

CHAPTER II.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURE.

Stages of culture, industrial, intellectual, political, moral—Development of culture in great measure corresponds with transition from savage through barbaric to civilized life—Progression-theory—Degeneration-theory—Development-theory includes both, the one as primary, the other as secondary—Historical and traditional evidence not available as to low stages of culture—Historical evidence as to principles of Degeneration—Ethnological evidence as to rise and fall in culture from comparison of different levels of culture in branches of the same race—Extent of historically recorded antiquity of civilization—Prehistoric Archæology extends the antiquity of man in low stages of civilization—Traces of Stone Age, corroborated by megalithic structures, lake dwellings, shell-heaps, burial-places, &c., prove original low culture throughout the world—Stages of Progressive Development in industrial arts.

IN taking up the problem of the development of culture as a branch of ethnological research, a first proceeding is to obtain a means of measurement. Seeking something like a definite line along which to reckon progression and retrogression in civilization, we may apparently find it best in the classification of real tribes and nations, past and present. Civilization actually existing among mankind in different grades, we are enabled to estimate and compare it by positive examples. The educated world of Europe and America practically settles a standard by simply placing its own nations at one end of the social series and savage tribes at the other, arranging the rest of mankind between these limits according as they correspond more closely to savage or to cultured life. The principal criteria of classification are the absence or presence, high or low development, of the industrial arts, especially metal-working, manufacture of

implements and vessels, agriculture, architecture, &c., the extent of scientific knowledge, the definiteness of moral principles, the condition of religious belief and ceremony, the degree of social and political organization, and so forth. Thus, on the definite basis of compared facts, ethnographers are able to set up at least a rough scale of civilization. Few would dispute that the following races are arranged rightly in order of culture :—Australian, Tahitian, Aztec, Chinese, Italian. By treating the development of civilization on this plain ethnographic basis, many difficulties may be avoided which have embarrassed its discussion. This may be seen by a glance at the relation which theoretical principles of civilization bear to the transitions to be observed as matter of fact between the extremes of savage and cultured life.

From an ideal point of view, civilization may be looked upon as the general improvement of mankind by higher organization of the individual and of society, to the end of promoting at once man's goodness, power, and happiness. This theoretical civilization does in no small measure correspond with actual civilization, as traced by comparing savagery with barbarism, and barbarism with modern educated life. So far as we take into account only material and intellectual culture, this is especially true. Acquaintance with the physical laws of the world, and the accompanying power of adapting nature to man's own ends, are, on the whole, lowest among savages, mean among barbarians, and highest among modern educated nations. Thus a transition from the savage state to our own would be, practically, that very progress of art and knowledge which is one main element in the development of culture.

But even those students who hold most strongly that the general course of civilization, as measured along the scale of races from savages to ourselves, is progress towards the benefit of mankind, must admit many and manifold exceptions. Industrial and intellectual culture by no means advances uniformly in all its branches, and in fact excellence in various of its details is often obtained under conditions

which keep back culture as a whole. It is true that these exceptions seldom swamp the general rule; and the Englishman, admitting that he does not climb trees like the wild Australian, nor track game like the savage of the Brazilian forest, nor compete with the ancient Etruscan and the modern Chinese in delicacy of goldsmith's work and ivory carving, nor reach the classic Greek level of oratory and sculpture, may yet claim for himself a general condition above any of these races. But there actually have to be taken into account developments of science and art which tend directly against culture. To have learnt to give poison secretly and effectually, to have raised a corrupt literature to pestilent perfection, to have organized a successful scheme to arrest free enquiry and proscribe free expression, are works of knowledge and skill whose progress toward their goal has hardly conduced to the general good. Thus, even in comparing mental and artistic culture among several peoples, the balance of good and ill is not quite easy to strike.

If not only knowledge and art, but at the same time moral and political excellence, be taken into consideration, it becomes yet harder to reckon on an ideal scale the advance or decline from stage to stage of culture. In fact, a combined intellectual and moral measure of human condition is an instrument which no student has as yet learnt properly to handle. Even granting that intellectual, moral, and political life may, on a broad view, be seen to progress together, it is obvious that they are far from advancing with equal steps. It may be taken as man's rule of duty in the world, that he shall strive to know as well as he can find out, and to do as well as he knows how. But the parting asunder of these two great principles, that separation of intelligence from virtue which accounts for so much of the wrong-doing of mankind, is continually seen to happen in the great movements of civilization. As one conspicuous instance of what all history stands to prove, if we study the early ages of Christianity, we may see men with minds

pervaded by the new religion of duty, holiness, and love, yet at the same time actually falling away in intellectual life, thus at once vigorously grasping one half of civilization, and contemptuously casting off the other. Whether in high ranges or in low of human life, it may be seen that advance of culture seldom results at once in unmixed good. Courage, honesty, generosity, are virtues which may suffer, at least for a time, by the development of a sense of value of life and property. The savage who adopts something of foreign civilization too often loses his ruder virtues without gaining an equivalent. The white invader or colonist, though representing on the whole a higher moral standard than the savage he improves or destroys, often represents his standard very ill, and at best can hardly claim to substitute a life stronger, nobler, and purer at every point than that which he supersedes. The onward movement from barbarism has dropped behind it more than one quality of barbaric character which cultured modern men look back on with regret, and will even strive to regain by futile attempts to stop the course of history, and to restore the past in the midst of the present. So it is with social institutions. The slavery recognised by savage and barbarous races is preferable in kind to that which existed for centuries in late European colonies. The relation of the sexes among many savage tribes is more healthy than among the richer classes of the Mohammedan world. As a supreme authority of government, the savage councils of chiefs and elders compare favourably with the unbridled despotism under which so many cultured races have groaned. The Creek Indians, asked concerning their religion, replied that where agreement was not to be had, it was best to 'let every man paddle his canoe his own way : ' and after long ages of theological strife and persecution, the modern world seems coming to think these savages not far wrong.

Among accounts of savage life, it is not, indeed, uncommon to find details of admirable moral and social excellence. To take one prominent instance, Lieut. Bruijn Kops and

Mr. Wallace have described, among the rude Papuans of the Eastern Archipelago, a habitual truthfulness, rightfulness, and kindliness which it would be hard to match in the general moral life of Persia or India, to say nothing of many a civilized European district.¹ Such tribes may count as the 'blameless Ethiopians' of the modern world, and from them an important lesson may be learnt. Ethnographers who seek in modern savages types of the remotely ancient human race at large, are bound by such examples to consider the rude life of primæval man under favourable conditions to have been, in its measure, a good and happy life. On the other hand, the pictures drawn by some travellers of savagery as a kind of paradisiacal state may be taken too exclusively from the bright side. It is remarked as to these very Papuans, that Europeans whose intercourse with them has been hostile become so impressed with the wild-beast-like cunning of their attacks, as hardly to believe in their having feelings in common with civilized men. Our Polar explorers may well speak in kindly terms of the industry, the honesty, the cheerful considerate politeness of the Esquimaux; but it must be remembered that these rude people are on their best behaviour with foreigners, and that their character is apt to be foul and brutal where they have nothing to expect or fear. The Caribs are described as a cheerful, modest, courteous race, and so honest among themselves that if they missed anything out of a house they said quite naturally: 'There has been a Christian here.' Yet the malignant ferocity with which these estimable people tortured their prisoners of war with knife and fire-brand and red pepper, and then cooked and ate them in solemn debauch, gave fair reason for the name of Carib (Cannibal) to become the generic name of man-eaters in European languages.² So when we read descriptions of the hospitality, the gentleness, the bravery, the deep religious feeling of the

¹ G. W. Earl, 'Papuans,' p. 79; A. R. Wallace, 'Eastern Archipelago.'

² Rochefort, 'Iles Antilles,' pp. 400-480.

North American Indians, we admit their claims to our sincere admiration ; but we must not forget that they were hospitable literally to a fault, that their gentleness would pass with a flash of anger into frenzy, that their bravery was stained with cruel and treacherous malignity, that their religion expressed itself in absurd belief and useless ceremony. The ideal savage of the 18th century may be held up as a living reproof to vicious and frivolous London ; but in sober fact, a Londoner who should attempt to lead the atrocious life which the real savage may lead with impunity and even respect, would be a criminal only allowed to follow his savage models during his short intervals out of gaol. Savage moral standards are real enough, but they are far looser and weaker than ours. We may, I think, apply the often-repeated comparison of savages to children as fairly to their moral as to their intellectual condition. The better savage social life seems in but unstable equilibrium, liable to be easily upset by a touch of distress, temptation, or violence, and then it becomes the worse savage life, which we know by so many dismal and hideous examples. Altogether, it may be admitted that some rude tribes lead a life to be envied by some barbarous races, and even by the outcasts of higher nations. But that any known savage tribe would not be improved by judicious civilization, is a proposition which no moralist would dare to make ; while the general tenour of the evidence goes far to justify the view that on the whole the civilized man is not only wiser and more capable than the savage, but also better and happier, and that the barbarian stands between.

