

## CHAPTER IX.

### *THE "FALL OF MAN" AND ETHNOLOGY.*

WE have seen that, closely connected with the main lines of investigation in archæology and anthropology, there were other researches throwing much light on the entire subject. In a previous chapter we saw especially that Lafitau and Jussieu were among the first to collect and compare facts bearing on the natural history of man, gathered by travellers in various parts of the earth, thus laying foundations for the science of comparative ethnology. It was soon seen that ethnology had most important bearings upon the question of the material, intellectual, moral, and religious evolution of the human race; in every civilized nation, therefore, appeared scholars who began to study the characteristics of various groups of men as ascertained from travellers, and to compare the results thus gained with each other and with those obtained by archæology.

Thus, more and more clear became the evidences that the tendency of the race has been upward from low beginnings. It was found that groups of men still existed possessing characteristics of those in the early periods of development to whom the drift and caves and shell-heaps and pile-dwellings bear witness; groups of men using many of the same implements and weapons, building their houses in the same way, seeking their food by the same means, enjoying the same amusements, and going through the same general stages of culture; some being in a condition corresponding to the earlier, some to the later, of those early periods.

From all sides thus came evidence that we have still upon the earth examples of all the main stages in the development of human civilization; that from the period when

man appears little above the brutes, and with little if any religion in any accepted sense of the word, these examples can be arranged in an ascending series leading to the highest planes which humanity has reached; that philosophic observers may among these examples study existing beliefs, usages, and institutions back through earlier and earlier forms, until, as a rule, the whole evolution can be easily divined if not fully seen. Moreover, the basis of the whole structure became more and more clear: the fact that "the lines of intelligence have always been what they are, and have always operated as they do now; that man has progressed from the simple to the complex, from the particular to the general."

As this evidence from ethnology became more and more strong, its significance to theology aroused attention, and naturally most determined efforts were made to break its force. On the Continent the two great champions of the Church in this field were De Maistre and De Bonald; but the two attempts which may be especially recalled as the most influential among English-speaking peoples were those of Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, and the Duke of Argyll.

First in the combat against these new deductions of science was Whately. He was a strong man, whose breadth of thought and liberality in practice deserve all honour; but these very qualities drew upon him the distrust of his orthodox brethren; and, while his writings were powerful in the first half of the present century to break down many bulwarks of unreason, he seems to have been constantly in fear of losing touch with the Church, and therefore to have promptly attacked some scientific reasonings, which, had he been a layman, not holding a brief for the Church, he would probably have studied with more care and less prejudice. He was not slow to see the deeper significance of archæology and ethnology in their relations to the theological conception of "the Fall," and he set the battle in array against them.

His contention was, to use his own words, that "no community ever did or ever can emerge unassisted by external helps from a state of utter barbarism into anything that can be called civilization"; and that, in short, all imperfectly

civilized, barbarous, and savage races are but fallen descendants of races more fully civilized. This view was urged with his usual ingenuity and vigour, but the facts proved too strong for him: they made it clear, first, that many races were without simple possessions, instruments, and arts which never, probably, could have been lost if once acquired—as, for example, pottery, the bow for shooting, various domesticated animals, spinning, the simplest principles of agriculture, household economy, and the like; and, secondly, it was shown as a simple matter of fact that various savage and barbarous tribes *had* raised themselves by a development of means which no one from outside could have taught them; as in the cultivation and improvement of various indigenous plants, such as the potato and Indian corn among the Indians of North America; in the domestication of various animals peculiar to their own regions, such as the llama among the Indians of South America; in the making of sundry fabrics out of materials and by processes not found among other nations, such as the bark cloth of the Polynesians; and in the development of weapons peculiar to sundry localities, but known in no others, such as the boomerang in Australia.

Most effective in bringing out the truth were such works as those of Sir John Lubbock and Tylor; and so conclusive were they that the arguments of Whately were given up as untenable by the other of the two great champions above referred to, and an attempt was made by him to form the diminishing number of thinking men supporting the old theological view on a new line of defence.

This second champion, the Duke of Argyll, was a man of wide knowledge and strong powers in debate, whose high moral sense was amply shown in his adhesion to the side of the American Union in the struggle against disunion and slavery, despite the overwhelming majority against him in the high aristocracy to which he belonged. As an honest man and close thinker, the duke was obliged to give up completely the theological view of the antiquity of man. The whole biblical chronology as held by the universal Church, "always, everywhere, and by all," he sacrificed, and gave all his powers in this field to support the theory of "the Fall." *Noblesse oblige*: the duke and his ancestors had

been for centuries the chief pillars of the Church of Scotland, and it was too much to expect that he could break away from a tenet which forms really its "chief cornerstone."

Acknowledging the insufficiency of Archbishop Whately's argument, the duke took the ground that the lower, barbarous, savage, brutal races were the remains of civilized races which, in the struggle for existence, had been pushed and driven off to remote and inclement parts of the earth, where the conditions necessary to a continuance in their early civilization were absent; that, therefore, the descendants of primeval, civilized men degenerated and sank in the scale of culture. To use his own words, the weaker races were "driven by the stronger to the woods and rocks," so that they became "mere outcasts of the human race."

In answer to this, while it was conceded, first, that there have been examples of weaker tribes sinking in the scale of culture after escaping from the stronger into regions unfavourable to civilization, and, secondly, that many powerful nations have declined and decayed, it was shown that the men in the most remote and unfavourable regions have not always been the lowest in the scale; that men have been frequently found "among the woods and rocks" in a higher state of civilization than on the fertile plains, such examples being cited as Mexico, Peru, and even Scotland; and that, while there were many examples of special and local decline, overwhelming masses of facts point to progress as a rule.

The improbability, not to say impossibility, of many of the conclusions arrived at by the duke appeared more and more strongly as more became known of the lower tribes of mankind. It was necessary on his theory to suppose many things which our knowledge of the human race absolutely forbids us to believe: for example, it was necessary to suppose that the Australians or New Zealanders, having once possessed so simple and convenient an art as that of the potter, had lost every trace of it; and that the same tribes, having once had so simple a means of saving labour as the spindle or small stick weighted at one end for spinning, had given it up and gone back to twisting threads with the

