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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING

OF THE

NINTH INTERNATIONAL

CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS

HELD IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER 5, 1892

BY

FREDERICK MAX MÜLLER, K.M.

PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS

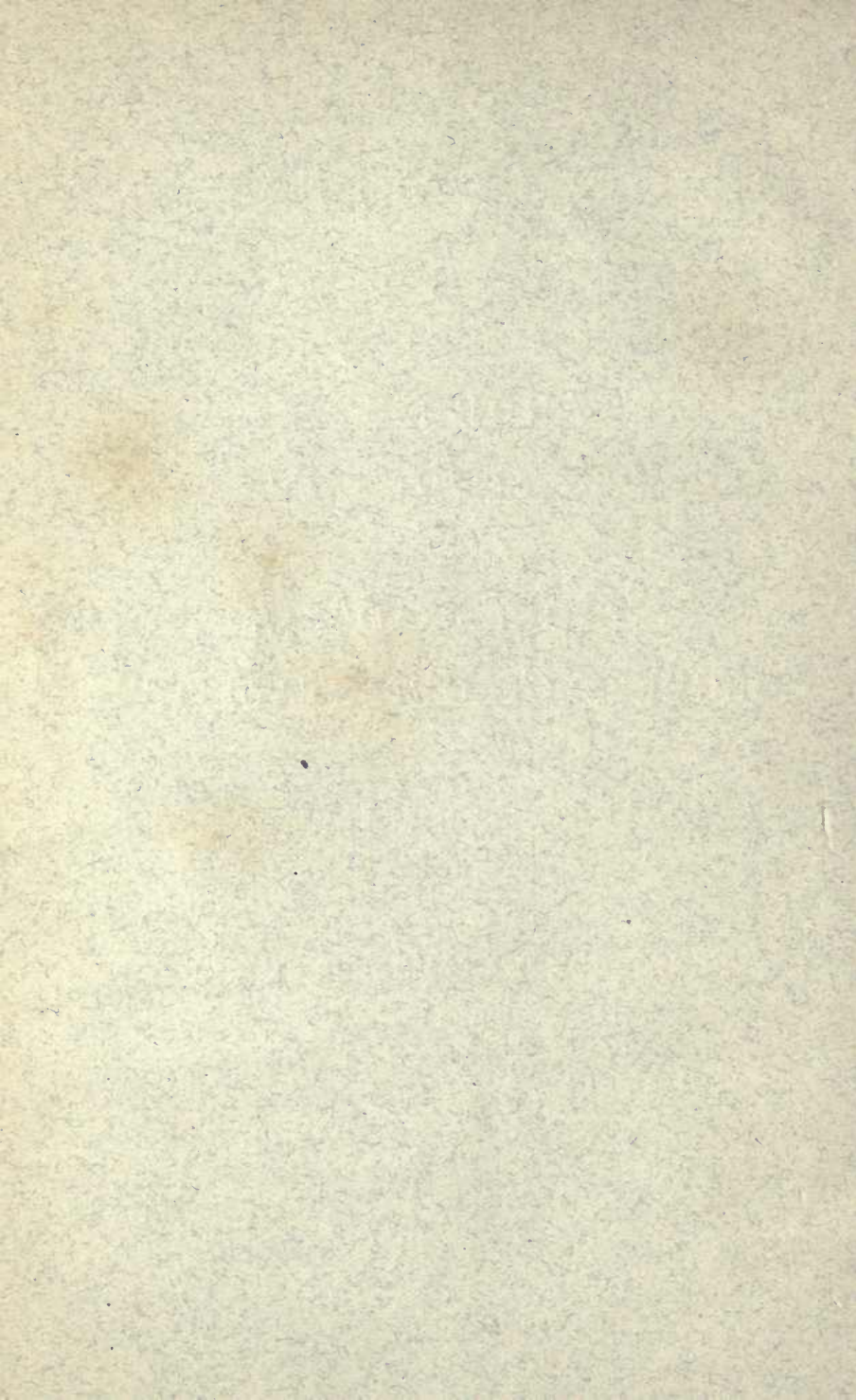
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UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS INTERNATIONAL



It is generally at the end, not at the beginning of scientific meetings that votes of thanks are proposed. But in our case, when we owe our very existence to the valuable help received from so many quarters, it seems but right that we should express our gratitude at the very outset.

Our first thanks are due to H. R. H. the Duke of York, for having granted us that sympathy and gracious support without which, I am afraid, our Congress would never have drawn its first breath, and our labours might indeed have been in vain.

We could not venture to disturb a father's grief and ask H. R. H. the Prince of Wales to grant us his royal protection. But His Royal Highness has testified the warm interest which he feels for our Congress, as for everything that is likely to draw the bonds of friendship between England and her great Indian Empire more closely together, by authorising H. R. H. the Duke of York to act at the present Congress, as the worthy successor of H. M. the King of Sweden, the Royal Patron of our last Congress. In granting us his royal protection the Duke of York has but proved himself the true son of the Prince of Wales, the worthy grandson of the Queen, and has shown once more to the

world, that nothing which concerns the highest interests of India can ever fail to evoke the warmest sympathies on the part of those to whom a Divine Providence has entrusted the Crown and the care of that glorious Empire.

We have next to express our thanks to the Secretary of State for India and to the illustrious Members of his Council; for having given us every encouragement in their power for successfully carrying out an undertaking which has excited a widespread interest in India, and has received powerful approval and support from some of the most respected leaders of public opinion in that country.

It has been said indeed that, in a free country like England, a scientific Congress should not look for royal favour and protection, or for help from Government. But it seems to me on the contrary that in a country like England, which is called a free country because its Government is truly representative of the will of the people, and because the Crown is so completely identified with all that is good and noble in the aspirations of science and art, the absence of royal patronage and governmental support would have conveyed a very false impression.