It might, perhaps, seem practicable to compare the whole average of the civilization of two peoples, or of the same people in different ages, by reckoning each, item by item, to a sort of sum-total, and striking a balance between them, much as an appraiser compares the value of two stocks of merchandise, differ as they may both in quantity and quality. But the few remarks here made will have shown how loose must be the working-out of these rough-and-ready

estimates of culture. In fact, much of the labour spent in investigating the progress and decline of civilization has been mis-spent, in premature attempts to treat that as a whole which is as yet only susceptible of divided study. The present comparatively narrow argument on the development of culture at any rate avoids this greatest perplexity. It takes cognizance principally of knowledge, art, and custom, and indeed only very partial cognizance within this field, the vast range of physical, political, social, and ethical considerations being left all but untouched. Its standard of reckoning progress and decline is not that of ideal good and evil, but of movement along a measured line from grade to grade of actual savagery, barbarism, and civilization. The thesis which I venture to sustain, within limits, is simply this, that the savage state in some measure represents an early condition of mankind, out of which the higher culture has gradually been developed or evolved, by processes still in regular operation as of old, the result showing that, on the whole, progress has far prevailed over relapse.

On this proposition, the main tendency of human society during its long term of existence has been to pass from a savage to a civilized state: Now all must admit a great part of this assertion to be not only truth, but truism. Referred to direct history, a great section of it proves to belong not to the domain of speculation, but to that of positive knowledge. It is mere matter of chronicle that modern civilization is a development of mediæval civilization, which again is a development from civilization of the order represented in Greece, Assyria, or Egypt. Thus the higher culture being clearly traced back to what may be called the middle culture, the question which remains is whether this middle culture may be traced back to the lower culture, that is, to savagery. To affirm this, is merely to assert that the same kind of development in culture which has gone on inside our range of knowledge has also gone on outside it, its course of proceeding being unaffected by our

having or not having reporters present. If any one holds that human thought and action were worked out in primæval times according to laws essentially other than those of the modern world, it is for him to prove by valid evidence this anomalous state of things, otherwise the doctrine of permanent principle will hold good, as in astronomy or geology. That the tendency of culture has been similar throughout the existence of human society, and that we may fairly judge from its known historic course what its prehistoric course may have been, is a theory clearly entitled to precedence as a fundamental principle of ethnographic research.

Gibbon in his 'Roman Empire' expresses in a few vigorous sentences his theory of the course of culture, as from savagery upward. Judged by the knowledge of nearly a century later, his remarks cannot, indeed, pass unquestioned. Especially he seems to rely with misplaced confidence on traditions of archaic rudeness, to exaggerate the lowliness of savage life, to underestimate the liability to decay of the ruder arts, and in his view of the effect of high on low civilization, to dwell too exclusively on the brighter side. But, on the whole, the great historian's judgment seems so substantially that of the unprejudiced modern student of the progressionist school, that I gladly quote the passage here at length, and take it as a text to represent the development theory of culture :—'The discoveries of ancient and modern navigators, and the domestic history, or tradition, of the most enlightened nations, represent the *human savage* naked both in mind and body, and destitute of laws, of arts, of ideas, and almost of language. From this abject condition, perhaps the primitive and universal state of man, he has gradually arisen to command the animals, to fertilise the earth, to traverse the ocean, and to measure the heavens. His progress in the improvement and exercise of his mental and corporeal faculties has been irregular and various ; infinitely slow in the beginning, and increasing by degrees with redoubled velocity : ages of laborious ascent have been

followed by a moment of rapid downfall ; and the several climates of the globe have felt the vicissitudes of light and darkness. Yet the experience of four thousand years should enlarge our hopes, and diminish our apprehensions : we cannot determine to what height the human species may aspire in their advances towards perfection ; but it may safely be presumed, that no people, unless the face of nature is changed, will relapse into their original barbarism. The improvements of society may be viewed under a threefold aspect. 1. The poet or philosopher illustrates his age and country by the efforts of a *single* mind ; but these superior powers of reason or fancy are rare and spontaneous productions ; and the genius of Homer, or Cicero, or Newton, would excite less admiration, if they could be created by the will of a prince, or the lessons of a preceptor. 2. The benefits of law and policy, of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences, are more solid and permanent ; and *many* individuals may be qualified, by education and discipline, to promote, in their respective stations, the interest of the community. But this general order is the effect of skill and labour ; and the complex machinery may be decayed by time, or injured by violence. 3. Fortunately for mankind, the more useful, or, at least, more necessary arts, can be performed without superior talents, or national subordination ; without the powers of *one*, or the union of *many*. Each village, each family, each individual, must always possess both ability and inclination, to perpetuate the use of fire and of metals ; the propagation and service of domestic animals ; the methods of hunting and fishing ; the rudiments of navigation ; the imperfect cultivation of corn, or other nutritive grain ; and the simple practice of the mechanic trades. Private genius and public industry may be extirpated ; but these hardy plants survive the tempest, and strike an everlasting root into the most unfavourable soil. The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance ; and the barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of Rome. But the scythe, the invention, or

emblem of Saturn, still continued annually to mow the harvests of Italy; and the human feasts of Læstrigons have never been renewed on the coast of Campania. Since the first discovery of the arts, war, commerce, and religious zeal, have diffused, among the savages of the Old and New World, these inestimable gifts: they have been successively propagated; they can never be lost. We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion, that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race.' ¹

This progression-theory of civilization may be contrasted with its rival, the degeneration-theory, in the dashing invective of Count Joseph de Maistre, written toward the beginning of the 19th century. 'Nous partons toujours,' he says, 'de l'hypothèse banale que l'homme s'est élevé graduellement de la barbarie à la science et à la civilisation. C'est le rêve favori, c'est l'erreur-mère, et comme dit l'école le proto-pseudes de notre siècle. Mais si les philosophes de ce malheureux siècle, avec l'horrible perversité que nous leur avons connue, et qui s'obstinent encore malgré les avertissements qu'ils ont reçus, avaient possédé de plus quelques-unes de ces connaissances qui ont dû nécessairement appartenir aux premiers hommes, &c.' ² The degeneration-theory, which this eloquent antagonist of 'modern ideas' indeed states in an extreme shape, has received the sanction of men of great learning and ability. It has practically resolved itself into two assumptions, first, that the history of culture began with the appearance on earth of a semi-civilized race of men, and second, that from this stage culture has proceeded in two ways, backward to produce savages, and forward to produce civilized men. The idea of the original condition of man being one of more or less high culture, must have a certain prominence

¹ Gibbon, 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' ch. xxxviii.

² De Maistre, 'Soirées de St. Pétersbourg,' vol. ii. p. 150.

given to it on account of its considerable hold on public opinion. As to definite evidence, however, it does not seem to have any ethnological basis whatever. Indeed, I scarcely think that a stronger counter-persuasion could be used on an intelligent student inclined to the ordinary degeneration-theory than to induce him to examine critically and impartially the arguments of the advocates on his own side. It must be borne in mind, however, that the grounds on which this theory has been held have generally been rather theological than ethnological. The strength of the position it has thus occupied may be well instanced from the theories adopted by two eminent French writers of the 18th century, which in a remarkable way piece together a belief in degeneration and an argument for progression. De Brosses, whose whole intellectual nature turned to the progression-theory, argued that by studying what actually now happens 'we may trace men upward from the savage state to which the flood and dispersion had reduced them.'¹ And Goguet, holding that the pre-existing arts perished at the deluge, was thus left free to work out on the most thorough-going progressionist principles his theories of the invention of fire, cooking, agriculture, law, and so forth, among tribes thus reduced to a condition of low savagery.² At the present time it is not unusual for the origin of civilization to be treated as matter of dogmatic theology. It has happened to me more than once to be assured from the pulpit that the theories of ethnologists who consider man to have risen from a low original condition are delusive fancies, it being revealed truth that man was originally in a high condition. Now as a matter of Biblical criticism it must be remembered that a large proportion of modern theologians are far from accepting such a dogma. But in investigating the problem of early civilization, the claim to ground scientific opinion upon

¹ De Brosses, 'Dieux Fétiches,' p. 15; 'Formation des Langues,' vol. i. p. 49; vol. ii. p. 32.

² Goguet, 'Origine des Lois, des Arts, &c.,' vol. i. p. 88.

a basis of revelation is in itself objectionable. It would be, I think, inexcusable if students who have seen in Astronomy and Geology the unhappy results of attempting to base science on religion, should countenance a similar attempt in Ethnology.

By long experience of the course of human society, the principle of development in culture has become so ingrained in our philosophy that ethnologists, of whatever school, hardly doubt but that, whether by progress or degradation, savagery and civilization are connected as lower and higher stages of one formation. As such, then, two principal theories claim to account for their relation. As to the first hypothesis, which takes savage life as in some sort representing an early human state whence higher states were, in time, developed, it has to be noticed that advocates of this progression-theory are apt to look back toward yet lower original conditions of mankind. It has been truly remarked that the modern naturalist's doctrine of progressive development has encouraged a train of thought singularly accordant with the Epicurean theory of man's early existence on earth, in a condition not far removed from that of the lower animals. On such a view, savage life itself would be a far advanced condition. If the advance of culture be regarded as taking place along one general line, then existing savagery stands directly intermediate between animal and civilized life; if along different lines, then savagery and civilization may be considered as at least indirectly connected through their common origin. The method and evidence here employed are not, however, suitable for the discussion of this remoter part of the problem of civilization. Nor is it necessary to enquire how, under this or any other theory, the savage state first came to be on earth. It is enough that, by some means or other, it has actually come into existence; and so far as it may serve as a guide in inferring an early condition of the human race at large, so far the argument takes the very practicable shape of a discussion turning rather on actual

than imaginary states of society. The second hypothesis, which regards higher culture as original, and the savage condition as produced from it by a course of degeneration, at once cuts the hard knot of the origin of culture. It takes for granted a supernatural interference, as where Archbishop Whately simply refers to miraculous revelation that condition above the level of barbarism which he considers to have been man's original state.¹ It may be incidentally remarked, however, that the doctrine of original civilization bestowed on man by divine intervention, by no means necessarily involves the view that this original civilization was at a high level. Its advocates are free to choose their starting-point of culture above, at, or below the savage condition, as may on the evidence seem to them most reasonable.

