

means of communication between man and man." In other words, the primary purpose of language, or the reason that man talked at all, was that he wanted something, and wanted some one else to know it and to help him in supplying his wants. His motive in using articulate sounds was not the communication of his feelings; his emotions of pain, anger, &c., could have been made known readily and completely enough by inarticulate cries, groans, howls and growls. The motive was the pressing want of the moment. His wants may be summed up in two words: nourishment and warmth. The natural objects which supplied the means of satisfying these were at once the primary cause and object of his first words. These would be edible roots, the fruits of the earth, the earth in which they grew, the plants which bore them; further, the animals he hunted, their skins, bones, &c., and the implements with which he hunted and worked—natural and artificial—sticks and stones, bows and arrows, axes, awls, &c. As man is a social animal, and the unit of society is, as Sir Henry Maine* has pointed out, not the individual but the family, we must add himself, his relations and friends. The sun, moon and stars, the sea and the sky, were all objects of less primary importance to him. From the nature, then, of the names given to himself, his relations and allies, to the edible products of the earth and the plants producing them, to the beasts and implements of the chase, we should be able to infer the principles on which primitive language was formed; and, as we have disposed of the why, we now come to the consideration of the question: What manner of language was it that primitive man made use of?

The answer to this question must be obtained in the same way as we arrive at the determination of primitive man's intellectual, moral and social condition, viz., by the comparative method, by an inquiry into the nature of language as we find it spoken at the present day. Nor will it be necessary to have recourse for this purpose to the languages of savage nations, since the qualities most essential towards the determination of the present problem are, as we shall see, inherent in all language by its very nature, and are intensified in proportion to the degradation of the users of language in the scale of culture. In illustrating the following argument, I shall confine myself almost entirely to ground familiar, more than any other, to the general student of language, viz., the Aryan roots.

* Early Village Communities, Lecture iii.