What would the people of India have thought if this meeting of scholars from all parts of Europe, who have devoted their lives to the improvement and enlargement of our knowledge of the East, after having been recognised and patronised by the

Sovereigns and their Ministers in every country of Europe in which they met before, had been ignored or slighted in England? And what would those scholars themselves have said who remember the kindness with which they were received in France, Italy, Germany, Holland, Austria, Russia, and last, not least, in Sweden, if in this, the greatest Oriental Empire which the world has ever known, the Government, and more particularly the Indian Government, had declined to give the same hospitable welcome to the Delegates of other countries, which their own Delegates have accepted year after year from foreign Governments?

By accepting the Honorary Presidency of our Congress, H. R. H. the Duke of York seems to me to have testified his conviction, and the conviction of the nation at large, that the East can never be foreign to the sympathy of the people of England, and that they consider a scholarlike study of the literature and the antiquities of their great Eastern Empire as deserving of every encouragement, and worthy of the most generous support. Need I add that the presence of the Queen's grandson is but another proof, if any proof were wanted, that Her Majesty the Queen, the first Empress of India, who has so often shown her warm and tender feelings for her Indian subjects, is with us in spirit, and wishes success to our labours.

We have next to express our gratitude to the Chancellor and Senate of the University of London,

to the President and Council of the Royal Society, to the Society of Antiquaries, to the Astronomical and Geographical Societies, for having placed some of their rooms at the disposal of our Congress. The authorities of the British Museum have granted us facilities which will be highly appreciated by the members of our Congress. The valuable Library and collections at the India Office have been thrown open to all our guests. They will find there in Sir George Birdwood a most valuable guide, as well as in Dr. Rost, whose services, I am glad to say, have been retained for the Library of the India Office.

Nor would it be right for me to open this Congress without giving expression to the warmest feelings of gratitude and admiration, which all who had the good fortune of being present at our last Congress in Sweden must ever entertain for our Royal Patron, His Majesty King Oscar of Sweden and Norway. He too is the ruler of a free country, and in him too we could recognise the true representative of the will and wish of his people. The brilliant success of our Congress at Stockholm and Christiania was due no doubt to the popular sympathy by which we were greeted everywhere, and the truly Scandinavian hospitality with which we were received in every town and village through which we passed, whether in Sweden or in Norway, and likewise to the active participation of the best intellects of the country in our labours. Yet it was an

exceptional good fortune that His Majesty King Oscar should personally have felt so enthusiastic an interest and so warm a love for all that is beautiful in the East. Not only did he show himself the most gracious host and most generous patron, but he made time to sit patiently through our lengthy and often tedious meetings. Who can ever forget his noble presence when he stepped in among us, every inch a king, a head and shoulders taller than all the rest; and who was not surprised on hearing him not only conversing in all the languages of his guests, but delivering eloquent addresses in Swedish, in English, in German, in French, and in Italian, nay, bidding us all farewell in a Latin speech full of vigour and kindness. I doubt whether at any former Congress so much solid work was done as at Stockholm and Christiana. There are idlers and mere camp-followers at every Congress; but, as President of the Aryan section, I can bear true testimony to the indefatigable industry of our members, who never allowed the festivities of the evening to interfere with the duties of the next morning. Our minutes and transactions are there to speak for themselves. We learn from a report published by an Indian scholar, Mr. Dhruva, that there were in all 106 papers read by 86 members, 48 being in French, 37 in German, 18 in English, 2 in Italian, and several by Orientals in their own languages. This proves once more, if any proof were wanted,

how popular Oriental studies are and always have been in France, how carefully they have been fostered by the French Government, and how much the progress of true scholarship owes to the brilliant genius, and even more, to the indefatigable industry of French Orientalists.

We are also deeply indebted to a former Patron, H. I. H. the Archduke Rainer, who has never ceased to take an active and powerful interest in the success of our meetings. You know what we owe to him and to his princely liberality in securing the unique treasures of Egyptian papyri which, in the hands of Professor Karabaček and his learned colleagues, have become a monumental landmark in the history of Oriental literature. Another of our Patrons, H. R. H. Prince Philip of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, might claim his place among us, not simply as a Royal Prince, but as a learned numismatist and a persevering and judicious collector of Eastern coins.

You will probably expect me to say a few words about some misunderstandings and personal jealousies which broke out after our last Congress. I should much prefer to say nothing about these truly childish squabbles, but I hope I shall be able to explain and justify our position without giving offence to anybody. At the end of our former Congresses there was generally an official invitation from some Government or University, asking us to hold our next Congress in one or other of the great

capitals of Europe. None had been received when we dispersed after our Scandinavian Congress, though several places had been privately suggested. As we had no permanent Committee, a resolution was passed by the Congress, according to the official Minutes, unanimously; or, according to the statements of certain Members, with one or two dissentient voices, that our former Presidents should be requested *pro hac vice* to form such a Committee for the sole purpose of receiving, and either accepting or rejecting, such invitations as might be sent to them. Nothing could have been more natural, more correct, more business-like in every respect. But M. de Rosny and some of his friends, professing to represent the Founders of our Congresses, and to speak in the name of the Oriental scholars of France,—though many of these French scholars have declined to accept M. de Rosny as their spokesman,—suddenly protested against this resolution as *ultra vires*. They appealed to a body of Statutes which had been drawn up in 1873 by M. de Rosny himself and those who called themselves the founders of these Oriental Congresses. These Statutes, it is now admitted, had never been discussed, and never been formally ratified by any subsequent Congress. And how can unratified Statutes claim any legal or binding character? But even supposing that these Statutes, unknown to most of the members of our Congress, and never appealed to before when they were