The two theories which thus account for the relation of savage to cultured life may be contrasted according to their main character, as the progression-theory and the degradation-theory. Yet of course the progression-theory recognizes degradation, and the degradation-theory recognizes progression, as powerful influences in the course of culture. Under proper limitations the principles of both theories are conformable to historical knowledge, which shows us, on the one hand, that the state of the higher nations was reached by progression from a lower state, and, on the other hand, that culture gained by progression may be lost by degradation. If in this enquiry we should be obliged to end in the dark, at any rate we need not begin there. History, taken as our guide in explaining the different stages of civilization, offers a theory based on actual experience. This is a development-theory, in which both advance and relapse have their acknowledged places. But so far as history is to be our criterion, progression is primary and degradation secondary; culture must be gained before it

¹ Whately, 'Essay on the Origin of Civilisation,' in *Miscellaneous Lectures*, &c. His evidence is examined in detail in my 'Early History of Mankind,' ch. vii. See also W. Cooke Taylor, 'Natural History of Society.'

can be lost. Moreover, in striking a balance between the effects of forward and backward movement in civilization, it must be borne in mind how powerfully the diffusion of culture acts in preserving the results of progress from the attacks of degeneration. A progressive movement in culture spreads, and becomes independent of the fate of its originators. What is produced in some limited district is diffused over a wider and wider area, where the process of effectual 'stamping out' becomes more and more difficult. Thus it is even possible for the habits and inventions of races long extinct to remain as the common property of surviving nations; and the destructive actions which make such havoc with the civilizations of particular districts fail to destroy the civilization of the world.

The enquiry as to the relation of savagery to barbarism and semi-civilization lies almost entirely in præ-historic or extra-historic regions. This is of course an unfavourable condition, and must be frankly accepted. Direct history hardly tells anything of the changes of savage culture, except where in contact with and under the dominant influence of foreign civilization, a state of things which is little to our present purpose. Periodical examinations of low races otherwise left isolated to work out their own destinies, would be interesting evidence to the student of civilization if they could be made; but unfortunately they cannot. The lower races, wanting documentary memorials, loose in preserving tradition, and ever ready to clothe myth in its shape, can seldom be trusted in their stories of long-past ages. History is oral or written record which can be satisfactorily traced into contact with the events it describes; and perhaps no account of the course of culture in its lower stages can satisfy this stringent criterion. Traditions may be urged in support either of the progression-theory or of the degradation-theory. These traditions may be partly true, and must be partly untrue; but whatever truth or untruth they may contain, there is such difficulty in separating man's recollection of what was from his specu-

lation as to what might have been, that ethnology seems not likely to gain much by attempts to judge of early stages of civilization on a traditional basis. The problem is one which has occupied the philosophic mind even in savage and barbaric life, and has been solved by speculations asserted as facts, and by traditions which are, in great measure, mere realized theories. The Chinese can show, with all due gravity, the records of their ancient dynasties and tell us how in old times their ancestors dwelt in caves, clothed themselves with leaves, and ate raw flesh, till, under such and such rulers, they were taught to build huts, prepare skins for garments, and make fire.¹ Lucretius can describe to us, in his famous lines, the large-boned, hardy, lawless, primæval race of man, living the roving life of the wild beasts which they overcame with stones and heavy clubs, devouring berries and acorns, ignorant as yet of fire, and agriculture, and the use of skins for clothing. From this state the Epicurean poet traces up the development of culture, beginning outside but ending inside the range of human memory.² To the same class belong those legends which, starting from an ancient savage state, describe its elevation by divine civilizers : this, which may be called the supernatural progression-theory, is exemplified in the familiar culture-traditions of Peru and Italy.

But other minds, following a different ideal track from the present to the past, have seen in a far different shape the early stages of human life. Those men whose eyes are always turned to look back on the wisdom of the ancients, those who by a common confusion of thought ascribe to men of old the wisdom of old men, those who hold fast to some once-honoured scheme of life which new schemes are superseding before their eyes, are apt to carry back their thought of present degeneration into far-gone ages, till they reach a period of primæval glory. The Parsi looks back to the happy rule of King Yima, when men and cattle were immortal, when water and trees never dried up and food

¹ Goguet, vol. iii. p. 270.

² Lucret. v. 923, &c. ; see Hor. Sat. i. 3.

was inexhaustible, when there was no cold nor heat, no envy nor old age.¹ The Buddhist looks back to the age of glorious soaring beings who had no sin, no sex, no want of food, till the unhappy hour when, tasting a delicious scum that formed upon the surface of the earth, they fell into evil, and in time became degraded to eat rice, to bear children, to build houses, to divide property, and to establish caste. In after ages, record preserves details of the continuing course of degeneration. It was King Chetiya who told the first lie, and the citizens who heard of it, not knowing what a lie was, asked if it were white, black or blue. Men's lives grew shorter and shorter, and it was King Maha Sâgara who, after a brief reign of 252,000 years, made the dismal discovery of the first grey hair.²

Admitting the imperfection of the historical record as regards the lowest stages of culture, we must bear in mind that it tells both ways. Niebuhr, attacking the progressionists of the 18th century, remarks that they have overlooked the fact 'that no single example can be brought forward of an actually savage people having independently become civilized.'³ Whately appropriated this remark, which indeed forms the kernel of his well-known Lecture on the Origin of Civilisation: 'Facts are stubborn things,' he says, 'and that no authenticated instance can be produced of savages that ever *did* emerge, unaided, from that state is no *theory*, but a statement, hitherto never disproved, of a matter of *fact*.' He uses this as an argument in support of his general conclusion, that man could not have risen independently from a savage to a civilized state, and that savages are degenerate descendants of civilized men.⁴ But he omits to ask the counter-question, whether we find one recorded instance of a civilized people falling independently into a savage

¹ 'Avesta,' trans. Spiegel & Bleek, vol. ii. p. 50.

² Hardy, 'Manual of Buddhism,' pp. 64, 128.

³ Niebuhr, 'Römische Geschichte,' part i. p. 88: 'Nur das haben sie übersehen, dass kein einziges Beyspiel von einem wirklich wilden Volk aufzuweisen ist, welches frey zur Cultur übergegangen wäre.'

⁴ Whately, 'Essay on Origin of Civilisation.'

state? Any such record, direct and well vouched, would be of high interest to ethnologists, though, of course, it would not contradict the development-theory, for proving loss is not disproving previous gain. But where is such a record to be found? The defect of historical evidence as to the transition between savagery and higher culture is a two-sided fact, only half taken into Archbishop Whately's one-sided argument. Fortunately the defect is by no means fatal. Though history may not account directly for the existence and explain the position of savages, it at least gives evidence which bears closely on the matter. Moreover, we are in various ways enabled to study the lower course of culture on evidence which cannot have been tampered with to support a theory. Old traditional lore, however untrustworthy as direct record of events, contains most faithful incidental descriptions of manners and customs; archæology displays old structures and buried relics of the remote past; philology brings out the undesigned history in language, which generation after generation have handed down without a thought of its having such significance; the ethnological survey of the races of the world tells much; the ethnographical comparison of their condition tells more.

Arrest and decline in civilization are to be recognised as among the more frequent and powerful operations of national life. That knowledge, arts, and institutions should decay in certain districts, that peoples once progressive should lag behind and be passed by advancing neighbours, that sometimes even societies of men should recede into rudeness and misery—all these are phenomena with which modern history is familiar. In judging of the relation of the lower to the higher stages of civilization, it is essential to gain some idea how far it may have been affected by such degeneration. What kind of evidence can direct observation and history give as to the degradation of men from a civilized condition towards that of savagery? In our great cities, the so-called 'dangerous classes' are sunk in hideous misery and depravity. If we have to strike a balance between the

Papuans of New Caledonia and the communities of European beggars and thieves, we may sadly acknowledge that we have in our midst something worse than savagery. But it is not savagery ; it is broken-down civilization. Negatively, the inmates of a Whitechapel casual ward and of a Hottentot kraal agree in their want of the knowledge and virtue of the higher culture. But positively, their mental and moral characteristics are utterly different. Thus, the savage life is essentially devoted to gaining subsistence from nature, which is just what the proletarian life is not. Their relations to civilized life—the one of independence, the other of dependence—are absolutely opposite. To my mind the popular phrases about ‘ city savages ’ and ‘ street Arabs ’ seem like comparing a ruined house to a builder’s yard. It is more to the purpose to notice how war and misrule, famine and pestilence, have again and again devastated countries, reduced their population to miserable remnants, and lowered their level of civilization, and how the isolated life of wild country districts seems sometimes tending towards savagery. So far as we know, however, none of these causes have ever really reproduced a savage community. For an ancient account of degeneration under adverse circumstances, Ovid’s mention of the unhappy colony of Tomi on the Black Sea is a case in point, though perhaps not to be taken too literally. Among its mixed Greek and barbaric population, harassed and carried off into slavery by the Sarmatian horsemen, much as the Persians till lately were by the Turkomans, the poet describes the neglect of the gardener’s craft, the decay of textile arts, the barbaric clothing of hides.

