the dispersion of the Indo-European family would doubtless be altogether inadmissible; and the event is most likely to have taken place far earlier."[2] In this conclusion we imagine every philologist will agree. The mother-tribe of the group is exhibited as a language-using tribe distinct from the Mongols and Semitics, and most probably territorially disconnected from them at a time long anterior to that of the alleged dispersion of mankind.

Let us now see what was the state of civilisation in the mother-tribe of the Indo-Europeans. Mr. Max Müller has done more than any other writer to familiarize English readers with the facts about which among philologists there is no dispute; but the most

[1] *Tree and Serpent-Worship* (1868), pp. 59, 62 of the Introduction.

[2] *Language and the Study of Language*, by W. D. Whitney, Professor of Sanskrit in Yale College (Trübner & Co., London, 1867), p. 205.

condensed statement of them we know is given by the American author whom we have just cited. Mr. Whitney says: "It is found that the primitive tribe which spoke the mother-tongue of the Indo-European family was not nomadic alone, but had settled habitations, even towns and fortified places, and addicted itself in part to the rearing of cattle, in part to the cultivation of the earth. It possessed our chief domestic animals—the horse, the ox, the sheep, the goat, and the swine, besides the dog: the bear and the wolf were foes that ravaged its flocks; the mouse and fly were already its domestic pests. The region it inhabited was a varied one, not bordering upon the ocean. The season whose name has been most persistent is the winter. Barley, and perhaps also wheat, was raised for food, and converted into meal. Mead was prepared from honey, as a cheering and inebriating drink. The use of certain metals was known; whether iron was one of them admits of question. The art of weaving was practised; wool and hemp, and possibly flax, being the materials employed. Of other branches of domestic industry, little that is definite can be said; but those already mentioned imply a variety of others as co-ordinate or auxiliary to them. The weapons of offence and defence were those which are usual among primitive peoples,—the sword, spear, bow, and shield. Boats were manufactured, and moved by oars. Of extended and elaborate political organization no traces are discoverable: the people was doubtless a congeries of petty tribes, under chiefs and leaders, rather than kings, and with institutions of a patriarchal cast, among which the reduction to servitude of prisoners taken in war appears not to have been wanting. The structure and relations of the family are more clearly seen; names of its members, even to the second and third degrees of consanguinity and affinity, were already fixed, and were significant of affectionate regard and trustful interdependence. That woman was looked down upon, as a being in capacity and dignity inferior to man, we find no indication whatever. The art of numeration was learned, at least up to a hundred; there is no general Indo-European word for 'thousand.' Some of the stars were noticed and named: the moon was the chief measurer of time. The religion was polytheistic, a worship of the personified powers of nature. Its rites, whatever they were, were practised without the aid of a priesthood."[1]

Three civilizations, occurring in the three families into which mankind is usually divided, have now been exhibited, two of them with some detail, at dates anterior to that which the popular chronology has fixed for the commencement of the peopling of

[1] *Language and the Study of Language*, l. c. p. 207.

the world. These civilizations were high compared with the state of human tribes yet on the earth. The people were agriculturists, and well practised in the common arts of life. They had a variety of domesticated animals; indeed, but few animals have within the historical period been added to the list. They clothed themselves with a variety of fabrics, dwelt in houses and in towns, protecting the latter by fortifications; they had speculated on the order of the spiritual world, and evolved religions; on the order of the material world, and evolved bodies of doctrine, which we should call sciences. They differed from one another in language, religion, physical characters, and social arrangements; but in this they agreed, that they had left a state of barbarism far in the rear.

If now we take up our position in time at a date preceding the alleged dispersion of mankind, say somewhere about 2700 years B.C., and contemplate the Chinese, the Egyptians, and the early Aryans,—races *so different in type*, geographically disconnected, and so far advanced in civilization,—and ask when were these nations represented by their progenitors in the primitive *family-group* from which some think mankind has been derived, is it not plain that we shall be forced to say, "If they ever were so represented, it must have been many thousands of years ago. In 4000 years the types of men have not changed.[1] They were either primordial, or their production must have occupied ages."

Here we may say that our proposition has been proved, and that the popular chronology, whose influence on historical inquiry has been so pernicious, must be discarded. It may be believed that, once it is fairly given up, we shall be unable to think of the ancient nations as being at all *much* nearer the beginnings of human progress than we are ourselves; we shall be unable to think that four or five thousand years are more than a fraction of the time which that progress has occupied. When that point of view becomes common, no one will any longer wonder at the Greeks appearing with the wonderful Homeric poems as their earliest record, or at the Aryans possessing the Veda from the dawn of history. Indeed, a knowledge of the Vedic literature, which, through the labours of Müller, Muir, and others, is being brought within our reach, will do much to establish the position we have been maintaining. That most ancient literature is in many respects wonderfully modern,[2] and no

[1] This is established by the monuments of ancient Egypt.

[2] As an illustration take Rig-Veda ix. 112, which has been closely translated as follows:—

"How multifarious are the views which different men inspire!
How various are the ends which men of various crafts desire!

one can study it without feeling that the years that separate us from the poets are few compared with those that separated the poets from barbarism.

(4.) *Archæology.*—The body of facts accumulated in the pages of Lubbock and Lyell bearing on the antiquity and ancient condition of man forms a hitherto innominate science (which we must glance at), comprising the history, so far as we know it, of what are called "prehistoric" times. We have evidence of man as a tool-using animal, and, what is more remarkable, as an artist, inhabiting the earth, along with genera of animals now extinct, most probably more than 20,000 years ago.[1] He then possessed the same characteristics that he now exhibits; was distinctively *man*, with remarkable powers of contrivance, and æsthetic tastes, though with less knowledge, and consequently with ruder habits. It would be out of place to enter into the details of this evidence. The fact that Sir Charles Lyell has yielded to the pressure of it, after a long resistance, is the best proof of its force. We may glance, however, at the facts in one district disclosed by cave-excavation. Human remains have been found along with those of the elephant and rhinoceros in the south of France; and there is proof that the concurrence in the same district of such remains with those of the reindeer at least is not accidental,—that the two were inhabitants of the country contemporaneously. The bones of the reindeer were broken open for the marrow, and many of them bear the marks of knives. At Les Eyzies a vertebra of this animal was found that had been pierced by a stone weapon when it was fresh.

> The leech a patient seeks; the smith looks out for something cracked;
> The priest seeks devotees from whom he may his fee extract.
> With feathers, metals, and the like, and sticks decayed and old,
> The workman manufactures wares to win the rich man's gold.
> A poet I, my sire a leech, and corn my mother grinds:
> On gain intent, we each pursue our trades of different kinds.
> The draught-horse seeks an easy car; of gallants girls are fond;
> The merry dearly love a joke; and frogs desire a pond."

There is a prose rendering of this lyric in Mr. John Muir's *Miscellaneous Hymns from the Rig and Atharva Vedas*, in the Proceedings of the Royal Asiatic Society. Mr. Muir says of it, "It is distinguished by a vein of naïve observation not unmingled with satire." It might have been written yesterday in London by a quiet cynic of the Thackeray type, who, looking to the balance and movement of the piece, would scarcely have said more in it of the aims and pursuits of the men of to-day than is here recorded of those which engaged men of our race 4000 years ago. It is instructive to reflect that this is a part of that Vedic literature which the orthodox Hindoo believes existed in the mind of God from all eternity!

[1] It illustrates the nature of the struggle between the old and new views of the age of man that there are some who regard the stone implements, which often are the only witnesses of man's existence long ago, as being "inventions of the devil" intended to mislead the human intellect. *Fossils* were thus long regarded!

