

pestilence could have prevented the over-peopling of the world ages ago. Man, from the assistance of his superior intelligence, is not subject to extensive diminution of his numbers by the lower animals.

Again, man has a natural tendency toward civilization. Of the meaning of this term, we all have an intuitive idea, though writers are not agreed as to its exact definition. It is sufficient for our purpose if we define it as an active working principle, innate in man, and leading him to find and adopt that which promises to improve his condition. This progressive principle separates him radically from the brute creation, and prevents him from remaining entirely stationary. If the extreme age of the world be admitted, we should expect to find extensive remains of very early civilization. But this, as we shall mention further on, does not appear. Philologists claim that language is at first monosyllabic, then by development to reach a highly inflected state, and finally through phonetic decay and loss of inflection, to retrograde to simpler forms. The Greek language was highly inflected; the Sanscrit still more so; yet both these belong to historic times. All the phases therefore, which language assumes, do not require an extremely long period for their development.

The considerations we have thus far adduced go to show that the race is comparatively young compared with the vast length of geological time. They have little weight, however, if the arguments which are brought forward in opposition can be shown to contradict them. The other side of the question, therefore, now demands our attention.

Archæology, appealing to geology for a support, offers arguments in support of the claim for a great age to the race. But if this claim be admitted, civilizations must have flourished in extremely remote times, and have left many traces of their existence. But this is not so evident, a period of a few thousand years being sufficient to account for the age of all that

are known, and we may well doubt the alleged antiquity of a few relics that have been found here and there.

Thus, remains of human industry are occasionally found at considerable depths in alluvial strata. One naturalist has found such a relic in rocks of the Miocene epoch and confidently asserts that its age, and of course that of the race, is to be reckoned by millions of years. Now the presence of these may often be due to purely accidental causes. This is indeed known to be the case in some instances, and when true, proves little as to their antiquity. Yet even when geological causes have been the agency, the test is uncertain and unreliable. The operations of such causes, though, as a rule slow, are yet subject to many exceptions, and eighty feet, for instance, of superincumbent strata may as often indicate a moderate age for a relic as an immense one. Coins of the age of Edward IV of England have been found in the valley of the Dee of that country at a depth of ten feet, proving an antiquity of but little more than two centuries at the farthest. In other cases twenty centuries have been claimed for the age of a like deposit, thus showing, in the absence of positive data, how little we know of geological time.

Sketches of extinct or extirpated animals do not necessarily possess a high antiquity, but only show that animals once common in certain localities have, through the agency of man disappeared.

Some European writers speak much of the Ages of "Stone" and "Bronze", and assign them to determinate periods of time in the distant past. The same is said of the lake dwellings of Switzerland and the British Islands. These, which are now generally under water, consisted of scaffolds of wooden beams, supported by piles driven into the beds of the lakes. The lake dwellings of Ireland continued in some cases to be occupied within the historic era. As we know very little of northern Europe before the time of Caesar, it is unnecessary to go much