‘ Nec tamen hæc loca sunt ullo pretiosa metallo :

Hostis ab agricola vix sinit illa fodi.

Purpura sæpe tuos fulgens prætexit amictus :

Sed non Sarmatico tingitur illa mari.

Vellera dura ferunt pecudes, et Palladis uti

Arte Tomitanæ non didicere nurus.

Femina pro lana Cerialia munera frangit,

Suppositoque gravem vertice portat aquam.®

Non hic pampineis amicitur vitibus ulmus :
 Nulla premunt ramos pondere poma suo.
 Tristia deformes pariunt absinthia campi,
 Terraque de fructu quam sit amara docet.' ¹

Cases of exceptionally low civilization in Europe may perhaps be sometimes accounted for by degeneration of this kind. But they seem more often the relics of ancient unchanged barbarism. The evidence from wild parts of Ireland two or three centuries ago is interesting from this point of view. Acts of Parliament were passed against the inveterate habits of fastening ploughs to the horses' tails, and of burning oats from the straw to save the trouble of threshing. In the 18th century Ireland could still be thus described in satire :—

' The Western isle renowned for bogs,
 For tories and for great wolf-dogs,
 For drawing hobbies by the tails,
 And threshing corn with fiery flails.' ²

Fynes Moryson's description of the wild or ' meere ' Irish about 1600, is amazing. The very lords of them, he says, dwelt in poor clay houses, or cabins of boughs covered with turf. In many parts men as well as women had in very winter time but a linen rag about the loins and a woollen mantle on their bodies, so that it would turn a man's stomach to see an old woman in the morning before breakfast. He notices their habit of burning oats from the straw, and making cakes thereof. They had no tables, but set their meat on a bundle of grass. They feasted on fallen horses, and seethed pieces of beef and pork with the unwashed entrails of beasts in a hollow tree, lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set over the fire, and they drank milk warmed with a stone first cast into the fire.³ Another

¹ Ovid. *Ex Ponto*, iii. 8; see Grote, 'History of Greece,' vol. xii. p. 641.

² W. C. Taylor, 'Nat. Hist. of Society,' vol. i. p. 202.

³ Fynes Moryson, 'Itinerary;' London, 1617, part iii. p. 162, &c.; J. Evans in 'Archæologia,' vol. xli. See description of hide-boiling, &c., among the wild Irish, about 1550, in Andrew Boorde, 'Introduction of Knowledge,' ed. by F. J. Furnivall, Early English Text Soc. 1870.

district remarkable for a barbaric simplicity of life is the Hebrides. Till of late years, there were to be found there in actual use earthen vessels, unglazed and made by hand without the potter's wheel, which might pass in a museum as indifferent specimens of savage manufacture. These 'craggans' are still made by an old woman at Barvas for sale as curiosities. Such a modern state of the potter's art in the Hebrides fits well with George Buchanan's statement in the 16th century that the islanders used to boil meat in the beast's own paunch or hide.¹ Early in the 18th century Martin mentions as prevalent there the ancient way of dressing corn by burning it dexterously from the ear, which he notices to be a very quick process, thence called 'graddan' (Gaelic, *grad*=quick).² Thus we see that the habit of burning out the grain, for which the 'meere Irish' were reproached, was really the keeping up of an old Keltic art, not without its practical use. So the appearance in modern Keltic districts of other widespread arts of the lower culture—hide-boiling, like that of the Scythians in Herodotus, and stone-boiling, like that of the Assinaboins of North America—seems to fit not so well with degradation from a high as with survival from a low civilization. The Irish and the Hebrideans had been for ages under the influence of comparatively high civilization, which nevertheless may have left unaltered much of the older and ruder habit of the people.

Instances of civilized men taking to a wild life in outlying districts of the world, and ceasing to obtain or want the appliances of civilization, give more distinct evidence of degradation. In connexion with this state of things takes place the nearest known approach to an independent degeneration from a civilized to a savage state. This happens in mixed races, whose standard of civilization may be more or less below that of the higher race. The mutineers of the

¹ Buchanan, 'Rerum Scoticarum Historia ;' Edinburgh, 1528, p. 7. See 'Early History of Mankind,' 2nd ed. p. 272.

² Martin, 'Description of Western Islands,' in Pinkerton, vol. iii. p. 639.

Bounty, with their Polynesian wives, founded a small but not savage community on Pitcairn's Island.¹ The mixed Portuguese and native races of the East Indies and Africa lead a life below the European standard, but not a savage life.² The Gauchos of the South American Pampas, a mixed European and Indian race of equestrian herdsmen, are described as sitting about on ox-skulls, making broth in horns with hot cinders heaped round, living on meat without vegetables, and altogether leading a foul, brutal, comfortless, degenerate, but not savage life.³ One step beyond this brings us to the cases of individual civilized men being absorbed in savage tribes and adopting the savage life, on which they exercise little influence for improvement ; the children of these men may come distinctly under the category of savages. These cases of mixed breeds, however, do not show a low culture actually produced as the result of degeneration from a high one. Their theory is that, given a higher and a lower civilization existing among two races, a mixed race between the two may take to the lower or an intermediate condition.

Degeneration probably operates even more actively in the lower than in the higher culture. Barbarous nations and savage hordes, with their less knowledge and scantier appliances, would seem peculiarly exposed to degrading influences. In Africa, for instance, there seems to have been in modern centuries a falling off in culture, probably due in a considerable degree to foreign influence. Mr. J. L. Wilson, contrasting the 16th and 17th century accounts of powerful negro kingdoms in West Africa with the present small communities, with little or no tradition of their forefathers' more extended political organization, looks especially to the slave-trade as the deteriorating cause.⁴

¹ Barrow, 'Mutiny of the Bounty'; W. Brodie, 'Pitcairn's Island.'

² Wallace, 'Malay Archipelago,' vol. i. pp. 42, 47¹; vol. ii. pp. 11, 43, 48; Latham, 'Descr. Eth.,' vol. ii. pp. 492-5; D. and C. Livingstone, 'Exp. to Zambesi,' p. 45.

³ Southey, 'History of Brazil,' vol. iii. p. 422.

⁴ J. L. Wilson, 'W. Afr.,' p. 189.

In South-East Africa, also, a comparatively high barbaric culture, which we especially associate with the old descriptions of the kingdom of Monomotapa, seems to have fallen away, not counting the remarkable ruins of buildings of hewn stone fitted without mortar which indicate the intrusion of more civilized foreigners into the gold region !¹ In North America, Father Charlevoix remarks of the Iroquois of the last century, that in old times they used to build their cabins better than other nations, and better than they do themselves now ; they carved rude figures in relief on them ; but since in various expeditions almost all their villages have been burnt, they have not taken the trouble to restore them in their old condition.² The degradation of the Cheyenne Indians is matter of history. Persecuted by their enemies the Sioux, and dislodged at last even from their fortified village, the heart of the tribe was broken. Their numbers were thinned, they no longer dared to establish themselves in a permanent abode, they gave up the cultivation of the soil, and became a tribe of wandering hunters, with horses for their only valuable possession, which every year they bartered for a supply of corn, beans, pumpkins, and European merchandise, and then returned into the heart of the prairies.³ When in the Rocky Mountains, Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle came upon an outlying fragment of the Shushwap race, without horses or dogs, sheltering themselves under rude temporary slants of bark or matting, falling year by year into lower misery, and rapidly dying out ; this is another example of the degeneration which no doubt has lowered or destroyed many a savage people.⁴ There are tribes who are the very outcasts of savage life. There is reason to look upon the miserable Digger Indians of North America and the Bushmen of South Africa as

¹ Waitz, 'Anthropologie,' vol. ii. p. 359, see 91 ; Du Chaillu, 'Ashangoland,' p. 116 ; T. H. Bent, 'Ruined Cities of Mashonaland.'

² Charlevoix, 'Nouvelle France,' vol. vi. p. 51.

³ Irving, 'Astoria,' vol. ii. ch. v.