The stone instruments found are suited for a variety of uses; for aid in eating, in killing, and in manufactures; the "finds" comprising scrapers, cores, awls, lance-heads, cutters, hammers, and mortar-stones. "In the archaic bone-caves," says Sir John Lubbock, "many very fair pictures have been found, scratched on bone or stone with a sharp point, probably of a flint implement. In some cases there is even an attempt at shading. . . . In the lower station at Laugerie several of these drawings have been found; one represents a large herbivorous animal, but unfortunately without the head or forelegs; a second also is apparently intended for some species of ox; a third represents a smaller animal, with vertical horns; another is evidently intended for a horse; and a fifth is very interesting, because, from the shape of the antlers and head, it was evidently intended for a reindeer. Several similar drawings have been obtained by M. de Lastic in a cave at Bruniquel. But perhaps the most remarkable example of the cave-man's art is a poniard, cut out of a reindeer's horn. The artist has ingeniously adapted the position of the animal to the necessities of the case. The horns are thrown back on the neck, the forelegs are doubled up under the belly, and the hind-legs are stretched out along the blade. Unfortunately the poniard seems to have been thrown away before the carving was quite finished, but several of the details indicate that the animal intended to be represented was a reindeer."[1] The cave-men, though they were such good artists, were ignorant of metals, of the art of *polishing* their stone implements, of pottery and agriculture. They had no domestic animals—not even the dog. Similar evidence demonstrates a like antiquity and condition of men in different parts of the world.

We have now transcended the period of historical records. In reaching a time indefinitely more remote, we have come on a condition of man indefinitely lower. Yet we find ourselves still far from the fountain-head—assuming for the moment that there has been from the first a progress; we find man still distinctively human, a tool-user, an artist, a thinker, an ingenious craftsman. Rude as the instruments were with which the cave-man worked, they yet required much thought to devise them, and great dexterity of hand to frame and to employ them. What man then wanted most was a knowledge of workable materials, and of methods of working—a knowledge which no one, we imagine, will maintain came to him otherwise than gradually, through the exercise from time to time of his wits, in new circumstances and on novel occasions;

[1] *Prehistoric Times*, by Sir John Lubbock, Bart. (1865), pp. 254-5.

through happy accidents, or as the result of some of the infinitely varied suggestions springing up in the mind, often, as we call it, casually. The cave-dweller was a hunter, and probably ate his prey raw. He broke the bones of animals to get at the marrow. But he was a social creature, and had time for, and cultivated, the arts of amusement. What more he may have been we shall never ascertain from the record that discloses these facts. What were his relations to his females, to his children, to his fellows; under what rules the groups in a district associated in the chase and divided its produce; whether there was any division of labour, any political system, this record, from the nature of it, can never inform us.

It here occurs, that in referring to an epoch so remote as 20,000 years ago, we may appear to be assuming, without evidence, that the earth itself then existed. The popular chronology declares it did not then exist as emphatically as it declares that distinct nations could not appear in different parts of the world earlier than 2224 B.C., the date assigned to the dispersion of mankind. Perhaps any remarks on this point are by this time superfluous; one or two may, however, be submitted with confidence for consideration. It is familiar that the defenders of this chronology—which is as purely a *human* invention as is the bicycle velocipede—have been obliged to stretch the days of creation, as given in Genesis, into periods of time of indefinite duration—millions of years, if necessary. It is also familiar that they are being obliged to regard the Mosaic account as comprising a history of the white races of men only—the others having nothing, on that view, to do with Adam.[1] Our first remark is that these concessions prove that the evidence of the antiquity of man has been felt to be irresistible by the defenders of the chronology, and therefore that it *is* irresistible, considering the weight of the prepossessions it has been able to overcome. Our next remark is that astronomy sets the existence *of the world* more than 20,000 years ago beyond doubt, by showing that there are stars now visible to us whose light takes at least 50,000 years to cross the space that separates us from them. Lastly, we observe that in the latest assault made on geological time by Sir William Thomson, the conclusion arrived at, on physical considerations, is, that geologists must contrive to confine "all geological history showing continuity of life," within "*some such period of past time as* ONE HUNDRED MILLION YEARS"![2] The student of human history, regarding man as the latest and highest of organized beings, is

[1] *Primeval Man*, l. c. p. 104.

[2] *On Geological Time*, by Sir William Thomson, LL.D., Trans. Geol. Soc. of Glasgow, vol. iii. Part I. p. 1.

disposed to be content with such a slice off the 100,000,000 years as may reasonably be thought to belong to him, and feels that he is nowise greedy when he claims a little more than 20,000 years out of the 100,000,000 as necessary for an explanation of the progress of mankind.

II. THE PRIMITIVE STATE.—Within the historical period the progress of man has been effected from point to point by his powers exerted to meet his occasions. All we know of man in prehistoric times shows that he was then less advanced than at the dawn of history. Was the gulf between the cave-dwellers and the ancient nations crossed through such exertions as have improved the condition of men within the historical period; and was the stage of advancement the cave-dwellers were in reached by similar exertions put forth by men advancing from a still lower condition? The forces that have effected such a mighty progress in the sciences and arts, and in the domestic and political grouping of men, within the period of history, will, if we assume them to have been at work from the first, afford an ample explanation of a progress from the rudest beginnings. They will do so even on the assumption that they were at first *less*, and their action less intense. On the other hand, the question above put cannot be answered in the negative unless we assume a commencement of the action of these forces, and that the progress we see could never have been carried on by them had it not been set agoing by supernatural means on a basis of communicated ideas. Such an assumption would be unscientific, and the inquiry is scientific. That the ancient nations had a long history that is unrecorded is certain. The stage of advancement at which records *can* begin is necessarily high, and on the theory of development the greater part of a nation's life is probably passed before reaching it. That the unrecorded part was, like the recorded, a progress, can generally be shown; that it was effected by other forces than those we still see at work there is no evidence.

The question we have above put, and, after a fashion, answered, it is usual to put somewhat differently, as when it is asked whether men were originally savage or civilized. If men were civilized to begin, existing savage races have fallen from the primitive state; if men were savage to begin, the ancient nations advanced in prehistoric times to the civilized state in which they appear. Our proposition is that men were originally savage and not civilized.

Let us here define what we mean by civilization. We have hitherto used the word indefinitely, as it is employed in common parlance, but a precise definition of it is necessary to prevent con-

fusion in the discussions we are entering upon. The word *civilization*, as its etymology indicates, denotes the condition of *cives*, of men, that is, united in societies which are also *civitates*—States. Of the many ideas the word now brings together, this is clearly the primary one, so that strictly we should not be justified in at all speaking of the stage of civilization of any people ignorant of the relations implied in citizenship. The combination of men in civil societies is possible only on certain conditions, namely, those which must be complied with before large numbers of men can live permanently together; and the first of these is ORDER, and the second is what we may call a COMMISSARIAT. The order of society turns wholly on the *grouping* of its members, domestic and political, while the efficiency of the commissariat depends of course on the stage at which the arts of subsistence have arrived, and the established facilities for the distribution and interchange of productions. Necessary for both of these main conditions being fulfilled are certain faculties,—the means of interchanging ideas and a capacity for common action, which implies a community of ideas and sympathies, as well as interests. Civilization begins with the State, and no earlier; and those who would discriminate between stages ruder than that, must be understood as speaking of preparatory stages leading up to the State from various distances and at varying rates. The idea of the State is elementary, like that of the family. The family rests on the closest blood-relationship; the gens on consanguinity, real or assumed, between the families composing it; the tribe, according to the common theory, is composed of cognate gentes. The State begins where blood-ties terminate. In the largest tribe a man is simply a tribesman: he is a citizen in the smallest group of tribes politically united under a common government.

This definition fixes attention on three distinct sets of phenomena—(1.) The grouping, domestic and political, of men in societies; (2.) The arts and sciences; and (3.) The means of intercommunication and common action. The means of communication is of course language. Religion is a most powerful social bond, facilitating common action by establishing a community of sentiments and aspirations. We propose rapidly to glance at the facts which show that in each and all of these there has been development.

(1.) *Grouping.*—Before we can say whether there has been progress in grouping, it is necessary to see whether we can find a test by which one mode of grouping can be known to be higher and better than another. Such a test we think exists.

