

THE ORIGIN OF CIVILISATION

&c.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE study of the lower races of men, apart from the direct importance which it possesses in an empire like ours, is of great interest from three points of view. In the first place, the condition and habits of existing savages resemble in many ways, though not in all, those of our own ancestors in a period now long gone by :¹ in the second, they illustrate much of what is passing among ourselves—many customs which have evidently no relation to present circumstances ; and some ideas which are rooted in our minds, as fossils are imbedded in the soil : while, thirdly, we can even, by means of them, penetrate some of that mist which separates the present from the future.

In fact, the lower races of men in various parts of

¹ I am very glad to find that so able and cautious a critic as Mr. Bagehot has expressed his assent to the line of argument here used, and

the general conclusions at which I have arrived. See his *Physics and Politics*, 1872, especially the excellent chapter on 'Nation-making.'