⁴ Milton and Cheadle, 'North West Passage by Land,' p. 241 ; Waitz, vol. iii. pp. 74-6.

the persecuted remnants of tribes who have seen happier days.¹ The traditions of the lower races of their ancestors' better life may sometimes be real recollections of a not far distant past. The Algonquin Indians look back to old days as to a golden age when life was better than now, when they had better laws and leaders, and manners less rude.² And indeed, knowing what we do of their history, we may admit that they have cause to remember in misery happiness gone by. Well, too, might the rude Kamchadal declare that the world is growing worse and worse, that men are becoming fewer and viler, and food scarcer, for the hunter, and the bear, and the reindeer are hurrying away from here to the happier life in the regions below.³ It would be a valuable contribution to the study of civilization to have the action of decline and fall investigated on a wider and more exact basis of evidence than has yet been attempted. The cases here stated are probably but part of a long series which might be brought forward to prove degeneration in culture to have been, by no means indeed the primary cause of the existence of barbarism and savagery in the world, but a secondary action largely and deeply affecting the general development of civilization. It may perhaps give no unfair idea to compare degeneration of culture, both in its kind of operation and in its immense extent, to denudation in the geological history of the earth.

In judging of the relations between savage and civilized life, something may be learnt by glancing over the divisions of the human race. For this end the classification by families of languages may be conveniently used, if checked by the evidence of bodily characteristics. No doubt speech by itself is an insufficient guide in tracing national descent, as witness the extreme cases of Jews in England, and three-parts negro races in the West Indies, nevertheless speaking

¹ 'Early History of Mankind,' p. 187.

² Schoolcraft, 'Algon Res.,' vol. i. p. 50.

³ Steller, 'Kamtschatka,' p. 272.

English as their mother-tongue. Still, under ordinary circumstances, connexion of speech does indicate more or less connexion of ancestral race. As a guide in tracing the history of civilization, language gives still better evidence, for common language to a great extent involves common culture. The race dominant enough to maintain or impose its language, usually more or less maintains or imposes its civilization also. Thus the common descent of the languages of Hindus, Greeks, and Teutons is no doubt due in great measure to common ancestry, but is still more closely bound up with a common social and intellectual history, with what Professor Max Müller well calls their 'spiritual relationship.' The wonderful permanence of language often enables us to detect among remotely ancient and distant tribes the traces of connected civilization. How, on such grounds, do savage and civilized tribes appear to stand related, within the various groups of mankind connected historically by the possession of kindred languages?

The Semitic family, which represents one of the oldest known civilizations of the world, includes Arabs, Jews, Phœnicians, Syrians, &c., and has an earlier as well as a later connexion in North Africa. This family takes in some rude tribes, but none which would be classed as savages. The Aryan family has existed in Asia and Europe certainly for many thousand years, and there are well-known and well-marked traces of its early barbaric condition, which has perhaps survived with least change among secluded tribes in the valleys of the Hindu Kush and Himalaya. There seems, again, no known case of any full Aryan tribe having become savage. The Gypsies and other outcasts are, no doubt, partly Aryan in blood, but their degraded condition is not savagery. In India there are tribes Aryan by language, but whose physique is rather of indigenous type, and whose ancestry is mainly from indigenous stocks with more or less mixture of the dominant Hindu. Some tribes coming under this category, as among the Bhils and Kulis of the

Bombay Presidency, speak dialects which are Hindi in vocabulary at least, whether or not in grammatical structure, and yet the people themselves are lower in culture than some Hinduized nations who have retained their original Dravidian speech, the Tamils for instance. But these all appear to stand at higher stages of civilization than any wild forest tribes of the peninsula who can be reckoned as nearly savages ; all such are non-Aryan both in blood and speech.¹ In Ceylon, however, we have the remarkable phenomenon of men leading a savage life while speaking an Aryan dialect. This is the wild part of the race of Veddas or 'hunters,' of whom a remnant still inhabit the forest land. These people are dark-skinned and flat-nosed, slight of frame, and very small of skull, and five feet is an average man's height. They are a shy, harmless, simple people, living principally by hunting ; they lime birds, take fish by poisoning the water, and are skilful in getting wild honey ; they have bows with iron-pointed arrows, which, with their hunting-dogs, are their most valuable possessions. They dwell in caves or bark huts, and their very word for a house is Singhalese for a hollow tree (*rukula*) ; a patch of bark was formerly their dress, but now a bit of linen hangs to their waist-cords ; their planting of patches of ground is said to be recent. They count on their fingers, and produce fire with the simplest kind of fire-drill twirled by hand. They are most truthful and honest. Their monogamy and conjugal fidelity contrast strongly with the opposite habits of the more civilized Singhalese. A remarkable Vedda marriage custom sanctioned a man's taking his younger (not elder) sister as his wife; sister-marriage existing among the Singhalese, but being confined to the royal family. Mistaken statements have been made as to the Veddas having no religion, no personal names, no language. Their religion in fact, corresponds with the animism of the ruder tribes of India ; some of their names are remarkable as being Hindu

¹ See G. Campbell, 'Ethnology of India,' in Journ. As. Soc. Bengal, 1866 part ii.

but not in use among the modern Singhalese; their language is a Singhalese dialect. There is no doubt attaching to the usual opinion that the Veddas are in the main descended from the 'yakkos' or demons; i.e. from the indigenous tribes of the island. Legend and language concur to make probable an admixture of Aryan blood accompanying the adoption of Aryan speech, but the evidence of bodily characteristics shows the Vedda race to be principally of indigenous pre-Aryan type.¹

The Tatar family of Northern Asia and Europe (Turanian, if the word be used in a restricted sense) displays evidence of quite a different kind. This wide-lying group of tribes and nations has members nearly or quite touching the savage level in ancient and even modern times, such as Ostyaks, Tunguz, Samoyeds, Lapps, while more or less high ranges of culture are represented by Mongols, Turks, and Hungarians. Here, however, it is unquestionable that the rude tribes represent the earlier condition of the Tatar race at large, from which its more mixed and civilized peoples, mostly by adopting the foreign culture of Buddhist, Moslem, and Christian nations, and partly by internal development, are well known to have risen. The ethnology of South-Eastern Asia is somewhat obscure; but if we may classify under one heading the native races of Siam, Burma, &c., the wilder tribes may be considered as representing earlier conditions, for the higher culture of this region is obviously foreign, especially of Buddhist origin. The Malay race is also remarkable for the range of civilization represented by tribes classed as belonging to it. If the wild tribes of the Malayan peninsula and Borneo be compared with the semi-civilized nations of Java and Sumatra, it appears that part of the race survives to represent an early

¹ J. Bailey, 'Veddahs,' in Tr. Eth. Soc., vol. ii. p. 278; see vol. iii. p. 70; Knox, 'Historical Relation of Ceylon,' London, 1681, part iii. chap. i. See A. Thomson, 'Osteology of the Veddas,' in Journ. Anthropol. Inst. 1889, vol. xix. p. 125; L. de Zoysa, 'Origin of Veddas,' in Journ. Ceylon Branch Royal Asiatic Soc., vol. vii.; B. F. Hartshorne in Fortnightly Rev., Mar. 1876. [Note to 3rd edition.]

savage state, while part is found in possession of a civilization which the first glance shows to have been mostly borrowed from Hindu and Moslem sources. Some forest tribes of the peninsula seem to be representatives of the Malay race at its lowest level of culture, how far original and how far degraded it is not easy to say. Among them the very rude Orang Sabimba, who have no agriculture and no boats, give a remarkable account of themselves, that they are descendants of shipwrecked Malays from the Bugis country, but were so harassed by pirates that they gave up civilization and cultivation, and vowed not to eat fowls, which betrayed them by their crowing. So they plant nothing, but eat wild fruit and vegetables, and all animals but the fowl. This, if at all founded on fact, is an interesting case of degeneration. But savages usually invent myths to account for peculiar habits, as where, in the same district, the Biduanda Kallang account for their not cultivating the ground by the story that their ancestors vowed not to make plantations. Another rude people of the Malay peninsula are the Jakuns, a simple, kindly race, among whom some trace their pedigree to a pair of white monkeys, while others declare that they are descendants of white men; and indeed there is some ground for supposing these latter to be really of mixed race, for they use a few Portuguese words, and a report exists of some refugees having settled up the country.¹ The Melanesians, Papuans, and Australians represent grades of savagery spread each over its own vast area in a comparatively homogeneous way. Lastly, the relations of savagery to higher conditions are remarkable, but obscure, on the American continents. There are several great linguistic families whose members were discovered in a savage state throughout; such are the Esquimaux, Algonquin, and Guarani groups. On the other hand there were three apparently unconnected districts of semi-civilization reaching a high barbaric level, viz., in Mexico and Central America, Bogota, and Peru. Between these higher and

¹ Journ. Ind. Archip., vol. i. pp. 295-9; vol. ii. p. 237.

lower conditions were races at the level of the Natchez of Louisiana and the Apalaches of Florida. Linguistic connexion is not unknown between the more advanced peoples and the lower races around them.¹ But definite evidence showing the higher culture to have arisen from the lower, or the lower to have fallen from the higher, is scarcely forthcoming. Both operations may in degree have happened.

It is apparent, from such general inspection of this ethnological problem, that it would repay a far closer study than it has as yet received. As the evidence stands at present, it appears that when in any race some branches much excel the rest in culture, this more often happens by elevation than by subsidence. But this elevation is much more apt to be produced by foreign than by native action. Civilization is a plant much oftener propagated than developed. As regards the lower races, this accords with the results of European intercourse with savage tribes during the last three or four centuries; so far as these tribes have survived the process, they have assimilated more or less of European Culture and risen towards the European level, as in Polynesia, South Africa, South America. Another important point becomes manifest from this ethnological survey. The fact, that during so many thousand years of known existence, neither the Aryan nor the Semitic race appears to have thrown off any direct savage offshoot, tells, with some force, against the probability of degradation to the savage level ever happening from high-level civilization.