No one will question but that a tribe of men, ignorant of

marriage and blood-relationship, and without permanent attachments of males to females, and of parents to offspring, is as low a group as is conceivable, a simple *herd*, as we should call it, when presented as an aggregate of creatures other than human. The rudest permanent arrangement of the sexes, and the most imperfect system of kinship—say, for instance, a system of kinship through mothers only,—appearing in a group, would compel us to recognise it as *more* advanced than that first considered. Permanent arrangements of a sort to permit kinship through fathers as well as mothers we should recognise as entitling a group to rank higher than the second considered. Looking at it another way: any regulated relation of the sexes is an advance on promiscuity; the Tibetan polyandry, in which the co-husbands are brothers, is an advance on the Nair, in which the co-husbands are strangers in blood; the Levirate is an improvement on—it is at any rate an advance from—Tibetan polyandry; monandry, with the agnatic family, repudiating such an obligation as the Levirate implies, is an improvement on the Levirate; and, lastly, we may see that modern marriage-laws, gradually conceding equality of rights to women, are improving a system which still preserves too many features of the husband's absolute supremacy as head of the agnatic family. A similar series of stages from lower to higher might be pointed out in the evolution of rights of property and laws of succession—rights and laws intimately connected with domestic grouping. As regards political grouping, it is not so easy to effect a classification. This is not to be wondered at, considering that no respectable arrangements have as yet anywhere been established for the reasonable government of large communities. Progress in political organization is in its infancy. Yet there are stages in the past history of even political grouping which, as manifestly connected with and determined by the domestic grouping, might pretty safely be classified. We shall not here, however, affect to offer a classification, as there does not exist such a body of settled opinion as could confidently be appealed to in justification of a scheme. Enough has been said to show how a classification of stages of progress in grouping generally may be effected, and that suffices for our purpose at this point.

Now, we have numerous examples of all the stages of domestic grouping we have enumerated occurring among the most diverse races of men. We have numerous instances of the family as a group, with the mother at its head—the marriage system polyandrous, and the husbands living not with the wife but in their mothers' houses. We have numerous instances, again, of a polyandrous arrangement, by which a woman

becomes the wife of all the brothers of a family, passing into permanent residence with them in *their* house. We have cases transitional between these two, and also between the last mentioned and the agnatic family, and can show how the one grew into the other. Sometimes we can exhibit the transition in progress in adjoining districts of the same country. In some cases, again, it can be shown that they actually succeeded one another as stages of evolution in the progress of particular nations. Take the case of kinship, for example (which depends on the form of the family), and the history of the Greeks as illustrating the growth of systems of kinships. The Homeric poems exhibit the ties of kinship through both father and mother as being recognised, and furnish hints that at an earlier time only the ties through the mother were acknowledged. These hints, when combined with the ancient traditions of the people, read in the light of facts elsewhere disclosed, *prove* that at an earlier time there was kinship through mothers only. In the post-Homeric times we reach a stage at which there was kinship through fathers only, that is, when agnation was established. Orestes was esteemed no relation of his mother Clytemnestra. Later still, agnation broke down, and there was again kinship acknowledged through mothers as well as fathers. These stages of evolution are not only well vouched, but the causes can be assigned which determined them—causes connected mainly with changes in the marriage-laws and the laws of inheritance, of which changes, again, the causes can generally be assigned. Such an evolution as is in this case presented can be shown to have taken place in numerous unconnected cases: we find tribes of men now existing occupying one or other of the stages precedent or transitional to that in which the Homeric Greeks appear; again, we find nations more ancient than the Greeks, either exhibiting traces of having, in the prehistoric times, come through such precedent stages, or occupying one or other of them, or one or other of the stages later than, and advancing from, that the Homeric Greeks occupied; lastly, *we cannot find a nation that offers no traces of such stages.* These facts being sufficiently attested, we are obliged to conclude that there was a law of progress in the evolution of forms of domestic grouping, which may be enunciated as a law of human progress; and the only explanation that can be offered of such a progress is, that men have advanced from the savage state.

Not only can every conceivable stage of domestic grouping be discovered in the history of the ancient nations, but the moral sentiments of men can be seen improving with the domestic institutions. It is a favourite idea with some that man's

progress has been material merely; that as a moral being he has not made progress. It may be a question whether he is readier now than formerly to observe the standards of propriety established in the society of which he is a member. We incline to think he has improved even in this respect. Public opinion, which applies the severest sanctions of right conduct, is more searching and powerful now, and, other things being the same, the disposition to obey the dictates of conscience may be assumed stronger the sharper the penalties of disobedience are. Of the improvement of the standards of propriety there is no doubt.

Look to the rules related to domestic grouping which constitute the standard of purity—the laws regulating the relations of the sexes generally. Sister marriages were common in ancient Egypt, where acts of prostitution in the temples were prescribed to the women. In ancient Persia there seems to have been no law of incest at all. Brothers and sisters married, and even mothers and sons. Unions of mothers and sons were *required* for the production of persons eligible to certain religious offices. Marriages were allowed both in Athens and Sparta between brothers and sisters of the half-blood. They were permissible also among the Jews. Amnon and Tamar were marriageable—"speak to the king, and he will not withhold me from thee."[1] Abraham married his sister, his father's daughter; Nahor married his niece, his brother's daughter. Amram, the father of Moses, married his father's sister. Such marriages *we* declare incestuous, and to be capital crimes. Anciently they were all right—agreeable to the moral standard; it is the standard of propriety that has changed with the nature of domestic grouping.

Where, again, is the ancient nation that was monogamous? The Jews certainly were not. They recognised concubinage as well as polygyny. Jacob had two sisters to wife at one time—a thing subsequently forbidden, polygyny being recognised in the prohibition. A Jew might marry his brother's widow, although he had wives of his own; indeed, at one time she became his wife without any form of marriage;[2] afterwards he was enabled to get quit of her;[3] arrangements that go to show that *polyandry* had anciently been a Jewish institution. Well, if not among the Jews, where else shall we look for monogamy? No Semitic people had it. Shall we find it among the Vedic races? The Rig-Veda contains traces of both polygyny and concubinage. The term *sapatri* occurs, for example, which

[1] 2 Samuel xiii. 13, and see verse 16.
[2] Lewis's *Hebrew Republic* (1725), vol. iii. p. 268.
[3] Ruth iv. 6; Deut. xxv. 5-10.

means having the same husband. The Hymns x. 145, 159, contain charms by which a wife tries to get rid of her rivals. For the kings, concubinage became an institution.[1] In the Sătăpăthă Brāhmănă, IX. 4. 1. 6, we have the order of sacrifice regulated on the principle of men being entitled to have many wives:—"He gives pre-eminence to the man in consequence of his vigour. He sacrifices to the man as if to one, and to the woman as if to many. Wherefore also one man has many wives." And so on. Here, again, as in the Jewish case, we can see that polyandry preceded polygyny as the marriage system. We find in the Rig-Veda that the Asvin brothers had one wife between them—Sûryâ. It is familiar that in the great epic, the Mahâbhârata, the heroes—the five Pandava Princes—had one wife between them, Draupadî. The authorities hold that there is proof that the Brahmans who compiled the epic from old materials, found this tradition too strong for them, otherwise they would have suppressed it; and that, since the marriage was repugnant on the whole to Vedic, and altogether to post-Vedic ideas, the story belongs to the pre-Vedic history of the people.

The father of Draupadî is represented by the compilers as shocked at the proposal of the Princes to marry his daughter. "You who know the law," he is made to say, "must not commit an unlawful act which is contrary to usage and the Vedas." The reply is, "The law, O king, is subtle; we do not know its way. *We follow the path which has been trodden by our ancestors in succession.*" One of the Princes then pleads precedent: "In an old tradition it is recorded that Jatilâ, of the family of Gotama, that most excellent of moral women, dwelt with seven saints; and that Vârkshî, the daughter of a Muni, cohabited with ten brothers, all of them called Prachetas, whose souls had been purified by penance."[2] The tradition being too stubborn for the Brahmans they thus tried as much as they could to palliate it. It is a tradition of that stage of the family group which prevails now in Thibet, and no one could study Manu and doubt that such a stage had anciently existed among the Hindoos. That it was pre-Vedic may be considered certain. At any rate, monogamy was not the Vedic idea of marriage, and we cannot doubt but there had been a progress in the pre-Vedic as well as in the post-Vedic times. In the latter, caste has arisen,—the laws of inheritance and marriage shifting from ruder to more civilized types. In the discussion between the Pandavas and

[1] Rig-Veda xx. 1. 12, and 1. 72; and see, for traces of polygyny, I. 112. 19, v. 42. 12.

