

subject. Ethnology is a wide and fertile subject, and I should be led far beyond the limits of an inaugural discourse were I to indulge in an historical sketch of its progress. But I may advert to the testimony of different witnesses—to the concurrence of distinct species of evidence—as to the much higher antiquity of the human race, than has been assigned to it in historical and genealogical records.

Mr. Leonard Horner discerned the value of the phenomena of the annual sedimentary deposits of the Nile in Egypt as a test of the lapse of time during which that most recent and still operating geological dynamic had been in progress. In two Memoirs communicated to the Royal Society in 1855 and 1858, the result of ninety-five vertical borings through the alluvium thus formed are recorded. In the excavations near the colossus of Rameses II. at Memphis, there were 9 feet 4 inches of Nile sediment between 8 inches below the present surface of the ground and the lowest part of the platform on which the statue had stood. Supposing the platform to have been laid in the middle of the reign of that king, viz. 1861 B.C., such date added to A.D. 1854 gives 3,215 years during which the above sediment was accumulated; or a mean rate of increase of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in a century. Below the platform there were 32 feet of the total depth penetrated; but the lowest 2 feet consisted of sand, below which it is possible there may be no true Nile sediment in this locality, thus leaving 30 feet of the latter. If that amount has been deposited at the same rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in a century, it gives for the lowest part deposited an age of 10,285 years before the middle of the reign of Rameses II., and 13,500 years before A.D. 1854. The Nile sediment at the lowest depth reached is very similar in composition to that of the present day. In the lowest part of the boring of the sediment at the colossal statue in Memphis, at a depth of 39 feet from the surface of the ground, the instrument is reported to have brought up a piece of pottery. This, therefore, Mr. Horner infers to be a record of the existence of man 13,371 years before A.D. 1854:—"Of man, moreover, in a state of civilization, so far at least, as to be able to fashion clay into vessels, and to know how to harden them by the action of a strong heat." Prof. Max Müller has opened out a similar vista into the remote past of the history of the human race by the perception and application of analogies in the formation of modern and ancient, of living and dead, languages. From the relations traceable between the six Romance dialects, Italian, Wallachian, Rætian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French, an antecedent common "mother-tongue" might be inferred, and, consequently the existence of a race anterior to modern Italians, Spanish, French, &c., with conclusions as to the lapse of time requisite for such divisions and migrations of the primitive stock, and for the modifications which the mother-language had undergone. History and preserved writings show that such common mother-race and language have existed in the Roman people and the Latin tongue. But Latin like the equally "dead" language Greek, with Sanscrit, Lithuanian, Zend, and the Gothic, Slavonic, and Celtic tongues, can be similarly shown to be modifications of one antecedent common language; whence is to be inferred an antecedent race of men, and a lapse of time sufficient for their migration over a tract extending from Iceland in the north-west to India in the south-east, and for all the above-named modifications to have been established in the common mother "Arian" tongue.