

THE COPTIC ELEMENT IN LANGUAGES OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY.

BY THE REV. JOHN CAMPBELL, M.A., TORONTO.

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Professor Max Müller wisely holds that the classification of races and of languages should be quite independent of each other¹. By this he means that the science of language in its classificatory stage and that of ethnology in the same should not be mixed up together by the student of both. He does not, and cannot, mean that we are not to expect to find intimate and important relations subsisting between the two classifications. If it be true that there are clearly defined species of mankind, it is exceedingly probable that there are corresponding clearly defined families of language. A multiplicity of protoplasts must, of necessity, imply various beginnings of speech. If again we favour the development theory in connection with the origin of the human race, we are almost compelled to adopt a similar theory in regard to the origin of language; and the classification, which proceeds upon subsequent development, will be as applicable to the one as to the other. Finally, supposing that theory to be the true one which finds in the human race no well marked species, but a number of varieties shading into one another by almost imperceptible differences, and defying anything like a scientific classification, may we not lawfully look for something of the same kind in the domain of that purely human faculty—speech? Professor Max Müller is a firm believer in the common origin of mankind, and has demonstrated the possibility of a common origin of language; yet he is disposed to draw very distinct lines between groups of languages, and to throw very far back into the past the time of their relative divergence from the simplest form of articulate speech.

Various attempts have been made to form a general classification of languages. Friedrich Schlegel divided them into two classes; the first of which “denotes the secondary intentions of meaning by an internal alteration of the sound of the root by inflection,” and comprises the languages of the Indo-European family. The second, in-

¹ Lectures on the Science of Language; series 1, lecture viii.