With regard to the opinions of older writers on early civilization, whether progressionists or degenerationists, it must be borne in mind that the evidence at their disposal

¹ For the connexion between the Aztec language and the Sonoran family extending N. W. toward the sources of the Missouri, see Buschmann, 'Spuren der Aztekischen Sprache im Nördlichen Mexico,' &c., in *Abh. der Akad. der Wissensch.* 1854; Berlin, 1859; also *Tr. Eth. Soc.*, vol. ii. p. 130. For the connexion between the Natchez and Maya languages see Daniel G. Brinton, in 'American Historical Magazine,' 1867, vol. i. p. 16; and 'Myths of the New World,' p. 28.

fell far short of even the miserably imperfect data now accessible. Criticizing an 18th century ethnologist is like criticizing an 18th century geologist. The older writer may have been far abler than his modern critic, but he had not the same materials. Especially he wanted the guidance of Prehistoric Archæology, a department of research only established on a scientific footing within the last few years. It is essential to gain a clear view of the bearing of this newer knowledge on the old problem.

Chronology, though regarding as more or less fictitious the immense dynastic schemes of the Egyptians, Hindus, and Chinese, passing as they do into mere ciphering-book sums with years for units, nevertheless admits that existing monuments carry back the traces of comparatively high civilization to a distance of above five thousand years. By piecing together Eastern and Western documentary evidence it seems that the great religious divisions of the Aryan race, to which modern Brahmanism, Zarathustrism, and Buddhism are due, belong to a period of remotely ancient history. Even if we cannot hold, with Professor Max Müller, in the preface to his translation of the 'Rig Veda,' that this collection of Aryan hymns 'will take and maintain for ever its position as the most ancient of books in the library of mankind,' and if we do not admit the stringency of his reckonings of its date in centuries B.C., yet we must grant that he shows cause to refer its composition to a very ancient period, where it then proves that a comparatively high barbaric culture already existed. The linguistic argument for the remotely ancient common origin of the Indo-European nations, in a degree as to their bodily descent, and in a greater degree as to their civilization, tends toward the same result. So it is again with Egypt. The calculations of Egyptian dynasties in thousands of years, however disputable in detail, are based on facts which at any rate authorize the reception of a long chronology. To go no further than the identification of two or three Egyptian names mentioned in Biblical and Classical

history, we gain a strong impression of remote antiquity. Such are the names of Shishank ; of the Psammitichos line, whose obelisks are to be seen in Rome ; of Tirhakah, King of Ethiopia, whose nurse's coffin is in the Florence Museum ; of the city of Rameses, plainly connected with that great Ramesside line which Egyptologists call the 19th Dynasty. Here, before classic culture had arisen, the culture of Egypt culminated, and behind this time lies the somewhat less advanced age of the Pyramid kings, and behind this again the indefinite lapse of ages which such a civilization required for its production. Again, though no part of the Old Testament can satisfactorily prove for itself an antiquity of composition approaching that of the earliest Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions, yet all critics must admit that the older of the historical books give on the one hand contemporary documents showing considerable culture in the Semitic world at a date which in comparison with classic history is ancient ; while on the other hand they afford evidence-by way of chronicle, carrying back ages farther the record of a somewhat advanced barbaric civilization. Now if the development-theory is to account for phenomena such as these, its chronological demand must be no small one, and the more so when it is admitted that in the lower ranges of culture progress would be extremely slow in comparison with that which experience shows among nations already far advanced. On these conditions of the first appearance of the middle civilization being thrown back to distant antiquity, and of slow development being required to perform its heavy task in ages still more remote, Prehistoric Archæology cheerfully takes up the problem. And, indeed, far from being dismayed by the vastness of the period required on the narrowest computation, the prehistoric archæologist shows even too much disposition to revel in calculations of thousands of years, as a financier does in reckonings of thousands of pounds, in a liberal and maybe somewhat reckless way.

Prehistoric Archæology is fully alive to facts which may

bear on degeneration in culture. Such are the colossal human figures of hewn stone in Easter Island, which may possibly have been shaped by the ancestors of the existing islanders, whose present resources, however, are quite unequal to the execution of such gigantic works.¹ A much more important case is that of the former inhabitants of the Mississippi Valley. In districts where the native tribes known in modern times rank as savages, there formerly dwelt a race whom ethnologists call the Mound-Builders, from the amazing extent of their mounds and enclosures, of which there is a single group occupying an area of four square miles. The regularity of the squares and circles and the repetition of enclosures similar in dimensions, raise interesting questions as to the methods by which these were planned out. To have constructed such works the Mound-Builders must have been a numerous population, mainly subsisting by agriculture, and indeed vestiges of their ancient tillage are still to be found. They did not however in industrial arts approach the level of Mexico. For instance, their use of native copper, hammered into shape for cutting instruments, is similar to that of some of the savage tribes farther north. On the whole, judging by their earthworks, fields, pottery, stone implements and other remains, they seem to have belonged to those high savage or barbaric tribes of the Southern States, of whom the Creeks and Cherokees, as described by Bartram, may be taken as typical.² If any of the wild roving hunting tribes now found living near the huge earthworks of the Mound-Builders are the descendants of this somewhat advanced race, then a very considerable degradation has taken place. The question is an open one. The explanation of the traces of tillage may perhaps in this case be like

¹ J. H. Lamprey, in *Trans. of Prehistoric Congress*, Norwich, 1868, p. 60; J. Linton Palmer, in *Journ. Eth. Soc.*, vol. i. 1869.

² Squier and Davis, '*Mon. of Mississippi Valley*,' &c., in *Smithsonian Contr.*, vol. i. 1848; Lubbock, '*Prehistoric Times*,' chap. vii.; Waitz, '*Anthropologie*,' vol. iii. p. 72; Bartram, '*Creek and Cherokee Ind.*,' in *Tr. Amer. Ethnol. Soc.*, vol. iii. part i. See Petrie, '*Inductive Metrology*,' 1877, p. 122. [Note to 3rd ed.]

that of the remains of old cultivation-terraces in Borneo, the work of Chinese colonists whose descendants have mostly been merged in the mass of the population and follow the native habits.¹ On the other hand, the evidence of locality may be misleading as to race. A traveller in Greenland, coming on the ruined stone buildings at Kakortok, would not argue justly that the Esquimaux are degenerate descendants of ancestors capable of such architecture, for in fact these are the remains of a church and baptistery built by the ancient Scandinavian settlers.² On the whole it is remarkable how little of colourable evidence of degeneration has been disclosed by archæology. Its negative evidence tells strongly the other way. As an instance may be quoted Sir John Lubbock's argument against the idea that tribes now ignorant of metallurgy and pottery formerly possessed but have since lost these arts. 'We may also assert, on a general proposition, that no weapons or instruments of metal have ever been found in any country inhabited by savages wholly ignorant of metallurgy. A still stronger case is afforded by pottery. Pottery is not easily destroyed; when known at all it is always abundant, and it possesses two qualities, namely, those of being easy to break and yet difficult to destroy, which render it very valuable in an archæological point of view. Moreover, it is in most cases associated with burials. It is, therefore, a very significant fact, that no fragment of pottery has ever been found in Australia, New Zealand, or in the Polynesian Islands.'³ How different a state of things the popular degeneration-theory would lead us to expect is pointedly suggested by Sir Charles Lyell's sarcastic sentences in his 'Antiquity of Man.' Had the original stock of mankind, he argues, been really endowed with superior intellectual powers and inspired knowledge, while possessing the same improvable nature as their posterity, how extreme a point of advancement would

¹ St. John, 'Life in Forests of Far East,' vol. ii. p. 327.

² Rafn, 'Americas Arctiske Landes Gamle Geographic,' pl. vii., viii.