[2] On the Mahâbhârata. Reprinted from the *Westminster Review* for April 1868.

their father-in-law we have simply a case of collision between moral standards belonging to two stages of the progress.

The Homeric Greeks were after a fashion monogamous; but they also had only just left polyandry in the rear. Their marriage system was clearly only a few generations old at the Troica, for none of them had a pedigree with more than one or two known fathers. It consisted moreover with their having any number of captive wives. Let us observe also of the Greeks, that while they were developing a proper law of incest and marriage they were gathering a literature round the practice of παιδεραστία. The relation between a man and his ἄϊτας they constituted by one of the ancient forms of marriage.[1] It is disagreeable to recall such facts; but they are necessary for our argument. To clearly understand what moral standards have been derelinquished by men within the historical period, a wide survey would have to be taken of ancient facts, of a nature still more disagreeable.[2]

It matters not what moral standard we take, when we study the history of the rules now constituting it we shall have a similar account to give of them. They are the lower the farther back we go, and are everywhere in harmony with the general character of the grouping at each stage of the evolution. But of the evolution of grouping and of moral sentiments from such low stages as we have exhibited, what explanation, we repeat, can be given, except that men have advanced from the savage state?

Other explanations have no doubt been offered; but it is impossible to regard them as being other than the products of an uninformed fancy. Take, for example, the hypothesis of Sir George Grey in explanation of the peculiar grouping, the complex laws of marriage, intermarriage, kinship, and succession, which he found among the natives of Australia. These laws are familiar to us as transitional in the case of numerous primitive races in many quarters of the world. And we have evidence of such laws among the most ancient nations. To Sir George they appeared, not as evolved from the past experiences of the people, and in the course of growth and modification, but as being of divine appointment, and immutable. "The laws of this people," he says, "are unfitted for the government of a single isolated family, some of them being only adapted for the regulation of an assemblage of families; they could, therefore, not have been a series of rules given by the first father to his chil-

[1] Grote's *Greece*, vol. ii. p. 500.

[2] See Leviticus, chap. xviii. in the light of verse 27; and see book xiii. 9 of *Mishcát-ul-Másábèh* on the points relating to marriage on which Mahomet was consulted by his disciples, vol. ii. p. 76 (Calcutta 1810).

dren: again they could not have been rules given by an assembly of the first fathers to their children, for there are these remarkable features about them, that some are of such a nature as to compel those subject to them to remain in a state of barbarism, whilst others are adapted to the wants and necessities of savage *races*, as well as to prevent too close intermarriages of a people, who preserve no written or symbolical records of any kind; and in all these instances the desired ends are obtained by the simplest means, so that we are necessitated to admit that when these rules were planned, *it was foreseen that the race submitted to them would be savages*, and under this foresight the necessary provision was made for the event."[1] Elsewhere he says it is impossible to believe the Australians to have been originally civilized, and equally impossible to believe that their laws had been developed.[2] His conclusion is, the laws were designed by God for them as savages, and with a view to prevent them ever improving! It is only what we should expect after this, when the same writer says that "The first natives who were placed on the (Australian) continent must have been instructed how to provide for their wants, how to form weapons suited to their circumstances, how to select roots and to capture animals fit for food."[3] A revealed stone arrow-head or boomerang should no more surprise us than an inspired "inch." If an inch is to be so taken, then an ell. We have been offered a revelation of the entire metric system!

The progress we contend for is wholly divine as much as it is wholly human. What is at issue is the mode of the divine operation. Why should a revelation to the Negritans and peoples in their situation be of *stone* arrows, suggesting a low state of development? Why not at once the Henry rifle and Boxer-Henry cartridge? Is there a special fitness of the boomerang for killing beasts or men in Australia, and nowhere else, since no other country has it? More reasonable surely it is to regard the weapon as a local *invention*. We cannot look at the facts from the two points of view simultaneously; and if we are to take any of them either way, we should take them all. It is possible to regard the discoveries of Galileo, Newton, Adams, and Leverrier as revelations; but if we do, along with them we should take Mr. Disraeli's Reform Act of 1868, and the latest addition to the law of sale or bankruptcy in England. Not the less for so, in some moods, regarding these, shall we be constrained by the whole cast of our minds, as Heaven-determined, to take an

[1] *Travels in North-West and Western Australia* (London, 1841), vol. ii. p. 222. [2] *Idem*, p. 223. [3] *Idem*, p. 220.

interest in and trace the stages of each discovery and enactment—and, divine as they may be, to get beyond them—with fresh discoveries that shall leave them behind as contributions merely to the growing mass of our knowledge, and with fresh enactments giving effect to new social conceptions evolved from experience.

It is obvious that the class of facts related to grouping which we have just surveyed belong to quite a different category from those related to the mechanical arts which the Duke of Argyll has so lightly put aside in his case against Sir John Lubbock. It is obvious also that before the Duke can plead one word in favour of the degradation hypothesis as explanatory of the facts of history, he must produce for us an ancient people whose moral standards we should call high, and whose grouping was in accordance with such standards. Till that is done the degradation hypothesis cannot be seriously considered. It will never do to tolerate an hypothesis which requires for its foundation another hypothesis which there are no facts to support.

(2.) *The Arts of Subsistence, etc.*—When we turn to the commissariat of society, the progress becomes, if possible, even more palpable. As regards the tools, weapons, and ornaments used by successive generations of men, there is evidence everywhere presented of the gradual relinquishment of inferior materials and forms on the gradual discovery of better. The succession of the ages of stone, bronze, and iron is an established fact, which, though only recently demonstrated, was long ago perceived as probable on an incomplete survey of the facts. Lucretius anticipated our archæologists:[1]—

> "Arma antiqua, manus, ungues, dentesque fuerunt
> Et lapides, et item sylvarum fragmina rami;
> Posterius ferri vis est ærisque reperta;
> Et prior æris erat quam ferri cognitus usus."

> "Man's earliest arms were fingers, teeth, and nails,
> And stones and fragments from the branching woods,
> Then copper next; and last, at latest traced,
> The tyrant iron."

The kinds of food on which men subsisted, and their modes of procuring food, equally with their arrangements for shelter and security, can easily be classified as more or less primitive; and most of the modes and arrangements now in use among the less-favoured races of men archæology shows were employed by the inhabitants of the world in remote prehistoric times. A nomad tribe, subsisting on fruits, berries, roots, and shell-fish,

[1] *De Rerum Natura*, v. 1282.

leads a more simple and precarious life than a tribe of hunters and hunting as a means of living is more obvious and presumably earlier than fishing.[1] A tribe that accumulates stores of food, by whatever causes led to do so, is obviously a step in advance of one that does not. The herdsman and shepherd keeping stocks of the animals most wanted is in advance of the hunter; while the agriculturist, whether nomadic or settled, is in advance of the herdsman and shepherd.

