The Archaeological Journal.

DECEMBER, 1856.

ON SOME OF THE BEARINGS OF ETHNOLOGY UPON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE.[1]

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ETHNOLOGY may have been regarded as a series of fanciful, and, probably, futile inquiries, leading to no very definite ends; and the ethnologist, as a sort of harmless visionary, led hither and thither by trifling indications, and exciting more smiles than looks of satisfaction. In such a region, hypotheses have been very prolific, and the pertinacity of their inventors has usually been in the inverse ratio to the stability and the number of the facts on which they have built them. Great learning has often been expended, even by men of sterling merit, upon investigations into the origin, migrations, and settlements of early nations, without any fixed principles or sound philosophy, to guide or to support the inquiries entered upon. Frequently some fancied, especially when recondite, resemblances, have led to a search for facts and appearances to give countenance to the theories they have suggested. Ethnology, therefore, in this sense, is mainly an abstraction of the mind. Such vague lucubrations may be very fascinating, but are chiefly to be tolerated on the principle of the old French maxim: "Du choc des idées jaillit la lumière." This, however, is but a description of the early stage of ethnology, like that of many other branches of research, which have grown into sciences. The wild, if not groundless speculations, not based upon facts and sound principles, of some antiquaries of the last century, perhaps even of more recent times—which speculations have commonly been as erroneous in their

[1] Communicated to the Section of Antiquities, at the Edinburgh Meeting of the Archaeological Institute, July, 1856.

ethnology as in their archaeology—bear little relation to the science of archaeology, as at present understood. And the "theories of the earth" of the earlier cosmogonists, in which the imagination set itself to educe order out of primeval chaos, using all the wonderful forces of nature at discretion, had a very small resemblance indeed to modern geology.

The great erudition displayed by the German philologists upon subjects so captivating to enquiring minds, may not be regarded as leading to very definite conclusions. Still a sort of science of *comparative philology* is being raised up, which, when subjected to more rigid criticism, and eliminated from those hasty views that have misled some very eminent cultivators of this field of knowledge, may ultimately produce satisfactory results. Man, his origin, his relations and alliances in all their extent, constitute a series of complex and difficult subjects of inquiry. And it is not to be wondered that the learned have too readily identified particular languages with certain races of men; and have allowed their attention to be absorbed by the curious and erudite study of the tongues of ancient people, when their personal peculiarities were so inaccessible—supposing this more facile ground to be the true ground of anthropological research. Language, the property of man, offers an immense region for investigation, and when investigated upon large and correct principles, such as are being gradually introduced into comparative philology, will no doubt lead to valuable results. Still language is only one of the attributes of man, and all the comparisons it admits of, constitute but a small part of the circle of inquiry of which he is the centre. His *physical characters*, the physiological laws to which his organisation and whole being are subjected, and the essential properties and distinctive peculiarities of his mental constitution, all difficult to learn on any comprehensive scale, and to elucidate, and requiring for their study long and extensive research, are the surest and first bases of ethnological science, as it appears to us.

This must first of all acquire fixed and well-defined principles before it can deserve the name of a science. It must before all be ascertained by a close and thorough investigation of different races of people, that they have and do observe something like definite laws in their origin, developments, alliances, and mutations, before ethnology itself can have

any stable ground to stand upon. The speculations which have formed its aerial substance too frequently, must be called down from the cloudy regions in which they have floated, wherein transmutations and metamorphoses innumerable have been as easy as those of the magician. And when this is accomplished, and the whole has been subjected to the test of rational inquiry, ethnology will itself obtain firm foundations, and be able to afford aid and elucidation to other branches of study.

I. For instance, if it can be ascertained, as there is every reason to believe it will be, that *race* is something more than the mere name of a mutable thing, and is really a permanent and enduring entity, which must of necessity have had a primeval origin, and exists the same now as it has always done, unchanged and unchangeable ; archaeology will find in this ethnological principle a stable and consistent basis of inquiry of real value and use. Instead of the doubt and hesitation with which current doctrines have led us to regard the remnants of ancient people to be met with in almost every country, we shall then look upon them as the venerable living representatives of nations whose ancestry reaches back perhaps to creation itself. A firmer and surer footing will thus be given to antiquarian researches, which will not be confined to unfolding ancient manners and customs, old dialects, or even modes of thought and expression, but may retrace the very lineaments and forms of people of primitive and pre-historic times.