³ Lubbock (Lord Avebury), in 'Report of British Association, 1867,' p. 121.

they have reached. ' Instead of the rudest pottery or flint tools, so irregular in form as to cause the unpractised eye to doubt whether they afford unmistakable evidence of design, we should now be finding sculptured forms surpassing in beauty the masterpieces of Phidias or Praxiteles ; lines of buried railways or electric telegraphs from which the best engineers of our day might gain invaluable hints ; astronomical instruments and microscopes of more advanced construction than any known in Europe, and other indications of perfection in the arts and sciences, such as the nineteenth century has not yet witnessed. Still farther would the triumphs of inventive genius be found to have been carried, when the later deposits, now assigned to the ages of bronze and iron, were formed. Vainly should we be straining our imaginations to guess the possible uses and meaning of such relics—machines, perhaps, for navigating the air or exploring the depths of the ocean, or for calculating arithmetical problems beyond the wants or even the conceptions of living mathematicians.'¹

- The master-key to the investigation of man's primæval condition is held by Prehistoric Archæology. This key is the evidence of the Stone Age, proving that men of remotely ancient ages were in the savage state. Ever since the long-delayed recognition of M. Boucher de Perthes' discoveries (1841 and onward) of the flint implements in the Drift gravels of the Somme Valley, evidence has been accumulating over a wide European area to show that the ruder Stone Age, represented by implements of the Palæolithic or Drift type, prevailed among savage tribes of the Quaternary period, the contemporaries of the mammoth and the woolly rhinoceros, in ages for which Geology asserts an antiquity far more remote than History can avail to substantiate for the human race. Mr. John Frere had already written in 1797 respecting such flint instruments discovered at Hoxne in Suffolk. ' The situation in which these weapons were found may tempt us to refer them to a very remote period

¹ Lyell, ' Antiquity of Man,' chap. xix.

indeed, even beyond that of the present world.'¹ The vast lapse of time through which the history of London has represented the history of human civilization, is to my mind one of the most suggestive facts disclosed by archæology. There the antiquary, excavating but a few yards deep, may descend from the débris representing our modern life, to relics of the art and science of the Middle Ages, to signs of Norman, Saxon, Romano-British times, to traces of the higher Stone Age. And on his way from Temple Bar to the Great Northern Station he passes near the spot ('opposite to black Mary's near Grayes inn lane') where a Drift implement of black flint was found with the skeleton of an elephant by Mr. Conyers, about a century and a half ago, the relics side by side of the London mammoth and the London savage.² In the gravel-beds of Europe, the laterite of India, and other more superficial localities, where relics of the Palæolithic Age are found, what principally testifies to man's condition is the extreme rudeness of his stone implements, and the absence of even edge-grinding. The natural inference that this indicates a low savage state is confirmed in the caves of Central France. There a race of men, who have left indeed really artistic portraits of themselves and the reindeer and mammoths they lived among, seem, as may be judged from the remains of their weapons, implements, &c., to have led a life somewhat of Esquimaux type, but lower by the want of domesticated animals. The districts where implements of the rude primitive Drift type are found are limited in extent. It is to ages later in time and more advanced in development, that the Neolithic or Polished Stone Period belonged, when the manufacture of stone instruments was much improved, and grinding and polishing were generally introduced. During the long period of prevalence of this state of things, Man appears to have spread almost over the whole

¹ Frere, in 'Archæologia,' 1800.

² J. Evans, in 'Archæologia,' 1861; Lubbock, 'Prehistoric Times,' 2nd ed., p. 335.

habitable earth. The examination of district after district of the world has now all but established a universal rule that the Stone Age (bone or shell being the occasional substitutes for stone) underlies the Metal Age everywhere. Even the districts famed in history as seats of ancient civilization show, like other regions, their traces of a yet more archaic Stone Age. Asia Minor, Egypt, Palestine, India, China, furnish evidence from actual specimens, historical mentions, and survivals, which demonstrate the former prevalence of conditions of society which have their analogues among modern savage tribes.¹ The Duke of Argyll, in his 'Primeval Man,' while admitting the Drift implements as having been the ice hatchets and rude knives of low tribes of men inhabiting Europe toward the end of the Glacial Period, concludes thence 'that it would be about as safe to argue from these implements as to the condition of Man at that time in the countries of his Primeval Home, as it would be in our own day to argue from the habits and arts of the Eskimo as to the state of civilization in London or in Paris.'² The progress of Archæology for years past, however, has been continually cutting away the ground on which such an argument as this can stand, till now it is all but utterly driven off the field. Where now is the district of the earth that can be pointed to as the 'Primeval Home' of Man, and that does not show by rude stone implements buried in its soil the savage condition of its former inhabitants? There is scarcely a known province of the world of which we cannot say certainly, savages once dwelt here, and if in such a case an ethnologist asserts that these savages were the descendants or successors of a civilized nation, the burden of proof lies on him. Again, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age belong in great measure to history, but their relation to the Stone Age proves the soundness of the judgement of Lucretius, when, attaching experience of the present to memory and

¹ See 'Early History of Mankind,' 2nd ed. chap. viii.

² Argyll, 'Primeval Man,' p. 129.

inference from the past, he propounded what is now a tenet of archæology, the succession of the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages :

*'Arma antiqua manus ungues dentesque fuerunt,
Et lapides et item silvarum fragmina rami*

*Posterior ferri vis est ærisque reperta,
Et prior æris erat quam ferri cognitus usus.'*¹

Throughout the various topics of Prehistoric Archæology, the force and convergence of its testimony upon the development of culture are overpowering. The relics discovered in gravel-beds, caves, shell-mounds, terramares, lake-dwellings, earthworks, the results of an exploration of the superficial soil in many countries, the comparison of geological evidence, of historical documents, of modern savage life, corroborate and explain one another. The megalithic structures, menhirs, cromlechs, dolmens, and the like, only known to England, France, Algeria, as the work of races of the mysterious past, have been kept up as matters of modern construction and recognized purpose among the ruder indigenous tribes of India. The series of ancient lake-settlements which must represent so many centuries of successive population fringing the shores of the Swiss lakes, have their surviving representatives among the rude tribes of the East Indies, Africa, and South America. Outlying savages are still heaping up shell-mounds like those of far-past Scandinavian antiquity. The burial mounds still to be seen in civilized countries have served at once as museums of early culture and as proofs of its savage or barbaric type. It is enough, without entering farther here into subjects fully discussed in modern special works, to claim the general support given to the development-theory of culture by Prehistoric Archæology. It was with a true appreciation of the bearings of this science that one of its founders, the venerable Professor Sven Nilsson, declared in 1843 in the

¹ Lucret. *De Rerum Natura*, v. 1281.

Introduction to his 'Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia,' that we are 'unable properly to understand the significance of the antiquities of any individual country without at the same time clearly realizing the idea that they are the fragments of a progressive series of civilization, and that the human race has always been, and still is, steadily advancing in civilization.'¹

Enquiry into the origin and early development of the material arts, as judged of by comparing the various stages at which they are found existing, leads to a corresponding result. Not to take this argument up in its full range, a few typical details may serve to show its general character. Amongst the various stages of the arts, it is only a minority which show of themselves by mere inspection whether they are in the line of progress or of decline. Most such facts may be compared to an Indian's canoe, stem and stern alike, so that one cannot tell by looking at it which way it is set to go. But there are some which, like our own boats, distinctly point in the direction of their actual course. Such facts are pointers in the study of civilization, and in every branch of the enquiry should be sought out. A good example of these pointer-facts is recorded by Mr. Wallace. In Celebes, where the bamboo houses are apt to lean with the prevalent west wind, the natives have found out that if they fix some crooked timbers in the sides of the house, it will not fall. They choose such accordingly, the crookedest they can find, but they do not know the rationale of the contrivance, and have not hit on the idea that straight poles fixed slanting would have the same effect in making the structure rigid.² In fact, they have gone half-way toward inventing what builders call a 'strut,' but have stopped

¹ See Lyell, 'Antiquity of Man,' 3rd ed. 1863; Lubbock, 'Prehistoric Times,' 2nd ed. 1870; 'Trans. of Congress of Prehistoric Archæology' (Norwich, 1868); Stevens, 'Flint Chips, &c.,' 1870; Nilsson, 'Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia' (ed. by Lubbock, 1868); Falconer, 'Palæontological Memoirs, &c.'; Lartet and Christy, 'Reliquiæ Aquitanicæ' (ed. by T. R. Jones); Keller, 'Lake Dwellings' (Tr. and Ed. by J. E. Lee), &c., &c.

² Wallace, 'Indian Archipelago,' vol. i. p. 357.

short. Now the mere sight of such a house would show that the plan is not a remnant of higher architecture, but a half-made invention. This is a fact in the line of progress, but not of decline. I have mentioned elsewhere a number of similar cases; thus the adaptation of a cord to the fire-drill is obviously an improvement on the simpler instrument twirled by hand, and the use of the spindle for making thread is an improvement on the clumsier art of hand-twisting;¹ but to reverse this position, and suppose the hand-drill to have come into use by leaving off the use of the cord of the cord-drill, or that people who knew the use of the spindle left it off and painfully twisted their thread by hand, is absurd. Again, the appearance of an art in a particular locality where it is hard to account for it as borrowed from elsewhere, and especially if it concerns some special native product, is evidence of its being a native invention. Thus, what people can claim the invention of the hammock, or the still more admirable discovery of the extraction of the wholesome cassava from the poisonous manioc, but the natives of the South American and West Indian districts to which these things belong? As the isolated possession of an art goes to prove its invention where it is found, so the absence of an art goes to prove that it was never present. The onus probandi is on the other side; if anyone thinks that the East African's ancestors had the lamp and the potter's wheel, and that the North American Indians once possessed the art of making beer from their maize like the Mexicans, but that these arts have been lost, at any rate let him show cause for such an opinion. I need not, perhaps, go so far as a facetious ethnological friend of mine, who argues that the existence of savage tribes who do not kiss their women is a proof of primæval barbarism, for, he says, if they had ever known the practice they could not possibly have forgotten it. Lastly and principally, as experience shows us that arts of civilized life are developed through successive stages of improvement, we may assume that the

¹ 'Early History of Mankind,' pp. 192, 243, &c., &c.

early development of even savage arts came to pass in a similar way, and thus, finding various stages of an art among the lower races, we may arrange these stages in a series probably representing their actual sequence in history. If any art can be traced back among savage tribes to a rudimentary state in which its invention does not seem beyond their intellectual condition, and especially if it may be produced by imitating nature or following nature's direct suggestion, there is fair reason to suppose the very origin of the art to have been reached.