We find now on the face of the earth, or we have accounts of tribes existing in each of the stages enumerated of progressive modes of procuring subsistence, and in every conceivable phase of transition from the lower to the higher of them; and it is impossible not to believe that as those in the lower are seen advancing, those in the higher have similarly and step by step advanced in these arts of life. Tree-dwellers and cave-dwellers, using nature-supplied shelters, are nowise distinguishable from other animals that do the same thing. The tribes that first felled trees, and erected rude platforms on their stumps, at a height from the ground, for security, were architects, as were the excavators of artificial caves or underground houses. The steps from either mode of "building" to modern architecture are numerous, and all the evidence shows that they were taken one by one. Many of them can be enumerated. Moreover, as regards the arts of subsistence, shelter, and security, the progress we are endeavouring to demonstrate is still a fact. New means of meeting the necessities and conveniences of men are year by year, and even day by day, being invented. And the same never-ending process of invention and discovery that we now see has been going on everywhere, *within the whole of recorded time.* Since this process, if assumed to have gone on from the first, offers a sufficient explanation of the facts—and since *in this field* there is a total absence of reasons against making the assumption,—we are free as we are constrained to make it, and to believe the whole phenomena of the arts and sciences to have been progressively evolved by human ingenuity exerted to meet human exigencies or to satisfy human curiosity. Of course, when we go back to the commencement of the evolution we have there Man—the creature capable of achieving the progress.

(3.) *Language.*—Language forms no exception to the law of evolution of all human powers. The means of communication

[1] Among Sir George Grey's divinely-taught Australian aborigines the hunter is seen stalking his prey *with the bearing of a beast of prey*, only with the aid of contrivances. But for these he would be undistinguishable from any other animal engaged in the search for food.

between man and man by articulate speech and writing, as a pure product of human effort, are effective only so far as a common understanding is artificially established as to the meaning to be attached to the sounds or the symbols. About writing there is no dispute. The written or rudimentary written systems, which are various, and independent of each other, can be exhibited in many of the stages of growth from pictorial signs, and abridgments of such, to the systematic employment of conventional symbols that are not pictorial.

It can scarcely be said that there is now a dispute as to the origin of speech. It is admitted that all the languages of men have grown; the processes and laws of the growth are well ascertained and agreed upon. All speech has been run back to a few monosyllabic sounds, as the elemental matter out of which the wonderful variety of tongues has been elaborated. There is some controversy as to the roots, but it chiefly concerns the question whether they were *instinctive* utterances, whatever that, as distinguished from *developed* utterances, may mean—it is not asserted that instincts may not be developed—or sounds uttered in successful imitation of sounds occurring in nature, and as interjections in the natural expressions of emotion.[1]

Professor Max Müller, who supports the instinctive theory, puts his results thus:—"We require no supernatural interference, nor any conclave of ancient sages to explain the realities of human speech. All that is formal in language is the result of rational combination; all that is material the result of a mental instinct. The first natural and instinctive utterances, if sifted differently by different clans, would fully account both for the first origin and for the first divergence of human speech. We can understand not only the origin of language, but likewise the necessary breaking-up of one language into many."[2] Elsewhere rejecting the origin of roots in interjections, and the imitation of sounds occurring in nature, he adopts the views of a German authority (Professor Heyse, of Berlin), which are as follows: "There is a law which runs through nearly the whole of nature, that everything which is struck rings. Each substance has its peculiar ring. . . . It was the same with man,

[1] Mr. E. B. Tylor has done good service in showing how important *gesture* originally was as a means of communication. He has shown that there must have been a time when the numerals were unspoken, and their purposes served by visible signs,—a hand meaning 5, and two hands 10; 20, of course, was a man. The argument rested by Sir John Lubbock on the evidence Mr. Tylor has adduced is conclusive as to the independent development, among different races, of systems of numeration founded on counting the fingers and toes, and worked at first by appeals to the eye. It is understood that Mr. Darwin is now working on this subject.

[2] *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 4th edition (1864), p. 409.

the most highly organized of nature's works"—and so on. Man possessed an instinctive "faculty for giving articulate expression to the rational conceptions of his mind." But "this creative faculty, which gave to each conception, as it thrilled for the first time through the brain, a phonetic expression, became *extinct* when its object was fulfilled!" etc. This—which would have been worthy of Sir George Grey, and in him not to be wondered at—is marvellous as propounded by Müller. It has been appositely termed "the *ding-dong* theory" of the origin of language, as opposed to the *bow-wow*, or imitative, and *pooh-pooh*, or interjectional, theories. It cannot be said that the "*ding-dong*" has met with any acceptance. Mr. Whitney says of it, "It may be very summarily dismissed, as wholly unfounded and worthless. It is, indeed, not a little surprising to see a man of the acknowledged ability and great learning of Professor Müller, after depreciating and casting ridicule upon the views of others respecting so important a point, put forward one of his own as a mere authoritative *dictum*, resting it upon nothing better than a fanciful comparison which lacks every element of a true analogy, not venturing to attempt its support by a single argument, instance, or illustration, drawn from either the nature or the history of language."[1]

Take it either way, as ideas came gradually, and therefore words, which, even on the *ding-dong* hypothesis, came after the ideas, we are led back to a time when man, as regards his power of communicating with his fellows, was undistinguishable from any other animal, for the brutes also have their modes of communication, including "their natural and instinctive utterances."

(4.) *Religion.*—Of the growth of religious ideas we shall here say little, because the subject would require more space than we have for the whole purposes of this paper at our disposal for its discussion, and to make the development clearly apparent. Thus much, however, it is necessary to say, that when we examine the religions of the ancient nations, as we know them, at the earliest time—and they were almost as various as their languages, while, like them, perhaps, compounded from a few simple elements,—the conclusion is irresistibly forced on the mind, that each of them had passed through a long previous history. They were composite, as were the populations that possessed them; animal and vegetable gods, the elements, and especially fire, the sun, moon, and planets, light and personifications of light, of the sun, and of the procreative and life-sustaining powers of nature, being all commingled in theo-

[1] Whitney, l.c. p. 427.

gonies to which there must have been numerous contributories, and on the elaboration of which an infinity of thinking, fancy, faith, metaphysics, and imposture had been expended, and round which in some cases literatures had grown. The ivy never covers the tower of yesterday. This also has been said, that not one of them exhibits the idea of God as we have it, as an idea in the mind of the worshippers; and that not one of them exhibits the idea of creation *ex nihilo*, as we have it; that these are modern conceptions. Max Müller, following the Rev. R. G. S. Browne, in his essay on the progress of Zend scholarship, points out that the idea of creation *ex nihilo* came late even to the Jews, who latterly received it as the orthodox view.[1] It occurs neither in the Veda nor Zendavesta. There is no hint of it in Homer. There has been a progress, therefore, in the central conceptions; how much more probable it is there was progress in the detail.

Every one admits there is but one true faith, and since of faiths there is an immense variety, that all save one have grown or been invented. That is, we all admit that religions *can* grow and develop, are human institutions, that reflect in their structure, as modified from time to time, the shifting phases of belief in their adherents. It has been asked whether *any* faith has had no history, has not grown and developed within the period of our knowledge? The mysteries of religion occupy so many minds, and so exercise ingenuity, that its doctrines constantly tend to vary, and would do so very rapidly, but for—(1.) the hold the central authority in each religious organization has on its ministers as bound by the standards; and (2.) the hold the ministers have on their flocks through the solemnities and ordinances. Despite these checks the varieties are surprisingly numerous. New sects are constantly forming, and about as frequently new religions. Of the projects, only those thrive that fall in with the sentiments and dispositions of large classes,—the conditions of success so far resembling those of ordinary commercial undertakings. By a process like that of natural selection in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, those that best accommodate themselves to the conditions of existence live, while the others perish. Many religions, either wholly new or radical modifications of old faiths, have sprung up and died within a century. One or two more vigorous still flourish, and may live long and be influential. We see Mohammedanism spreading into regions to which Christianity is refused access—the superior faith beaten in some districts by the inferior, as being more attractive to the inferior people. Every faith, again, on a conquest, loses

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop* (ed. 1867), vol. i. p. 135.

in purity as it gains in range, through unavoidable intermixture of its rites and doctrines with those of the religion it displaces. Christianity itself, as seen in the Romish Church, has taken over much of the ceremonial, many of the festivals, and not a few of the doctrines, of ancient Paganism. Change is thus a consequence of diffusion. And as every religion spreads necessarily from some centre of origin, continuous modification is a necessary feature of the progress of every religion from its beginning.