As examples of the permanent and undying endurance of race, of features and physical peculiarities which have lasted for many ages, and cling with unchanged constancy to the people still, we may especially cite one from the most primitive of ancient nations, the *ancient Egyptians.* In point of antiquity we can refer to no older on the face of the globe, and their most remarkable monuments afford the very test our citation demands. In physical conformation, special study has convinced us, they also present peculiarities which, taken altogether, do not meet in any other people. So that whether they be admitted to be an autocthonous race or not, they are strictly indigenous to the Valley of the Nile ; for we may pronounce with much confidence, that no people presenting the same peculiarities of form are to be met with elsewhere. This ancient and fine race is to be

traced through all the monuments of the successive dynasties, possessing the same delicate features, in perfect contrast with the Negroid conformation, which, from an ill-understood passage of Herodotus, they had been supposed to present. And, what is still more remarkable, all observant travellers who ascend the sacred river, even the most recent, concur in the testimony, that the people of the country everywhere offer the most striking resemblance to the venerable bas-reliefs and paintings of the monuments. This forcible figure has more than once been used by Egyptian travellers, that in colour, form, and every other outward feature, the proper rural population look as if they had stepped from the walls of the temples as animated images of their far-off ancestors. Notwithstanding a succession of invasions and conquests, continually repeated from the time of Cambyses downwards, to the intrusion of the Saracens and modern Turks and Arnaouts, the true Egyptian people have remained as constant as the Nile and its inundations. We need not here refer to the features and characteristics of the ancient Egyptians, and the many curious questions connected with them. It is enough to establish the great central ethnological position, that the most ancient of the Egyptian people still exist in their living representatives, in the Fellahs of the villages on the shores of the Nile. A position in itself sufficient, were it requisite, to show that ethnology and archaeology are twin sisters, intimately connected, and mutually supporting each other—destined, when better understood, and their relations more fully developed, each to lend the other reciprocal aid.

Examples of like peculiarity, and of like pertinacity of form, occur on every hand. Of the personal remains of *the ancient Assyrians*, the learned and most enterprising antiquarians who have revealed their remarkable bas-reliefs, and other characteristic monuments, have scarcely met with any. We have been informed, through the kindness of Sir Henry Rawlinson, that "in all the ruins of Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea," evidences of a peculiar mode of sepulture are met with, which accounts for this. "The bodies were originally doubled up and squeezed into the lower half of a clay sepulchral jar, after which the upper half of the jar must have been added in a soft state and again exposed to the furnace, the result being that the bones were partially cal-

cined in the process." Sir Henry adds, "I judge that this was the mode of sepulture, from having in a hundred instances found skeletons in jars, either with no aperture at all, or at any rate with so small an orifice that by no possibility could the cranium have been forced through it." Mr. Layard, in his second work, alludes with an expression of surprise to the absence of tombs at Nineveh, and observes, "I cannot conjecture how or where the people of Nineveh buried their dead." From accidental circumstances, however, Mr. Layard, during his excavations at the North West Palace, was enabled to bring to light a veritable skull of an ancient Assyrian, now preserved in the British Museum. It was found in a chamber, which had an entrance and no exit, with a great many other bones and armour; a room to which it is supposed the defenders of the palace on its destruction had retreated, and there perished. This skull is possessed of great interest for its complete identity with the heads of the people of the sculptures, thus conferring upon them the irrefragable stamp of nature and of authenticity. Besides which it presents special characters, which distinguish it from the crania of all other ancient races, as far as the writer's inquiries have enabled him to determine. And this precious osseous relic, archaeologically of such great value, is equally so in an ethnological view, for it not only represents the special people of ancient Assyria, but, according to the testimony of high authorities, especially that of M. Botta, it may be considered as a model of those now inhabiting Persia, Armenia, and Kurdistan. For these are said still to preserve the type offered by the bas-reliefs themselves. Not only in their physical conformation, but, according to Sir H. Rawlinson, in mother-tongue also, the present inhabitants of the country resemble their far-off ancestors—for he says, "they speak a language closely allied to that of the Nineveh inscriptions."

