

systematic plan, showing the relations they bear to each other, and the part each has played in the grand collection. For this purpose travelers have visited barbarous nations, and attempts, more or less successful, have been made to find a key to the dead languages of antiquity, like the Egyptian and the Assyrian, these ancient languages helping to throw considerable light on the past history of the developement of human speech.

In viewing the different races of mankind, we find that the Caucasian or white race has done the most for civilization. We see therefore, that history confines itself chiefly to the record of the progress of this race, which embraces the Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians, the Hebrews and the Phœnicians, the Hindoos, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans. The many colonies founded by modern European nations, in different parts of the earth, also belong to this race. From the light which modern research has thrown on the history of antiquity, scholars divide the Caucasian race into three main branches: I. The Aryan or Indo-European branch; II. The Semitic branch; III. The Hamitic branch. We are also told that this classification is a linguistic one, that is to say based on the different languages spoken by these three families of nations. We ourselves belong to the Aryan division, and it also embraces nearly all the present and past races of Europe,—the Greeks, Romans, Germans or Teutons, Celts and Slavonians, together with the two ancient Asiatic peoples,—the Hindoos and the Persians. The languages of these different nations are found to have a certain similarity or family resemblance to *Sanscrit*, the ancient language of India, and to *Zend*, the ancient language of Persia. These two languages are not now spoken. The *Sanscrit* is understood only by the Brahmins, and by scholars who have studied it, in order to facilitate an acquaintance with the history of these ancient countries. *Sanscrit* is not considered the parent of the different languages already named, though at one time it was thought to be so. It is now said to be the nearest to the original undivided speech of the Aryans. From the ancient history of Languages, or that part of it of Aryan

ancestry, we pass to the modern, and find before us the different European languages belonging to the same great family, and spoken at the present day. From the Romans or Latins we have the modern *Romance* languages, Italian, French and Spanish; and from the Teutons or Germans, we have the Scandinavian languages spoken in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland, as well as the German language spoken in Germany and Austria. Our English language, being partly Teutonic and partly *Romance*, bears a relation to each of these divisions.

The second great linguistic is the Semitic, including the languages of Syria, Arabia, and the Tigris and Euphrates countries.

The third division, the Hamitic, is represented by the Egyptians, and it is also thought that the ancient Chaldeans belonged to this race.

It is interesting to read of the patience and perseverance with which a knowledge of these ancient eastern languages has been acquired. I find it impossible, within the limit of this paper, to refer to many of the wonderful achievements performed by men who have devoted their lives to this great work. I must, however, draw attention to one interesting incident in connection with this subject.—

The knowledge of reading Egyptian hieroglyphics died out with the decline of Egypt, and the name became in time a synonym for anything mysterious. It was an interesting discovery that led to a considerable amount of light being thrown upon these mysterious characters. At the time of the expedition of the French to Egypt, under Napoleon, at the close of the last century, an engineer in digging for the foundation of a fort, near the Rosetta mouth of the Nile, discovered a stone about three feet long, on which were three inscriptions written one above the other. The lowest of the three was in Greek, the first in hieroglyphic, or the language of the priests and cultured classes, and the second in what was known as demotic, or the language of the common people. The stone, which, on account of the place of its discovery, is known as the "Rosetta Stone," was carefully preserved. Copies of the inscriptions were circulated among scholars