If we would see from how low a state men may have advanced as regards speculation on the mysterious order of the world, we shall find races of men whose minds a thought of the existence of the divine power has never entered. Above that stage of blank ignorance we shall find every conceivable phase of speculation and belief; every imaginable form of superstition and idolatry; and a great variety of contending, highly organized, and in some respects "reasoned" systems of religious doctrine. The belief in God, and the idea of his hating sin and loving righteousness, are grand conceptions. Were there always *some* human breasts in which from the first they were cherished? To the question no one dare say No, however he may be moved by the probabilities of the case, looking to the answer which history would prompt him to give. "We can hardly speak with sufficient reverence of the discovery of these truths," says Max Müller, "however trite they may appear to ourselves; and, if the name of revelation seems too sacred a name to be applied to them, that of discovery is too profane, for it would throw the vital truths of all religion, both ancient and modern, into the same category as the discoveries of a Galileo or a Newton. Theologians may agree in denying that any man in possession of his reason can, without a crime, remain ignorant of God for any length of time. Missionaries, however, who held and defended this opinion, have been led to very different convictions after some intercourse with savage tribes. Dobrizhoffer, who was for eighteen years a missionary in Paraguay, states that the language of the Abipones does not contain a single word which expresses God or a divinity. Penafiel, a Jesuit theologian, declared that there were many Indians who, on being asked whether, during the whole course of their lives, they ever thought of God, replied, *No, never.* Dobrizhoffer says, 'Travelling with fourteen Abipones, I sat down by the fire in the open air, as usual on the high shore of the river Plata. The sky, which was perfectly serene, delighted our eyes with its twinkling stars. I began a conversation with the Cacique Ychoalay, the most intelligent of all the Abipones I have been acquainted with, as well as the most

famous in war. "Do you behold," said I, "the splendour of heaven, with its magnificent arrangement of stars? Who can suppose that all this is produced by chance? Whom do you suppose to be their creator and governor? What were the opinions of your ancestors on the subject?" "My father," replied Ychoalay, readily and frankly, "our grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, were wont to contemplate the earth alone, solicitous only to see whether the plain afforded grass and water for their horses. They never troubled themselves about what went on in the heavens, and who was the creator and governor of the stars."[1]

We have now glanced at the facts which support the conclusion that men were originally ignorant of language and laws, arts, sciences, and religion,—a conclusion to which we are driven from whatever view of man's origin we set out. The story of the fall of man, unaccompanied as it is by a statement that the arts of life were divinely communicated, represents the species as left from the first to struggle for existence on the earth, cursed because of the disobedience of the first father. The narrative bears that men grew up in wickedness till the Flood came, which left as their only records but a few names and the generally bad reputation. At a later time the sins of Noah's descendants led to their dispersion, and to the confusion of tongues. Wandering in different directions, unable to communicate with each other, none of them perhaps retaining the original language or the ideas embedded in it, they must have sunk into utter barbarism. What does it matter whether the savagery from which men have advanced was primitive or induced, if it be the fact that it was universal? The learned President de Goguet, in his excellent work on the Origin and Progress of Laws, Arts, and Sciences, thus depicts the condition of men, before the commencement of the progress it was his object to investigate:—"All society being dissolved by the confusion of tongues [at Babel], and families living detached from each other, they sunk in a little time into the profoundest ignorance. Add to this, the consideration of the tumult and disorder inseparable from new establishments, and we shall easily conceive how there was a time, in which almost all this world was plunged into the most deplorable barbarity. Men wandered in the woods and fields, without laws, without leaders, or any form of government. Their ferocity became so great, that many of them devoured each other. All kinds of knowledge, even the most common and necessary, were so much neglected that not a few had forgot even the use of fire.

[1] *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (1859), p. 538.

It is to these unhappy times we must refer what profane historians relate of the miseries which afflicted the first ages of the world. All ancient traditions declare that the first men led a life very little different from that of beasts. We shall find no difficulty in believing these relations if we cast our eyes on what ancient authors tell us of the state of several countries even in their own times, a state the reality of which is confirmed by modern relations. Travellers inform us, that even at this day, in some parts of the world, they meet with men who are strangers to all social intercourse, of a character so cruel and ferocious that they live in perpetual war, destroying and even devouring each other. These wretched people, void of all the principles of humanity, without laws, polity, or government, live in dens and caverns, and differ but very little from the brute creation. Their food consists of some fruits and roots, with which the woods supply them; for want of skill and industry they can seldom procure more solid nourishment. In a word, not having even the most common and obvious notions, they have nothing of humanity but the external figure. These savage people exactly answer the description given us by historians of the ancient state of mankind. We see even from Scripture that soon after the dispersion the precepts and example of Noah were so generally forgotten that even the ancestors of Abraham were plunged in idolatry."[1]

We have here the conclusion to which the facts led a man as ingenious and learned as he was orthodox—"that the first men led a life very little different from that of beasts." The fact may be humiliating; but surely it is encouraging. If we of the higher races of men are yet of those who once were in such a case, and have come to be what we are, while with humble hearts we regard our origin and first estate, we may hopefully look to the future as holding in store for our species forms of life purer and higher than the present by as much as the present are purer and higher than the past.

III. THE METHOD OF STUDYING EARLY HISTORY.—In considering how the general course of human progress from its beginning can be ascertained, we shall reach a point from which the argument demonstrating the progress to have taken place will be seen to acquire a great accession of force.

It has been said that in the course of the life of the individual phases occur analogous to those of the development of the species. This is partially true as regards the unfolding of intelligence and morality. There is the childish stage of

[1] *The Origin of Laws*, etc., Trans. (Edinburgh, 1761), Introduction, vol. i. p. 3.

thoughtlessness and love of amusement; the boyish, in which speculation begins; youth, with its love-blossoms, quickened poetic and scientific imagination, faith, chivalry, self-devotion; manhood last, appreciating the situation, with experience, self-control, moderation, disappointment, and submissiveness. A fanciful person might, with a little trouble, make much out of the slight general resemblances here suggested. It would be to no purpose, however, saving the exercise and the pleasures of ingenuity. The infant has his mother's arms; the child his father's hearth; the boy, older and wiser comrades; the youth, a refuge, when discomfited, beneath the parental roof; so that, as the race had no corresponding solaces and supports, there is a radical difference between its case and that of the individual at each stage of progress. The species, whatever view is to be taken of its origin, has beyond doubt been from the beginning engaged in the struggle for existence. It may be impossible to infer from the incidents of that struggle, as we now see it, what its character was when waged with the forces of nature, hand to hand, without science and without art; but we must believe it was in early times very sharp and terrible, seeing how hard it still is for the majority. How the fierce pull for life must have qualified, stunted, or prevented the growth of the intellect and conscience, we may learn from a study of the effects of exceptional circumstances on the nature and conduct of individuals. But beyond this, the study of the individual, always excepting the knowledge it affords of human nature, will not much avail in the elucidation of human history in general. The analogies between the evolution of the life of the specimen and the species are suggestive rather than instructive, and need not seriously occupy the student of history.

The history of a nation, on the other hand, might be expected to disclose, not analogies merely to the phases of development of the species, but many of the phases themselves. Here, however, a difficulty occurs similar to that encountered in the general inquiry: the history of most nations was to an unknown extent transacted before the age of records. The question is, How can we learn what the unrecorded part of the national progress was? Our answer is, that we can do this to a considerable extent by studying the various sections of the nation. In a progressive community all the sections do not advance *pari passu*, so that we may see in the lower some of the phases through which the more advanced have passed. Of course the completeness of the disclosure must depend on the number and nature of the inequalities presented.