But it is the same with other ancient races, *the Jews* and *the Gypsies* being the most familiar instances. The former present specific features, which we are authorised specially to identify with them in all ages and in all countries, proof of which it were easy to adduce from every quarter of the globe, and almost every clime, did time permit. We prefer, however, rather to allude to an observation made some years ago, by the present governor of Hong-Kong, Sir John

Bowring, when he visited Nablous, the Schechem of the Old Testament and Sychar of the New, the ancient capital of Samaria. The excellent and learned traveller was surprised to find that the Chief Priest, and other remnants of this ancient sect, personally, "had nothing of the Hebrew expression," but, on the contrary, "much resembled the Druses of Mount Labanon, the ancient Syrian race." They were "utterly unlike Jews," of whose remarkable features the traveller had expected to find traces, whilst the similarity to the ancient race of the country was striking. But there is a total failure of evidence to show that the ancient Samaritans were of the Jewish race, however much they might be allied in religious views and worship. Some have affirmed that they were "a mixed race of people, being composed of immigrants and the remaining natives." There appears, therefore, strong, and, we believe, conclusive evidence, that, notwithstanding the captivity under one of the Assyrian monarchs, the Samaritans were, and continue to be to this day, mainly the aboriginal race of the country. As M. Alfred Maury has so well expressed it, "C'est toujours le caractere primitif qui a prévalu," whatever mixture may have taken place.

II. If it can be established that not only peculiar physical conformations, but *the mental and moral properties of all races are essential to them*, and do not admit of being transmuted one into the other, or of undergoing any material change—and there are strong reasons for thinking this will be established—the archaeologist will be able with much more self-reliance to travel back along the line of preceding centuries, and to fix upon people whose mental and moral status, whose social and intellectual characteristics, he has developed by the study of various ages.

The civilisations of all civilised races are special. Whether we regard the civilisation of the ancient Egyptians, of the Assyrians, of the Greeks, of the Arabians, of the Chinese, of the Hindoos, of the Mexicans, or of the Peruvians, we cannot deny that we are contemplating in each case an aggregate of causes and effects which is peculiar, and, without refusing to admit that one may have influenced the other in some respects, as the art of Egypt or of Assyria may have been reflected upon that of Greece at its dawn ; and possibly the letters of Greece may have shed an influence, hitherto unde-

veloped, over those of the East—the whole mental and moral character in its evolutions, of these distinct civilisations has been peculiar to it—and not capable of being transferred from one great nation to another. It has had its bases in their physical and psychical organisation, and has been intimately connected with it, and, therefore, cannot in the nature of things, really and thoroughly reappear in a people of different organisation.

The Jew of modern times, and in almost all countries, presents the same propensities as to trade and a wandering life that distinguished him in the middle ages, and which have characterised him since he was first induced to migrate from the plains of Mesopotamia. His civilisation is quite peculiar and distinct from all those in which he mingles, but never wholly adopts. In literature and art his position is inferior, and one belonging to himself alone.

The Chinese are a race of people whose mental and moral organisation has conferred upon them as marked a character as any we can refer to, and which will be at once admitted by those who have paid attention to this remarkable nation, having a civilisation of its own. That they have an especial endowment of mind appears in every feature of their characters. During the war with this people, which led to the admission of the English to different parts of the Celestial Empire, a phenomenon was frequently exhibited which it would be impossible to parallel in European countries. On the capture of different places by the English *demons*, for such they appear to have been esteemed, as soon as our soldiers entered them, they were appalled by sights as unaccountable as they were monstrous and unheard of. The inhabitants, instead of perishing in the defence of their household gods, or flying from an enemy which had overcome them, with some shadow of hope for future resistance, if not revenge, or at least with the instinct of self-preservation, were discovered quietly in their houses in great numbers dead or dying of sheer terror, hanging and drowning themselves by scores with fanatical agony. That our irrepressible love of life, which leads to ceaseless care and anxiety for its preservation, and which we regard as an instinct of human nature, is not shared in, in anything like the same degree, by this singular people, is apparent from the accounts lately transmitted to this country by Sir John Bowring—which do