Professor Nilsson, looking at the remarkable similarity of the hunting and fishing instruments of the lower races of mankind, considers them to have been contrived instinctively by a sort of natural necessity. As an example he takes the bow and arrow.¹ The instance seems an unfortunate one, in the face of the fact that the supposed bow-and-arrow-making instinct fails among the natives of Tasmania, to whom it would have been very useful, nor have the Australians any bow of their own invention. Even within the Papuan region, the bow so prevalent in New Guinea is absent, or almost so, from New Caledonia. It seems to me that Dr. Klemm, in his dissertations on Implements and Weapons, and Colonel Lane Fox, in his lectures on Primitive Warfare, take a more instructive line in tracing the early development of arts, not to a blind instinct, but to a selection, imitation, and gradual adaptation and improvement of objects and operations which Nature, the instructor of primæval man, sets before him. Thus Klemm traces the stages by which progress appears to have been made from the rough stick to the finished spear or club, from the natural sharp-edged or rounded stone to the artistically fashioned celt, spear-head, or hammer.² Lane Fox traces connexion through the various types of weapons, pointing out how a form once arrived at is repeated in various sizes, like the spear-head and

¹ Nilsson, 'Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia,' p. 104.

² Klemm, 'Allg. Culturwissenschaft,' part ii., *Werkzeuge und Waffen*.

arrow-point ; how in rude conditions of the arts the same instrument serves different purposes, as where the Fuegians use their arrow-heads also for knives, and Kafirs carve with their assagais, till separate forms are adopted for special purposes ; and how in the history of the striking, cutting, and piercing instruments used by mankind, a continuity may be traced, which indicates a gradual progressive development from the rudest beginnings to the most advanced improvements of modern skill. To show how far the early development of warlike arts may have been due to man's imitative faculty, he points out the analogies in methods of warfare among animals and men, classifying as defensive appliances hides, solid plates, jointed plates, scales ; as offensive weapons, the piercing, striking, serrated, poisoned kinds, &c. ; and under the head of stratagems, flight, concealment, leaders, outposts, war-cries, and so forth.¹

The manufacture of stone implements is now almost perfectly understood by archæologists. The processes used by modern savages have been observed and imitated. Sir John Evans, for instance, by blows with a pebble, pressure with a piece of stag's horn, sawing with a flint-flake, boring with a stick and sand, and grinding on a stone surface, succeeds in reproducing all but the finest kinds of stone implements.² On thorough knowledge we are now able to refer in great measure the remarkable similarities of the stone scrapers, flake-knives, hatchets, spear- and arrow-heads, &c., as found in distant times and regions, to the similarity of natural models, of materials, and of requirements which belong to savage life. The history of the Stone Age is clearly seen to be one of development. Beginning with the natural sharp stone, the transition to the

¹ Lane Fox (Pitt-Rivers), 'Lectures on Primitive Warfare,' Journ. United Service Inst., 1867-9.

² Evans in 'Trans. of Congress of Prehistoric Archaeology' (Norwich, 1868), p. 191 ; Rau in 'Smithsonian Reports,' 1868 ; Sir E. Belcher in Tr. Eth. Soc., vol. i. p. 129.

rudest artificially shaped stone implement is imperceptibly gradual, and onward from this rude stage much independent progress in different directions is to be traced, till the manufacture at last arrives at admirable artistic perfection, by the time that the introduction of metal is superseding it. So with other implements and fabrics, of which the stages are known through their whole course of development from the merest nature to the fullest art. The club is traced from the rudest natural bludgeon up to the weapon of finished shape and carving. Pebbles held in the hand to hammer with, and cutting-instruments of stone shaped or left smooth at one end to be held in the hand, may be seen in museums, hinting that the important art of fixing instruments in handles was the result of invention, not of instinct. The stone hatchet, used as a weapon, passes into the battle-axe. The spear, a pointed stick or pole, has its point hardened in the fire, and a further improvement is to fix on a sharp point of horn, bone, or chipped stone. Stones are flung by hand, and then by the sling, a contrivance widely but not universally known among savage tribes. From first to last in the history of war the spear or lance is grasped as a thrusting weapon. Its use as a missile no doubt began as early, but it has hardly survived so far in civilization. Thus used, it is most often thrown by the unaided arm, but a sling for the purpose is known to various savage tribes. The short cord with an eye used in the New Hebrides, and called a 'becket' by Captain Cook, and a whip-like instrument noticed in New Zealand, are used for spear-throwing. But the more usual instrument is a wooden handle, a foot or two long. This spear-thrower is known across the high northern districts of North America, among some tribes of South America, and among the Australians. These latter, it has been asserted, could not have invented it in their present state of barbarism. But the remarkable feature of the matter is that the spear-thrower belongs especially to savagery, and not to civilization. Among the higher nations the nearest approach to it seems to have been the

classic amentum, a thong attached to the middle of the shaft of the javelin to throw it with. The highest people known to have used the spear-thrower proper were the nations of Mexico and Central America. Its existence among them is vouched for by representations in the mythological pictures, by its Mexican name 'atlatl,' and by a beautifully artistic specimen of the thing itself in the Christy Museum; but we do not hear of it as in practical use after the Spanish Conquest. In fact the history of the instrument seems in absolute opposition to the degradation-theory, representing as it does an invention belonging to the lower civilization, and scarcely able to survive beyond. Nearly the same may be said of the blow-tube, which as a serious weapon scarcely ranges above rude tribes of the East Indies and South America, though kept up in sport at higher levels. The Australian boomerang has been claimed as derived from some hypothetical high culture, whereas the transition-stages through which it is connected with the club are to be observed in its own country, while no civilized race possesses the weapon.

The use of spring traps of boughs, of switches to fillip small missiles with, and of the remarkable darts of the Pelew Islands, bent and made to fly by their own spring, indicate inventions which may have led to that of the bow, while the arrow is a miniature form of the javelin. The practice of poisoning arrows, after the manner of stings and serpents' fangs, is no civilized device, but a characteristic of lower life, which is generally discarded even at the barbaric stage. The art of narcotizing fish, remembered but not approved by high civilization, belongs to many savage tribes, who might easily discover it in any forest pool where a suitable plant had fallen in. The art of setting fences to catch fish at the ebb of the tide, so common among the lower races, is a simple device for assisting nature quite likely to occur to the savage, in whom sharp hunger is no mean ally of dull wit. Thus it is with other arts. Fire-making, cooking, pottery, the textile arts, are to be traced along lines of

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gradual improvement.¹ Music begins with the rattle and the drum, which in one way or another hold their places from end to end of civilization, while pipes and stringed instruments represent an advanced musical art which is still developing. So with architecture and agriculture. Complex, elaborate, and highly-reasoned as are the upper stages of these arts, it is to be remembered that their lower stages • begin with mere direct imitation of nature, copying the shelters which nature provides, and the propagation of plants which nature performs. Without enumerating to the same purpose the remaining industries of savage life, it may be said generally that their facts resist rather than require a theory of degradation from higher culture. They agree with, and often necessitate, the same view of development which we know by experience to account for the origin and progress of the arts among ourselves.

In the various branches of the problem which will henceforward occupy our attention, that of determining the relation of the mental condition of savages to that of civilized men, it is an excellent guide and safeguard to keep before our minds the theory of development in the material arts. Throughout all the manifestations of the human intellect, facts will be found to fall into their places on the same general lines of evolution. The notion of the intellectual state of savages as resulting from decay of previous high knowledge, seems to have as little evidence in its favour as that stone celts are the degenerate successors of Sheffield axes, or earthen grave-mounds degraded copies of Egyptian pyramids. The study of savage and civilized life alike avail us to trace in the early history of the human intellect, not gifts of transcendental wisdom, but rude shrewd sense taking up the facts of common life and shaping from them schemes of primitive philosophy. It will be seen again and again, by examining such topics as language, mythology, custom, religion, that savage opinion is in a more or less rudimentary state, while the civilized

¹ See details in 'Early History of Mankind,' chap. vii.-ix.

mind still bears vestiges, neither few nor slight, of a past condition from which savages represent the least, and civilized men the greatest advance. Throughout the whole vast range of the history of human thought and habit, while civilization has to contend not only with survival from lower levels, but also with degeneration within its own borders, it yet proves capable of overcoming both and taking its own course. History within its proper field, and ethnography over a wider range, combine to show that the institutions which can best hold their own in the world gradually supersede the less fit ones, and that this incessant conflict determines the general resultant course of culture. I will venture to set forth in mythic fashion how progress, aberration, and retrogression in the general course of culture contrast themselves in my own mind. We may fancy ourselves looking on Civilization, as in personal figure she traverses the world; we see her lingering or resting by the way, and often deviating into paths that bring her toiling back to where she had passed by long ago; but, direct or devious, her path lies forward, and if now and then she tries a few backward steps, her walk soon falls into a helpless stumbling. It is not according to her nature, her feet were not made to plant uncertain steps behind her, for both in her forward view and in her onward gait she is of truly human type.