The inequality of development is determined by the nature of things. It results necessarily from the conditions under

which many of the causes of progress operate, and is, in the nature of the case also, more remarkable the larger the progressive community is. While the progress of communities is determined to a great extent by causes that affect all their sections equally, it must always be in many respects promoted by a few leading spirits, acting chiefly on certain of the sections only in the first instance. The men of genius who by their inventions have from time to time added to human knowledge and power, and, by their speculations and aspirations, dignified our life; the philosophers and critics who are foremost to purify, amplify, and change ideas; and the favourites of fortune who are so circumstanced as to be immediately benefited by discoveries, and influenced by improved standards of propriety, form a class by themselves in every community. What is gained by the leaders is first appreciated, taken over, and secured by those next to them in the ranks of progress—ranks that widen backwards from the front. Its transmission to the rear, and adoption and preservation there, are manifestly dependent on the arrangements for that end existing,—the educational apparatus, —which are everywhere imperfect, and for each rank the more imperfect the wider it is, the more numerous its members. And since the force of custom is more decided in the greater masses than the less, while the means of diffusing new ideas are more imperfect for the greater than the less, the latter *must* tend to advance more rapidly than the former. In other words, owing to the inequality of gifts and opportunities, and the conditions hampering the dissemination of new ideas and methods, inequalities of development *must* be presented by the sections of every progressive society, and must be more numerous and remarkable the larger the society is. We should not look for very different modes of life in a small group, and we should be surprised not to find them in a large group, for there, on the view we have been taking, they are normal and necessary.

Let us take the case of London to illustrate our meaning. In that centre of arts, sciences, industries, and intelligence, are predatory bands, leading the life of the lowest nomads. The night street-prowlers are nearly as low in their habits as the jackals of Calcutta. The city might be made to furnish illustrations of the progress of the family in every phase, from the lowest incestuous combinations of kindred to the highest group based on solemn monogamous marriage. It contains classes that know not marriage, classes approximating to marriage through habits of settled concubinage, and classes for whom promiscuity is an open, unabashed organization. The honour of some of the people are the humane institutions; the disgrace of others are the baby-farming and infanticide,—systems as

heartless as ever China or Orissa knew. Manners, customs, even language and religion, vary, as we pass from class to class. Groups as destitute as Ojibbeways of religious knowledge and emotion are within the shadow of its cathedrals: the same district containing some whose minds the idea of God never entered, and others who, in the pride of philosophy, have rejected it. Between the extremes is every conceivable form of intelligent and unintelligent faith.

Many of these facts, we are aware, may be explained on the degradation hypothesis, as well as by the hypothesis of unequal development. That the lowest strata are constantly receiving accessions through degradation there is no doubt; but these strata have always existed, and were presumably lower formerly than they now are. Can we doubt that they consist to a large extent of the direct representatives of those who formed the lowest strata in the earliest times?

What is true of the large towns generally is still truer of the nation at large. Cities are the centres of all that is denominated by civilisation, as the name indicates; they are *ex facie* the birthplaces of civility, urbanity, politeness. In country districts opportunities of interchanging ideas are rarer, while the clashing of interests evolving new rules of conduct is less frequent and intense; progress in the country therefore is naturally slow, and mainly determined by influences flowing over from the towns. We should expect accordingly to find life most primitive in the districts least exposed to city influences. And this is what we find. In Devonshire and Cornwall, at one extreme, and in the Highlands and the Hebrides, at the other, we discover remains of pre-Christian customs and superstitions, as well as modes of life of striking rudeness. Customs survived in Wales till lately that grew out of the rudest stages of society, as, for example, the mimicked cavalry engagement as a ceremony of marriage. Ideas derived from other ancient customs may still be found lingering in various districts in the north of England. The notion that one may divorce a wife by selling her is one of these. Indeed, when we go back little more than a hundred years, we find the most palpably diverse states of life within the country. Tribal and clan ties were till very lately in full force in the Highlands of Scotland, where the archaic system of relationship by milk-ties still survives—a system of which almost everywhere else the traces have long been obliterated.

Of course, for many of the inequalities special reasons may be assigned. The population is here mixed, there pure—one stock being purer here, and another there, and each having peculiarities affecting the social phases. The same thing may

be said of the town populations. What we maintain is, that had the population been originally homogeneous, and its progress achieved by its internal forces uninfluenced from without, there must have been inequalities of development—the sections less affected by the causes of progress exhibiting phases of life and feeling through which those better situated had passed. A variety of stocks in a nation is merely another and independent guarantee for inequalities of development, as establishing inequalities of gifts, and probably of opportunities, in the sections of the population.

Let us see now to what account such inequalities might be put in illustrating the history of the population of the United Kingdom. We might disinter in Cornwall a great part of the Paganism of the ancient Britons; from a study of the still lingering customs associated with the Beltane festival and Easter and May-day, we might pretty confidently conclude that the Celts and the Anglo-Saxons had equally at one time been fire-worshippers, had we no other evidence of the fact. We might conclude that the Welsh tribes had at one time been exogamous tribes, that obtained their wives usually by actually capturing them from their enemies; and that the mixed population in the north of England comprised tribes that used to get their wives by the less primitive method of sale and purchase. The milk-ties of the Hebrides, as they may to this day be studied, would throw a light on the difficulty Giraldus Cambrensis states to have been long ago felt in Ireland, among congeners of the Hebrideans, in the taking of hostages,—a light which might explain the difficulty, even if the system of Alterage and Fosterage had not been the subject of an exposition from the pen of Sir John Davis. Further than this we need not press our illustrations. All we have desired to show at this point is that the method may undoubtedly be an aid in the investigation of the unrecorded history of a people.

The advantages of the method, we said, must be more apparent in studying the larger communities than the smaller. They may be expected therefore to appear at the fullest in the study of mankind at large. Races, nations, tribes, are the units in the composition of human society. The races differ from one another in capacities and dispositions. Some of them within the whole of historic time have been less favourably situated than others; and in the history of each, as we know it, a variety of circumstances, some of them what we call accidental, have powerfully affected their careers, sometimes rapidly accelerating their progress, sometimes retarding it, or converting it into retrogression, sometimes simply modifying its direction and

rate. How the races came to be located where we find them we cannot as a rule tell, any more than we can say whether the physical and mental characters that distinguish them were primitive or induced. Most of them have been situated where they now are since the dawn of history, and all the types appear as existing from the first. Of these facts a variety of explanations have been offered. One is that the types represent so many independent creations in distinct zoological zones. It is enough for our purpose that, numerous and striking as the differences are by which the types are distinguished, and on which such speculations are founded, the various races have so much in common that their differences may be disregarded. The *human* characters outweigh and make insignificant the distinctions of races and types.

It is *a fortiori* of inequalities of development appearing in each community that they should appear among mankind. The *rationale* of their production being the same in the one case as in the other, it will be seen that the inequalities of gifts and opportunities must have been indefinitely more numerous and striking for the totality of the races of men than for any one of them.

Our proposition, of course, is that the preface to general human history, as recorded, may be compiled from the materials presented by barbarism. Whether it can be accurately compiled must depend—assuming the method to be correct—on the sufficiency of the materials. If every conceivable phase of progress can be studied as somewhere observed and recorded, and if the phases can be shown to be interconnected, to shade into one another by gentle gradations, then a clear and decided outline of the progress may be made from the rudest phase to the highest. The method may be sound and the picture incomplete; no one could doubt the method or the real character of the history of man if, from the materials at our disposal, a perfect picture could be drawn. Equal certainty as to the correctness of the method and the character of the history may be reached, however, otherwise than by attempting the picture, which could in no case here be exhibited.

The best proof of the soundness of the method, as well as of the continuity and uniform character of human progress, is that we can trace everywhere, and sometimes under striking symbolical disguises, in the higher layers of civilization, the rude modes of life, and forms of law related to grouping, with which the examination of the lower layers makes us familiar. *Of these traces and symbols no explanation can be given except on the theory of development.* As to the symbolical forms, we must infer that in the past life of the people employing them there were

corresponding realities; and if among primitive races we find such realities as might naturally pass into the forms on an advance taking place in civilisation, then we may infer that what these now are those employing the symbols once were. That such enigmas as the symbols sometimes are should be explainable in this way, and in no other, is a confirmation of the development hypothesis.