equal violence to the precious estimation of the value of life inherent in our minds. Sir John, in his recent visits to continental China, says, he has passed towers built up for the reception of living infants, into which they are thrown by their parents, through a hole left for that purpose, there to perish. He also saw ponds in which were numerous bodies of infants floating about, victims of the same barbarous inhumanity. The instinctive horror connected with the presence of the dead seems also to be wanting, for he frequently, on entering a house, stumbled over a corpse lying at the threshold ; and witnessed parties seated at table with a dead body under their feet. One result of the recent rebellion is a sacrifice of human life intensely painful to reflect upon. It is believed that in the city of Canton alone from 70,000 to 100,000 persons perished by the hands of the executioner during the year 1855. And it is stated on good authority, that, on the taking of Blenheim Fort, near Canton, houses were erected in many of the surrounding villages, where suspected and proscribed persons might go and commit suicide, by hanging or by opium, to save the disgrace of a public execution—and that hundreds availed themselves of this privilege. We have it on the authority of a number of respectable witnesses, whose testimony there is no reason to question, that in China there is no insuperable difficulty, when an individual is condemned to capital punishment, for him to procure a substitute, if he have the means, who will submit to the last infliction of the law *in his stead.* For alluding to these appalling facts before this learned Society an apology seems necessary. They are adduced as striking and convincing evidence of an *essential* difference in the moral constitution of the people to which they appertain, from anything of which we have any cognisance among European nations, — notwithstanding the occasional calamities which have at times occurred in this western world, and for short periods seemed to pervert the strongest instincts of our nature by the overwhelming force of despair, or other fearful passions.

The sanguinary worship of the *Ancient Mexicans,* in which hecatombs of human beings were annually sacrificed on the altars in honour of their gods, is another parallel instance that need not detain us, but which substantiates our deduction.

It is unnecessary, however, to travel so far to discover the very different estimate which is entertained of the precious principle of life by dissimilar races, and which seems to prove an essential diversity of moral character. The Celtic races, amongst many other markedly peculiar moral features, are well known to entertain very different notions about the value of life from those of Germanic descent. We may merely point to *our fellow-countrymen across the channel*, and to *the people of France* for evidence of this position—a position that may be confirmed not only in our own day, but in any period of the history of these nations. The "wild Irish" of the Middle Ages were not doubtful descendants of those more voracious, and less discriminating in their repasts, of Diodorus and Strabo. The people of Anglo-Saxon descent, on the contrary, are remarkable among all races for the reverence they entertain for the priceless boon of life, for the stringency of the laws which are designed to protect it, and the sacredness with which it is always invested in their estimation.[2]

III. A third point, which, if it can be established, that *any mixture of races does not result in a new hybrid people*, will have an equal tendency to render the doctrines of ethnology stable, and to strengthen its archaeological applications. It would appear that any mixture of breeds among the families of man can only be effected, so as to produce fruitful and permanent results, when the original families are very similar, or belong to tribes nearly allied. When ever this essential condition does not exist, the hybrid product is not endowed with those vigorous and healthy qualities, neither of mind nor body, which are necessary for its permanence and welfare. And a physiological law comes into immediate operation amongst all mixed breeds, which in a few generations eliminates the foreign blood from the

[2] The earliest of our written laws, the "Dooms" of Ethelbert, King of Kent, might be adduced in support of this position, as they ordain the *wer-geld*, or compensatory mulct, solely as the penalty for every offence, however heinous. But, leaving out of view the influence of Augustine and his monks in the enactment of these laws, which might cast a doubt upon their validity in support of the position now maintained, we appeal to the general character of the people of the Teutonic race, in all periods of their history.

It is also worthy of remark, that the title of the work of Bartholine, the son of the celebrated physician and anatomist, "De Causis Mortis a Danis gentilibus Contemptæ," refers not to the want of appreciation of life among the northern nations, but to their contempt of death—an essentially different feeling—however prodigally they may have sported with the precious possession.

stronger and more predominant race, and restores it to its original purity. Were it not for the operation of this law, what an inconceivable medley mankind would by this time have been reduced to. There would be scarcely a people on the face of the globe that we could recognise. All would be change and equally mongrel deterioration, which is opposed to observation in almost every country; and against which, happily, the divine fore-ordination has provided; and, as the lesser evil, all really mixed races are by the very circumstance of such mixture, naturally transient and perishable. The consequence is, there is no *race* of mulattos, or half-breeds, in any country, and wherever they are produced, they excite no important and persistent influence on the native populations.

IV. A fourth and last subject to which we shall advert on the present occasion, as having an important influence on the bearing of ethnology on archaeological science, refers to *civilisation*. If it can be confirmed by reasonable evidence that civilisation is not a state of progression, equally common to all races of man, from a pristine condition of helpless barbarism upwards, whether ascending by definite degrees and ages, like the stone, bronze, &c., or otherwise, but is a resultant of the developmental process of certain given races only; so that there are as many civilisations, as we have before hinted, as there have been civilisable and civilised races, each essentially different from the rest; we shall have another test of the greatest value archaeologically, whereby to try all ancient people, their remains and works.