broken year after year by their very authors, could claim any legal force, it can hardly be disputed that every corporate body which has the right of drawing up Statutes has also the right of suspending or over-riding them by a majority of votes. Without such a right no Society could possibly exist and cope successfully with the sudden emergencies that are sure to arise. However, though the members of the Oriental Congress could not recognise the exclusive proprietorship in these international Congresses which M. de Rosny and his confederates claimed for themselves, they had no objection whatever to a friendly separation of elements which had often proved discordant at former Congresses. It seemed to many of us simply a case of what is called development by differentiation or growth by fission. There were at former Congresses a number of visitors, most welcome in many respects, but whose tastes and interests differed widely from those of the majority; and though we should never have parted with them of our own free will, many of us feel that we shall be better able to maintain the character of our Congresses, if each party follows its own way. There will be in future the so-called Statutory Congresses of M. de Rosny and his associates, while we shall try to preserve the old character and the continuity of the International Congress of Orientalists, and shall gladly welcome some of the old members who for a time have deserted our Congress.

What we chiefly want are *Oriental scholars*, that is to say, men who have proved themselves able to handle their own spade, and who have worked in the sweat of their brow in disinterring the treasures of Oriental literature. We do not wish to exclude mere lovers of Eastern literature, nor travellers, or dragomans, or even intelligent couriers; they are all welcome: but when we speak of Oriental scholars, we mean men who have shown that they are able at least to publish texts that have never been published before, and to translate texts which have never been translated before. Of such I am glad to say we have lost hardly any.

You will be glad to hear that we have received an invitation to hold our next, the tenth Congress, in Switzerland. The names of the Members of the Swiss Committee are the best guarantee that our meeting there will keep up the standard of our former meetings, and will hand down our tradition to those who will continue our work when we are gone. We have also received a most tempting invitation from His Majesty the King of Roumania, to hold our eleventh meeting at Bucharest. The present Congress will have to decide on both these proposals. We wish to part with our former colleagues without any reproach or recriminations. We say indeed with Abraham, 'Let there be no strife; separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, I will go to the right; and if thou

depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.'

Having now disposed of these preliminary matters, I shall try to discharge the duty that falls to the President, in opening this International Congress of Orientalists. No one can feel more deeply than myself how totally unequal I am to the task imposed upon me, how unworthy of the honourable post which you wished me to occupy. I know but too well that there are many Oriental Scholars who would have filled the office of President of this International Congress of Orientalists far more worthily than I can hope to do. If after long hesitation, as you know, I accepted at last your repeated invitation, it was because I saw in it but another proof of that exceeding kindness which I have experienced again and again during my long life in England, and which seems to me to spring chiefly from a wish to make me feel that you do no longer consider me as a stranger, but have accepted me as one of yourselves, as a comrade who has fought now for nearly fifty years in the ranks of the brave army of Oriental scholars in England. Never indeed could a General boast of a more brilliant staff; and if we value those honours most which are bestowed upon us by our peers, believe me that I value the honour which you have conferred on me in electing me your President, as the highest bestowed upon me during the whole of my long life in England, because it has been bestowed on me not only by my

peers, but by my betters, not only by my best friends, but by my best judges.

But though the Presidential chair is this year so inadequately filled, never, I believe, has our Congress been able to boast of so illustrious an array of Patrons, Vice-Presidents, and Presidents of Sections as on this occasion. We count among our Presidents of Sections one who, by common consent, may be called the most celebrated man of our country, Mr. Gladstone, celebrated alike as a statesman and as a scholar. We are proud of the presence of another statesman, Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff, who, as Governor of Madras, has rendered an illustrious name still more illustrious, and whose knowledge often surprises us by its accuracy even more than by its extent and variety. Nor would it be easy to find stronger representatives in their special departments of Oriental scholarship in this country than our Presidents, Sir Thomas Wade, Sir Raymond West, Professor Cowell, Professor Sayce, Professor Le Page Renouf, Professor Robertson Smith, Sir Arthur Gordon, and Dr. Tylor.

To each and all of them and to their distinguished Secretaries I now express, in the name of the Congress, our most respectful and cordial thanks.

I have thus far explained to you our right to exist; I shall now try to explain the reason of our existence, or the objects which we have in view in holding from time to time these Oriental Congresses in the principal towns of Europe.

When we wish to express something removed from us as far as it can be, we use the expression 'So far as the East is from the West.' Now what we who are assembled here are aiming at, what may be called our real *raison d'être*, is to bring the East, which seems so far from us, so distant from us, nay, often so strange and indifferent to many of us, as near as possible—near to our thoughts, near to our hearts. It seems strange indeed that there should ever have been a frontier line to separate the East from the West, nor is it easy to see at what time that line was first drawn, or whether there were any physical conditions which necessitated such a line of demarcation. The sun moves in unbroken continuity from East to West, there is no break in his triumphant progress. Why should there ever have been a break in the triumphant progress of the human race from East to West, and how could that break have been brought about? It is quite true that as long as we know anything that deserves the name of history, that break exists. The Mediterranean with the Black Sea, the Caspian with the Ural Mountains may be looked upon as the physical boundary that separates the East from the West. The whole history of the West seems so strongly determined by the Mediterranean, that Ewald was inclined to include all Aryan nations under the name of *Mediterranean*. But the Mediterranean ought to have formed not only the barrier, but likewise the connecting-link between

