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FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF PHONETIC LANGUAGE.—BY DR. RAE.

A careful consideration of the circumstances that influence the condition of man forming epochs in his history—steps in the progress of civilization—would lead us, as it seems to me, to divide them into two classes: the one of primary, the other of secondary, operation. Of the former, that is of those which exert an immediate agency on his condition, we might instance his taming and domesticating the more powerful of the inferior animals, the ox species, the horse, the elephant, camel, &c.; his acquiring a knowledge of agriculture and of navigation. All these discoveries, and others similar to these, have in times past, exercised a very powerful and immediate influence on the condition of man, or at least on the

men who have invented or adopted them.—The steam engine is an instance of a discovery now operating largely on the condition and relations of our race. Others again are of secondary agency; they are merely different modes of bringing about the same, or nearly the same, events. As instances I may cite the use of one species of grain instead of another, of oats in place of wheat; or of one sort of material in place of another for dress, of cotton, for example, instead of luen or woollen—the use that some nations make of malt liquors, when others use wine or spirituous liquors—or again, the adoption of rhyme in poetry, in place of measure; of painting in place of sculpture. The operation of all such things is only secondary, and the effects they bring about are sensible only after long periods.

Of these latter circumstances, of