It is scarcely necessary to allude to the most extraordinary doctrine that the discovery of stone weapons and implements in every quarter of the globe, is a valid evidence that the very same race, a nation of workers in stone, has been spread over all these vastly separated countries. Such incredible hypothesis is by no means necessary to account for this fact, which is readily explained, if we consider that every race of man, having the same, or nearly the same, thews and sinews, the same faculties; being stimulated by the same wants and necessities to procure food, clothing, and shelter, and being surrounded by very similar circumstances in the form of objects of chase, and minerals, and other natural productions, out of which to provide weapons, &c., must necessarily go to work pretty much in the same manner, and

produce very similar results ; objects, which, in reality, have stood to these simple and primitive people everywhere in place of the claws and teeth with which the lower beasts of prey are naturally armed. It is no doubt a curious circumstance to find the forms of arrow and spear-heads, &c., from such distant countries, presenting the same shape ; nay, some of the ruder flint spear-heads from the Pacific Islands are fashioned by the same number of blows, given in the self-same direction, as the similar weapons, of the same material, of the ancient Britons. The materials, however, frequently vary, whilst the most perfect and appropriate shapes occur everywhere. The ancient stone weapons of the North American Indian tribes are formed of a variety of very beautiful hard stones, of agates, sienite, obsidian, jaspers, quartz, chalcedonies, in the place of the flint and the granite of the ancient Briton.

It has been a prevalent view of this subject to regard the early period of all people to be alike. When they first find themselves scattered over the land they are in the archaeological position of *a stone age*. This, however, in one respect, may be very much questioned. Primitive races have, in all probability, been very differently endowed, and whilst all may have adopted stone weapons and implements, some only have continued in their use for any length of time —the civilisable races having abandoned them soon. We know not that any great weight in support of this view can be attached to the fact of the much greater prevalence of these stone objects in some countries than in others. In Egypt, for example, we believe they have only been met with infrequently, and in small numbers, which we should expect among this most early civilised people. In Greece and Assyria, we believe, they have never been found in the same profusion as in the British islands, and on the continent of America.

If, therefore, the four positions we have enumerated, and supported in this brief manner, can be satisfactorily established—and, we wish it to be distinctly noticed, that what we have put hypothetically and suggestively is not to be understood as uttered dogmatically,—then the advantages which archaeology may derive from ethnology will be very materially increased. Instead of the dubious and uncertain doctrines which have hitherto prevailed, ethnology will be

based upon more fixed principles, and these principles will afford the foundation for antiquarian investigations and reasonings of the greatest interest and importance. The antiquities of different races, especially of primeval ones, may be studied and elucidated with much more confidence and more satisfactory results.

Ethnology, it must be recollected, we consider to embrace the investigation of the anatomical and physiological peculiarities of all people of all ages, of their manners and customs, religion, mode of thought; their history and traditions, their origin and migrations, and the whole subject of their language. If the study of their monuments and works be more particularly archaeological, ethnology cannot fail to claim her part in this inquiry, as exemplifying the specific character of the people themselves. And without pretending to have pointed out a tithe of the alliances of the two sciences within the limits of this brief paper, we believe enough has been shown to prove beyond question that they are destined mutually to help each other, as their resources are developed, and their principles become more and more established, and that they should always go on together, hand in hand.

Ethnology is, and must needs frequently be, itself an archaeological research, when it concerns itself with ancient people; and it is much to be desired that archaeologists would take up the study of old races ethnologically, instead of being too easily contented with that of their works of art, and the monuments they have left behind. If the views we have been endeavouring to explain be correct, there must be a number of remnants of people in the remote corners of our Islands, that can trace their descent from the great races which have inhabited them in distant ages. These remnants of ancient races deserve the most careful investigation in every peculiarity attached to them, and results of a curious nature may confidently be expected. It seems probable that modern changes will tend to increase the rapidity with which these primitive people are disappearing. Therefore, their physical characters, habits, manners, and customs, all the peculiar properties of their minds in their development, should be observed with much care—that is their ethnological phenomena—in order that the antiquities of their far-off ancestors may be better understood. Each study will throw

light upon the other reciprocally. Nothing could be of greater value and interest in these pursuits than careful descriptions of these more obscure people, a collection of faithfully executed coloured drawings of them, of their crania, their most characteristic and comprehensive epitome, and of their implements, utensils, and weapons. Human knowledge must always remain imperfect, and have an illimitable field before it; but it can never reach attainable perfection without collecting all the rays from all available sources of light.