Asia and Europe. Without that high-road leading to all the emporia of the world, without the pure and refreshing breezes, without the infinite laughter of the Mediterranean, there would never have been an Athens, a Rome, there would never have been that spirited and never resting Europe, so different from the solid and slowly changing Asiatic continent. Northern Africa, however, Egypt, Palestine, Phenicia, and Arabia, though in close proximity to the Mediterranean, belong in their history to the East, quite as much as Babylon, Assyria, Media, Persia, and India. Even Asia Minor formed only a temporary bridge between East and West, which was drawn up again when it had served its purpose. We ourselves have grown up so entirely in the atmosphere of Greek thought, that we hardly feel surprised when we see nations, such as the Phenicians and Persians, looked upon by the Greeks as strangers and barbarians, though in ancient times the former were far more advanced in civilisation than the Greeks, and though the latter spoke a language closely allied to the language of Homer, and possessed a religion far more pure and elevated than that of the Homeric Greeks. The Romans were the heirs of the Greeks, and the whole of Europe succeeded afterwards to the intellectual inheritance of Rome and Greece. Nor can we disguise the fact that we ourselves have inherited from them something of that feeling of strangeness

between the West and the East, between the white and the dark man, between the Aryan and the Semite, which ought never to have arisen, and which is a disgrace to everybody who harbours it. No one would in these Darwinian days venture to doubt the homogeneousness of the human species, the brotherhood of the whole human race; but there remains the fact that, as in ancient so in modern times, members of that one human species, brothers of that one human family, look upon each other, not as brothers, but as strangers, if not as enemies, divided not only by language and religion, but also by what people call blood, whatever they may mean by that term.

I wish to point out that it constitutes one of the greatest achievements of Oriental scholarship to have proved by irrefragable evidence that the complete break between East and West did not exist from the beginning; that in prehistoric times language formed really a bond of union between the ancestors of many of the Eastern and Western nations, while more recent discoveries have proved that in historic times also language, which seemed to separate the great nations of antiquity, never separated the most important among them so completely as to make all intellectual commerce and exchange between them impossible. These two discoveries seem to me to form the highest glory of Oriental scholarship during the present century. Some of our greatest scholars, some of them here present, have contributed to these

discoveries ; and I thought therefore that they formed the most worthy subject to occupy our thoughts at the beginning of our International Congress of Orientalists. The Presidents of our Sections will probably dwell on the results obtained during the last year in their own more special departments. I was anxious therefore to show that Oriental scholarship has also made some substantial contributions to the general stock of human knowledge, that it has added in fact a completely new chapter to the history of the world, and has changed another chapter, formerly the oldest but also the most barren, into a living picture, full of human thought, of human fears, and human hopes.

I begin with the prehistoric world which has actually been brought to light for the first time by Oriental scholarship.

I confess I do not like the expression *prehistoric*. It is a vague term and almost withdraws itself from definition. If real history begins only with the events of which we possess contemporaneous witnesses, then no doubt the whole period of which we are now speaking and many later periods also, would have to be called prehistoric. But if history means, as it did originally, research, and knowledge of real events based on such research, then the events of which we are going to speak are as real and as truly historical as the battle of Waterloo. It is often supposed that students of Oriental languages and of the Science of Language deal with words only. We

have learnt by this time that there is no such thing as 'words only,' that every new word represented really a most momentous event in the development of our race. What people call 'mere words,' are in truth the monuments of the fiercest intellectual battles, triumphal arches of the grandest victories won by the intellect of man. When man had formed names for body and soul, for father and mother, and not till then, did the first act of human history begin. Not till there were names for right and wrong, for God and man, could there be anything worthy of the name of human society. Every new word was a discovery, and these early discoveries, if but properly understood, are more important to us than the greatest conquests of the Kings of Egypt and Babylon. Not one of our greatest explorers has unearthed with his spade or pickaxe more splendid palaces and temples, whether in Egypt or in Babylon, than the etymologist. Every word is the palace of a human thought; and in scientific etymology we possess the charm with which to call these ancient thoughts back to life. It is the study of words, it is the Science of Language, that has withdrawn the curtain which formerly concealed these ancient times and their intellectual struggles from the sight of historians. Even now, when scholars speak of languages and families of languages, they often forget that languages mean speakers of languages, and families of speech presuppose real families, or classes, or

powerful confederacies, which have struggled for their existence and held their ground against all enemies. Languages, as we read in the book of Daniel, are the same as nations that dwell on all the earth. If therefore Greeks and Romans, Celts, Germans, Slavs, Persians, and Indians, speaking different languages, and each forming a separate nationality, constitute, as long as we know them, a real historical fact, there is another fact equally real and historical, though we may refer it to a prehistoric period, namely, that there was a time when the ancestors of all these nations and languages formed one compact body, speaking one and the same language, a language so real, so truly historical, that without it there would never have been a real Greek, a real Latin language, never a Greek Republic, never a Roman Empire; there would have been no Sanskrit, no Vedas, no Avesta, no Plato, no Greek New Testament. We know with the same certainty that other nations and languages also, which in historical times stand before us so isolated as Phenician, Hebrew, Babylonian, and Arabic, presuppose a prehistoric, that is an antecedent powerful Semitic confederacy, held together by the bonds of a common language, possibly by the same laws and by a belief in the same gods. Unless the ancestors of these nations and languages had once lived and worked together, there would have been no common arsenal

from which the leading nations of Semitic history could have taken their armour and their swords, the armour and swords which they wielded in their intellectual struggles, and many of which we are still wielding ourselves in our wars of liberation from error, and our conquests of truth. These are stern, immovable facts, just as Mont Blanc is a stern, irremovable fact, though from a distance we must often be satisfied with seeing its gigantic outline only, not all its glaciers and all its crevasses. What I mean is that we must not attempt to discover too much of what happened thousands of years ago, or strain our sight to see what, from this distance in time, we cannot see.

