

claim descent from some of these primitive characters. From these have sprung families, whose connection with each other is so remote that it requires close examination to detect that in the far distant ages they had a common progenitor. Moreover a critical analysis of these fundamental sounds—of these radical characters—discloses the fact that the leading ideas which form the principal stock-in-trade of every nation in the early stages of its history are represented in these ancient Asiatic and European tongues by almost *identical* characters and sounds. To a certain extent scholars have succeeded in unfolding these primitive stocks, which, limited in number and simple in essence, constitute the germs of language. Whether they shall be able to go even a stage beyond this and discover what gave birth to these—what led the grey fathers of the several races of men to adopt these vocables as the outward representatives of certain thoughts and feelings—is a problem for the future. The process of reducing these countless derivatives to a small number of primitives has been wonderfully simplified; but, whence sprang these originals, we may never clearly ascertain. Even into this domain speculative research, having raised the curtain of mystery, has entered; but as yet has brought forth results exceedingly unsatisfying. Thence these explorers have reached forth to us dogmatic assertions, bold speculations, brilliant fancies; but these, we fear, cannot stand the test of keen, cold criticism and practised inductive reasoning.

From an examination of the Sanscrit much light has been thrown on the laws which govern the development of language, and which are found to apply in a special degree to those studied in the classical room. Scarce any literary pursuit more interesting than to trace the operation of the processes of assimilation, weakening, and expansion which occur in transforming the coarse, strong, guttural, and sibilant sounds