

has just prepared a work on Chinese philology, the aim of which is to prove the common origin of Asiatic and European languages.

In the above somewhat lengthy preface it has been my endeavour to show that, while important differences of grammatical structure do exist between certain groups of languages, these groups themselves cannot be clearly defined; and that even where points of similarity in grammatical structure are almost or entirely wanting, a community of roots may still attest true relationship. It is on these grounds, as well as on the ground of my belief already stated in a previous paper,¹¹ that Egypt was the cradle of the race, that I am emboldened to present, under the title of this essay, the result of some recent studies in comparative philology—studies which, I may state, were commenced and carried on in perfect independence of any theory.

The language in which I profess to have found a link or links binding together the Aryan and Semitic families, is the old Egyptian. The researches of M. Quatremère de Quincy first revealed the fact that this ancient language survived in the Coptic, which was used in Egypt as late as the twelfth century of the Christian era. After many foreign elements have been rejected from the Coptic, it is found to consist mainly of monosyllabic roots, many of them formed with only one consonant, and these apparently the radicals of Semitic words of similar signification. In the earliest stages of this language there does not appear to have been any well-marked distinction between the parts of speech, although, at a later period, a construction similar to that of the Semitic languages, especially in the case of the verb, manifests itself.¹² Professor Max Müller will hardly allow that the Coptic and Berber languages of North Africa are of a well-defined Semitic character; neither will he erect them into a separate family.¹³ These languages, together with the Ethiopic, Nubian, Abyssinian and similar East African tongues, down to the old Malagasy, have been formed into a group called the Nilotic or Nilo-Hamitic, which Bunsen and others looked upon as sprung from the same stock as the Semitic, and as forming with them a single family. Sir Gardner Wilkinson makes the following interesting statements in regard to the old Coptic. "The Egyptian language might, from its grammar, appear to claim a Semitic origin, but it is not really one of that

¹¹ The Birthplace of Ancient Religions and Civilization.—*Canadian Journal*, August, 1871.

¹² Benfey, über das Verhältnisz der ägyptischen Sprache zum semitischen Sprachstamm. Leipzig, 1844.

¹³ Science of Language; series i; lecture viii.