When we are asked, for instance, in what exact part of the world these ancient consolidations took place, every true scholar, and every honest historian knows that such a question is almost idle, because it does not admit of a definite or positive answer. It is easy to fix on this or that indication in order to assign with the greatest confidence the original home of the Âryas to this or that place in Asia or Europe. The very North Pole has been pointed out by a learned and ingenious American scholar, as the most probable home of the whole of mankind. All true scholars, I believe, admit that we must be satisfied with the general statement that the consolidation of the Aryan speakers took place 'somewhere in Asia,' for

they know that this ' somewhere in Asia ' is not quite so vast and vague as it sounds, there being a number of countries which no scholar would ever dream of as possible homes of the Âryas at that early time, such as Siberia in the North, China in the East, India in the South, Arabia and Asia Minor in the West of the Asiatic continent.

Nothing has shaken the belief, for I do not call it more, that the oldest home of the Âryas was in the East. All theories in favour of other localities, of which we have heard so much of late, whether in favour of Scandinavia, Russia, or Germany, rest on evidence far more precarious than that which was collected by the founders of Comparative Philology. Only we must remember, what is so often forgotten, that when we say Âryas, we predicate nothing—we can predicate nothing—but language. We know, of course, that languages presuppose speakers; but when we say Âryas, we say nothing about skulls, or hair, or eyes, or blood, as little as when we say Christians or Mohammedans, English or Americans. All that has been said and written about the golden hair, the blue eyes, and the noble profile of the Âryas, is pure invention, unless we are prepared to say that Socrates, the wisest of the Greeks, was not an Ârya, but a Mongolian. We ought in fact, when we speak of Âryas, to shut our eyes most carefully against skulls, whether dolichocephalic or

brachycephalic, or mesocephalic, whether orthognathic, prognathic, or mesognathic. We are completely agnostic as to all that, and we gladly leave it to others to discover, if they can, whether the ancestors of the Aryan speakers rejoiced in a Neanderthal or any other kind of skull that has been discovered in Europe or Asia. Till people will learn this simple lesson, which has been inculcated for years by such high authorities as Horatio Hale, Powell, and Brinton, all discussions on the original home of the Âryas are so much waste of time and temper.

There is the same difference of opinion as to the original home of the Semites, but all Semitic scholars agree that it was 'somewhere in Asia.' The idea that the Semites proceeded from Armenia has hardly any defenders left, though it is founded on an ancient tradition preserved in Genesis. An eminent scholar who at the last moment was prevented by domestic affliction from attending our Congress, Professor Guidi¹, holds that the Semites came probably from the Lower Euphrates. Other scholars, particularly Dr. Sprenger, place the Semitic cradle in Arabia. Professor Nöldeke takes much the same view with regard to the home of the Semites, which I take with regard to the home of the Âryas. We cannot with certainty fix

¹ Della sede primitiva dei Popoli Semitici, Proceedings of the Accademia dei Lincei, 1878-79.

any particular spot, but that it was somewhere in Asia, no scholar would ever doubt.

It is well known also that some high authorities, Dr. Hommel, for instance, and Professor Schmidt, hold that the ancestors of the Semites and Âryas must for a time have lived in close proximity, which would be a new confirmation of the Asiatic origin of the Âryas. But we hardly want that additional support. Benfey's arguments in favour of a European origin of the Âryas were, no doubt, very ingenious. But, as his objections have now been answered one by one¹, the old arguments for an Asiatic home seem to me to have considerably gained in strength. I, at all events, can no longer join in the jubilant chorus that, like all good things, our noble ancestors, the Âryas, came from Germany. Dr. Schrader, who is often quoted as a decided supporter of a European origin of the Âryas, is far too conscientious a scholar to say more than that all he has written on the subject should be considered 'as purely tentative.' (Preface, p. vi.)

With regard to time, our difficulties are greater still, and to attempt to solve difficulties which cannot be solved, seems to me no better than the old attempt to square the circle. If people are satisfied with approximate estimates, such as we are accustomed to in geology, they may say that some of the Aryan languages such as Sanskrit in India, Zend in Media, must have

¹ Three Lectures on the Science of Language, pp. 60 seq.

been finished and used in metrical form about 2000 B.C. Greek followed soon after. And when it is said that these languages were finished 2000 B.C., that means simply that they had become independent varieties of that typical Aryan language which had itself reached a highly finished state long before it was broken up into these dialects. This typical language has been called the *Proto-Aryan* language. We are often asked why it should be impossible to calculate how many centuries it must have taken before that Proto-Aryan language could have become so differentiated and so widely divergent as Sanskrit is from Greek, or Latin from Gothic. If we argued geologically, we might say, no doubt, that it took a thousand years to produce so small a divergence as that between Italian and French, and that therefore many thousands of years would not suffice to account for such a divergence as that between Sanskrit and Greek. We might therefore boldly place the first divergence of the Aryan languages at 5000 B.C., and refer the united Aryan period to the time before 5000 B.C. That period again would require many thousands of years, if we are to account for all that had already become dead and purely formal in the Proto-Aryan language, before it began to break up into its six ethnic varieties, that is into *Celtic*, *Teutonic*, *Slavonic*, *Greek*, *Latin*, and *Indo-Iranic*. The whole grammatical framework of that Proto-Aryan language must have