Let us illustrate this by a single instance. There is almost no existing race of men among whom what has been called the Form of Capture in marriage ceremonies has not been found, except those who get wives by actual capture, or in one or other of the ways transitional between the practice of actual capture and the symbolizing of it. Now, of the meaning of this particular symbol there can be no doubt, because the practice of actual capture has been exhibited in numerous stages of decadence into the symbol, and in the varieties of the symbol itself we often have records which, *aliunde*, we know to be correct of the ancient modes of warfare among the people observing the symbol. But the Form of Capture has been found in use among all the nations of antiquity, so that whatever the symbol may imply must be held to be true of the early history of those nations. We must believe, therefore, that the ancient nations were composed of tribes that used at one time to capture their wives from foreign tribes, and that had been exogamous, *i.e.*, disallowed marriage within the tribe. Exogamy is a sufficient explanation of *a system* of capturing women for wives, and wherever such a practice, or the symbol of it, is found, it can as a rule be *shown* that exogamy is or was the law. Of exogamy, again, no explanation can be feigned short of hypothecating the savage state, and a system of female infanticide, which kept low the number of women in tribes. At any rate, the symbol proving that the system of actual capture had prevailed, and this system being inconsistent with certainty of male parentage in the run of cases, we have a demonstration that in the ancient nations a system of kinship through mothers only must have existed in the prehistoric times. So that by means of this symbol alone the ancient nations are decomposed *into tribes* on a level, as regards grouping, with the native tribes of Australia. And can any one doubt that the Australians have been lower than they are,—that they are an advancing people? Even among them we find inequalities of development!

That the Chinese were anciently exogamous we may infer from evidence appearing in their law as still in force.[1] Staun-

[1] See Davis, i. 264; Purchas, iii. 367-394; Du Halde, i. 145.

ton informs us that "the most usual name in the Chinese language for describing the people or nation is Pe-Sing, or the hundred names." The names are now more numerous, but they are still remarkably few. M. Abel Rémusat says there are only 400 family names for a population of 200,000,000 individuals, and the law, as laid down in the penal code, is that marriage cannot be contracted between two persons of the same family name.[1] On the average, there are 500,000 persons of the same name between whom marriage is prohibited. There can be little doubt that these names were anciently tribal, and that the tribes they belonged to were exogamous. We have similar independent evidence of exogamy in India. The gotra of the Hindoos resembles in every respect the family of the Chinese and the *totem* of the Australians and Red Indians. And the foundation of the prohibition among the Hindoos, we learn from Manu, is that the family name indicates that the parties are of the same primitive stock. Exogamy is no more or less than the interdiction of the marriage of persons of the same stock, all of the stock being primitively comprised in the same group. In neither of these cases have we direct evidence of the system of female kinship, which is usually found accompanying exogamy, but in the case of the Hindoos we must infer it from evidence of their having anciently been polyandrous, appearing both in the laws, and in their most ancient literature. All the traditions of the Chinese, again, declare that there was a time when marriage was unknown to the people. At such a time, if kinship was thought of at all, the only system possible would be a system of kinship through mothers.

We have proof that the Greeks had the system of female kinship, and many indications, apart from traditions, that they were anciently exogamous. The Egyptians also, we gather from Herodotus, came through the stage of female kinship. He says of them, "No necessity binds sons to keep their parents when they do not choose; whereas daughters are obliged to do so, even if against their choice." This custom Rawlinson declares to be incredible, and we might think it incredible did we not know, on excellent authority, of such a rule among various other peoples. It was a rule proper to the stage in which, Nicolaus Damascenus informs us, the Lycians were in his time. "The Lycians," he says, "honour their women rather than their men, and are called after the mother. They leave their inheritances to their daughters, and not to their sons." The rule is now in force among the Kocch, with whom the women are the heads of families, and the daughters the heirs. Where daughters are the heirs of families

[1] Note to chap. x., *In-Kiao-li; or, The Two Cousins.*

is it incredible they should be saddled with the obligations of heirship as well as entitled to its benefits? What explanation can, on any other view, be given of such a rule?

If the Greeks, Hindoos, Chinese, Egyptians, were all anciently exogamous, or had the system of kinship through females only, they were originally savages, and we shall be justified in studying the condition of savages, in order to ascertain what was the general course of history in prehistoric times.[1]

The argument in favour of the method of inquiry proposed, founded on symbolical usages, is of so simple a kind that only a strong prejudice can resist it. In many cases, where the fact to be proved matters little, no one thinks of resisting it. No one will question, for instance, that the Roman marriage *per coemptionem* symbolized the ancient marriage by sale and purchase, and proves that a section of the people, at least, had had experience of that archaic manner of procuring wives. No one can doubt but that the Libripens officiating with his scales at a will or act of adoption, illustrates the source whence all ideas of formal dispositions were derived—the sale of "fungibles;" or that the formalities in the *Legis Actio Sacramenti* indicate that the Romans were anciently ignorant of legal proceedings, and dependent for a settlement of their disputes on the force of arms, or the good offices of neutral parties interfering as arbiters. To take a different case: no one will question the good sense of Captain Cook in his interpretation of a symbol he became acquainted with in Otaheite. After giving an account of the human sacrifices in use there, he observes:—"It were much to be wished that this deluded people may learn to entertain the same horror of murdering their fellow-creatures, in order to furnish an invisible banquet to their God [the sacrificed are *buried* by the altar, and it is supposed the god feeds

[1] Mr. E. B. Tylor has made a valuable contribution to the evidence which justifies the course we propose, in a paper recently read before the Royal Institution of Great Britain, "On the Survival of Savage Thought in Modern Civilization." That the ancient nations should be so much further advanced in the arts of subsistence, convenience, and amusement than in grouping should surprise no one. The arts necessary for existence must have been cultivated before those related to convenience merely. The chief determinant of progress in grouping has been *property*, and therefore a settled social order of some sort must have been reached before the progress could become rapid, more especially as a revolution in the popular sentiments was a condition of each step of the progress. Some of the steps could not be taken at all till men got into comparatively easy circumstances. As to *the arts*—music, poetry, designing,—there being a talent in man for these, there is no reason why they should not have been developed quite as early as the arts of subsistence. There must have been plenty of spare time, among the races situated in tropical countries especially, for their cultivation, and there is no reason why men should not take to them as naturally as birds do to singing.

on their souls], as they now have of feeding corporeally on human flesh themselves. And yet we have good reason to believe there was a time when they were cannibals. We were told (and indeed partly saw it) that it is a necessary ceremony, when a poor wretch is sacrificed, for the priest to take out the left eye. This he presents to the king, holding it to his mouth, which he desires him to open; but instead of putting it in, he immediately withdraws it. This they call 'eating the man,' or 'food for the chief,' and perhaps we may observe here some traces of former times, when the dead body was really feasted on."[1] Knowing that cannibalism *was* a practice of some of the congeners of the Otaheiteans, we cannot doubt the correctness of the inference that the practice of cannibalism was here symbolized. The selection of the left eye may seem singular; but so is the whole thing.

We have now given reasons for believing that the history of man upon the earth goes back to times very remote; and that it is a history of a progress from the first. We have presented a view of the method by which the outline of that progress in prehistoric times can be drawn. We have seen that owing to the inequalities of development occurring among the races of men, facts of to-day are in a sense the most ancient history,—many existing forms of life being structurally more archaic than any recorded, lying nearer, that is, to the beginning of human progress, considered as a development. We have shown how we may classify such forms as more or less archaic, and learn from the study of their interconnexion what were the successive steps in their evolution. Almost every conceivable phase of progress being somewhere presented as existing or recorded, the materials for the sketch are abundant, and the securities against error great. We have pointed out the instructive value of the symbolism of law and ceremony. Were it not for the key a knowledge of the inequalities of development furnishes to the meaning of that symbolism, in what mystery would the history and practices of our species be enveloped! What has been called "the poetry of law" would have to be received as made up of grotesqueries and graces of procedure introduced at random to satisfy the popular fancy. As it is, in the knowledge of the inequalities, and of the ruder forms of life, the mystery is unriddled, and the symbolism is made to tell us as certainly of the early usages of a people as the rings in the transverse section of a tree tell of its age.

[1] *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (London, 1784), vol. ii. p. 44.