been finished before that time, so that but little had to be added afterwards. Not only was there a common stock of roots, but all thematic suffixes for the formation of nouns, adjectives, and derivative words had been settled, the terminations of declension and conjugation had become fixed, the formation of feminines was recognised as well as the degrees of comparison, and there was a whole treasury of words, many of them already with secondary and tertiary meanings. All this must have been finished before there was a Sanskrit language different from Greek, or a Greek language different from Latin. These common Aryan words have often been used as reflecting the state of thought and civilisation previous to what I call the Aryan separation, previous to 5000 B.C., nowhere more completely than in Schrader's useful work, 'Prehistoric Antiquities.' The original elaboration of that wonderful work of art which we call language must have required even more time than its later differentiation. When I say that the elaboration of a whole system of grammatical forms must have taken more time than its later differentiation, what I mean is that many of the features which distinguish Sanskrit from Greek, and Greek from Latin, need not be considered at all as new creations, but should rather be looked upon as remnants of a great mass of dialectic variety which existed in the common Aryan speech, and

were retained some by Sanskrit, others by Greek. It has been clearly established, for instance, through the labours of Brugmann, Osthoff, Collitz, Fick, and others, that the Proto-Aryan language possessed three varieties of the short vowel *a*, which had been differentiated before the Aryan separation took place into *a*, *e*, *o*. In Sanskrit we have no short *e* and *o*, at least not in classical Sanskrit. But it must be remembered that in Sanskrit the short vowel *a* is never written after consonants, and that we know nothing of its peculiar pronunciation at different times, except, as Pânini says, that it differed from that of all the other vowels. That in certain cases it was in Sanskrit also pronounced like *e*, we know by the effect which that palatalised vowel has produced on a preceding *k*, by imparting to it the palatal character of *ch*. The fact that in Sanskrit the copula which corresponds to Latin *que*, and Greek $\tau\epsilon$ is *ch*, and not *ka*; shows that the vowel must at one time in Sanskrit also have been pronounced *e*, and not *a* or *o*, as it was in the interrogative pronoun *ka*.

If we find the verbal augment in Sanskrit and Zend and then again in Armenian and Greek, we may be quite certain that these four languages did not invent it independently, but that it existed as an optional element in Proto-Aryan times.

Even the Greek passive Aorist in $\theta\eta\nu$, which has often been pointed out as a piece of purely Greek

workmanship, has many analogies in other Aryan languages, as Curtius has shown in his excellent work on the Greek Verb.

If then we *must* follow the example of geology and fix chronological limits for the growth of the Proto-Aryan language, previous to the consolidation of the six national languages, 10,000 B.C. would by no means be too distant, as the probable limit of what I should call our historical knowledge of the existence of Aryan speakers somewhere in Asia.

And what applies to those Aryan speakers, applies with even greater force to the Semitic, because the earliest monuments of Semitic speech, differentiated as Babylonian, Phenician, Hebrew, and Arabic go back, as we are told, far beyond the earliest documents of Sanskrit or Greek. Here also we must admit a long period previous to the formation of the great national languages, because thus only can the fact be accounted for that on many points so modern a language as Arabic is more primitive than Hebrew, while in other grammatical formations Hebrew is more primitive than Arabic¹.

Whether it is possible that these two linguistic consolidations, the Aryan and Semitic, came originally from a common source, is a question which scholars do not like to ask, because they know that it does not admit of a scholarlike answer. No scholar would

¹ See Driver, Hebrew Tenses, p. 132.

deny the possibility of an original community between the two, during their radical period, and previous to the development of any grammatical forms. But the handling of this kind of linguistic protoplasm is not congenial to the student of language and must be left to other hands. Still, such attempts should not be discouraged altogether, and if they are carried out in the same spirit in which in the last number of the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*, Professor Erman has tried to prove a close relationship between Semitic and Egyptian, they deserve the highest credit. Another question also which carries us back still further into unknown antiquity, whether it is possible to account for the origin of languages or rather of human speech in general, is one which scholars eschew, because it is one to be handled by philosophers rather than by students of language. I must confess, the deeper we delve, the farther the solution of this problem seems to recede from our grasp; and we may here too learn the old lesson that our mind was not made to grasp beginnings. We know the beginnings of nothing in this world, and the problem of the origin of language, which is but another name for the origin of thought, evades our comprehension quite as much as the problem of the origin of our planet and of the life upon it, or the origin of space and time, whether without or within us. History can dig very deep, but, like the shafts of our mines, it is always arrested before it

has reached the very lowest stratum. Students of language, and particularly, students of Oriental languages, have solved the problem of the origin of species in language, and they had done so long before the days of Darwin; but, like Darwin, they have to accept certain original germs as given, and they do not venture to pierce into the deepest mysteries of actual creation or cosmic beginnings.

And yet, though accepting this limitation of their labours as the common fate of all human knowledge, Oriental scholars have not altogether laboured in vain. No history of the world can in future be written without its introductory chapter on the great consolidations of the ancient Aryan and Semitic speakers. That chapter may be called prehistoric, but the facts with which it deals are thoroughly historical, and I say once more, in the eyes of the student of language they are as real as the battle of Waterloo. They form the solid foundation of all later history. They determine the course of the principal nations of ancient history as the mountains determine the course of rivers. Try only to realize what is meant by the fact that there was a time, and there was a place, where the ancestors of the poets of the Veda and of the prophets of the Zend Avesta shook hands and conversed freely with the ancestors of Homer, nay, with our own linguistic ancestors, and you will see what a shifting of scenery,

what a real transformation-scene Oriental students have produced on the historical stage of the world. They have brought together the most valuable, and yet the least expensive Museum of antiquities, namely, the words which date from the time of an undivided Aryan and an undivided Semitic brotherhood; relics older than all Babylonian tablets or Egyptian papyri; relics of their common thoughts, their common religion, their common mythology, their common folk-lore, nay, as has lately been shown by Leist, Köhler, and others, relics of their common jurisprudence also.

Here too there has been much useless controversy. It is as clear as daylight that when we find a number of words which all Aryan languages share in common, these words and the ideas which they express, must have been known before the Proto-Aryan language was differentiated as Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, and all the rest. It has been possible to put together these fragmentary words into a kind of mosaic picture, giving us an idea of the degree of civilisation reached before the Aryan separation. To some students this picture or this idyll (*εἰδύλλιον*), seemed to disclose a much higher advance of civilisation than they expected in such early times. They therefore wrote rapturously of those early Âryas, who called themselves *ârya*, or noble, though originally this self-glorious name need not have

meant more than tillers of the soil. Others, on the contrary, still under the influence of Rousseau's school, claimed these Âryas as true representatives of the Noble Savage, with all the vices as well as the virtues of the Child of Nature. Such a controversy is simply barren. What the true scholar values are the linguistic materials brought together and critically sifted by the industry and ingenuity of men such as Bopp, Kuhn, Benfey, and last not least, Dr. Schrader, who have drawn this picture of ancient Aryan civilisation with almost Pre-raphaelite minuteness. Till some one has given us a definition of what is meant by Savage, it does not matter whether we call these undivided Âryas savages or sages. The only important point in the eyes of a scholar is that we should know the words, and therefore the thoughts, which the Âryas shared in common before they broke up from their old common Aryan home.

At the present moment, when the whole world is preparing for the celebration of the discovery of America, or what is called the New World, let us not forget that the discoverers of that Old, that Prehistoric World of which I have been speaking, deserve our gratitude, as much as Columbus and his companions. The discoveries of Sir William Jones, Schlegel, Humboldt, and of my own masters and fellow-workers Bopp, Pott, Burnouf, Benfey, Kuhn

and Curtius, will for ever remain a landmark in the studies devoted to the history, that is, the knowledge of our race, and, in the end, the knowledge of ourselves. If others have followed in their footsteps, and have proved that these bold discoverers have sometimes been on a wrong track, let them have full credit for what they have added, for what they have corrected, and what they have rejected—but a Moses who fights his way through the wilderness, though he dies before he enters on the full possession of the promised land, is greater than all the Joshuas that cross the Jordan and divide the land. Many travellers now find their way easily to Africa and back, but the first who toiled alone to discover the sources of the Nile, men such as Burton, Speke, and Livingstone, required often greater faith and greater pluck than those who actually discovered them. As long as I live, I shall protest against all attempts to belittle the true founders of the Science of Language. Their very mistakes often display more genius than the corrections of their Epigoni.

It may be said that this great discovery of a whole act in the drama of the world, the very existence of which was unknown to our forefathers, was due to the study of the Science of Language rather than to Oriental scholarship. But where would the Science of Language have been without the students of Sanskrit and Zend, of Hebrew and Arabic? At a

Congress of Orientalists we have a right to claim what is due to them, and I doubt whether anybody here present would deny that it is due in the first place to Oriental scholars, such as Sir W. Jones, Colebrooke, Schlegel, Bopp, Burnouf, Grimm, and Kuhn, if we now have a whole period added to the history of the world, if we now can prove that long before we know anything of Homeric Greece, of Vedic India, of Persia, Greece, Italy, and all the rest of Europe, there was a real historical community formed by the speakers of Aryan tongues, that they were closely held together by the bonds of a common speech and common thoughts. It is equally due to the industry and genius of Oriental scholars such as de Sacy, Gesenius, Ewald, and my friend the late Professor Wright, if it can no longer be doubted that the ancestors of the speakers of Babylonian and Assyrian, Syriac, Hebrew, Phœnician, and Arabic formed once one consolidated brotherhood of Semitic speech, and that, however different they are, when they appear for the first time in their national individuality on the stage of history, they could once understand their common words and common thoughts, like members of one and the same family. Surely this is an achievement on which Oriental scholarship has a right to take pride, when it is challenged to produce its title to the gratitude of the world at large.

If we now turn our attention to another field of

Oriental scholarship which has been fruitful of results of the greatest importance to the student of history and to the world at large, we shall be able to show, not indeed that Oriental scholars have created a whole period of history, as in the case of the Âryas and Semites, before their respective separation, but that they have inspired the oldest period in the history of the world with a new life. Instead of learning by heart the unmeaning names of kings and the dates of their battles, whether in Egypt, or Babylon, in Syria and Palestine, we have been enabled, chiefly through the marvellous discoveries of Oriental scholars, to watch their most secret thoughts, to comprehend their motives, to listen to their prayers, to read even their private and confidential letters. Think only what ancient Egypt was to us a hundred years ago! A Sphinx buried in a desert, with hardly any human features left. And now—not only do we read the hieroglyphic, the hieratic, and demotic inscriptions, not only do we know the right names of kings and queens 4000 or 5000 years B.C., but we know their gods, their worship; we know their laws and their poetry; we know their folk-lore and even their novels. Their prayers are full of those touches which make the whole world feel akin. Here is the true Isis, here is Human Nature, unveiled. The prayers of Babylon are more formal; still, how

much more living is the picture they give us of the humanity of Babylon and Nineveh, than all the palaces, temples, and halls. And as to India, think what India was to the scholars of the last century. A name and not much more. And now! Not only have the ancient inhabitants ceased to be mere idolaters or niggers, they have been recognised as our brothers in language and thought. The Veda has revealed to us the earliest phases in the history of natural religion, and has placed in our hands the only safe key to the secrets of Aryan mythology. Nay, I do not hesitate to say that there are rays of light in the Upanishads and in the ancient philosophy of the Vedânta which will throw new light even to-day on some of the problems nearest to our own hearts. And not only has each one of the ancient Oriental Kingdoms been reanimated and made to speak to us, like the gray, crumbling statue of Memnon, when touched by the rays of the dawn, but we have also gained a new insight into the mutual relations of the principal nations of antiquity. Formerly, when we had to read the history of the ancient world, every one of the great Kingdoms of the East seemed to stand by itself, isolated from all the rest, having its own past, unconnected with the past history of other countries.

China, for instance, was a world by itself. It had always been inhabited by a peculiar people,

different in thought, in language, and in writing even from its nearest neighbours.

Egypt, in the gray morning of antiquity, seemed to stand alone, like a pyramid in a desert, self-contained, proud, and without any interest in the outside world, entirely original in its language, its alphabet, its literature, its art, and its religion.

India, again, has always been a world by itself, either entirely unknown to the Northern nations, or surrounded in their eyes by a golden mist of fable and mystery.

The same applies more or less to the great Mesopotamian Kingdoms, to *Babylon* and *Nineveh*. They too have their own language, their own alphabet, their own religion, their own art. They seem to owe nothing to anybody else.

It is somewhat different with *Media* and *Persia*, but this is chiefly due to our knowing hardly anything of these countries before they appear in conflict with their neighbours, either as conquerors or as conquered on the ancient battle-fields of history.

In fact if we look at the old maps of the ancient world, we see them coloured with different and strongly contrasting colours, which admit of no shading, of no transition from one to the other. Every country seemed a world by itself, and, so far as we can judge from the earliest traditions which have reached us, each nation claimed even its own

independent creation, whether from their own gods, or from their own native soil. China knows nothing of what is going on in Babylon and Egypt, Egypt hardly knows the name of India, India looks upon all that is beyond the Himalayan snows as fabulous, while the Jews more than all the rest felt themselves a peculiar people, the chosen people of God.

Until lately, if it was asked whether there was any communication at all between the leading historical nations of the East, the answer was that no communication, no interchange of thought, no mutual influence was possible, because language placed a barrier between them which made communication, and more particularly free intellectual intercourse, entirely impossible.

If, therefore, it seemed that some of these ancient nations shared certain ideas, beliefs or customs in common, the answer always was that they could not have borrowed one from the other, because there was really no channel through which they could have communicated, or borrowed from each other by means of a rational and continuous converse. Thanks to the more recent researches of Oriental scholars, this is no longer so. One of the first and one of the strongest proofs that there was, in very ancient times, a very active intellectual intercourse between Aryan and Semitic nations is the Greek Alphabet. The Greeks never made any secret of their having

borrowed their letters from Phenician school-masters. They called their letters Phenician, as we call our numerical figures Arabic, while the Arabs called them Indian. The very name of *Alphabet* in Greek is the best proof that at the time when the Greeks were the pupils of Phenician writing-masters, the secondary names of the Semitic letters, Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, had already been accepted. Originally the Aleph was the picture of an eagle, Beth of another bird, Gimel of a vessel with a handle, Daleth of a stretched out hand. This intercourse between Phenicians and Greeks must have taken place previous to the beginning of any written literature in Greece, previous therefore to the seventh century at least. When we speak of Greeks and Phenicians in general, we must guard against thinking of whole nations, or of large numbers. The work of humanity in the past, more even than in the present, was carried on by the few, not by the many, by what Disraeli called 'the men of light and leading,' the so-called Path-makers of the ancient world. They represent unknown millions, standing behind them, as a Commander-in-chief represents a whole army that follows him. The important point is that in the alphabet we have before us a tangible document, attesting a real communication between these leaders of progress and civilisation in the East and in the West, a bridge between Phenicia and

Greece, between Semitic and Aryan people. The name of the letter *alpha* in the Greek alphabet is a more irresistible proof of Phenician influence than all the legends about Kadmos and Thebes, about a Phenician Herakles or a Phenician Aphrodite. And having discovered the still standing arches of that ancient bridge in the letters of the alphabet, we can now better understand other traces of Phenician imports, whether in the religion, the mythology, or the art of Greece.

But later discoveries have opened even wider vistas. It was one of the most brilliant achievements, due to the genius of the Vicomte de Rougé, to have shown that, though they discovered many things, the Phenicians did not discover the letters of the alphabet. Broken arches of the same bridge that led from Phenicia to Greece, have been laid bare, and they lead clearly from Phenicia to Egypt. It is well known that even the ancients hardly ever doubted that the alphabet was originally discovered in Egypt, and carried from thence by the Phenicians to Greece and Italy. Plato, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, and Gellius, all speak of Egypt as the cradle of the alphabet, and Tacitus (*Annals* xi. 14), who seems to have taken a special interest in this subject, is most explicit on that point. It was supposed for a time that the Egyptians simply took certain hieroglyphic signs, and made them stand for

their initial letters. This was called the akrological theory, but it is no longer tenable. The alphabet was never a discovery, in the usual sense of the word; it was like all the greatest discoveries, a natural growth. It arose, without any intentional effort, from the employment of what are called complementary hieroglyphics¹. Thus in hieroglyphic writing the wall with battlements expresses the syllable *Men*; but with the waved line written under it. This waved line is called the complement of the battlements, and is always to be understood after it, even if it is not expressed. In like manner, the *crux ansata* has for its complements the waved line and the sieve, and if they are not there, they have to be supplied. This *crux ansata* means life, and is pronounced *anch*. It was therefore an almost irresistible conclusion that led the ancient Egyptians to suppose that the battlement, when followed by the waved line stood, not for *Men*, but only for *m*, while the waved line stood for *n*; or that the *crux ansata*, seemed to represent the initial *A* only, while the *nch* were figured by the waved line and the sieve. In the end the result is the same; certain hieroglyphics were accepted as standing for their initial letters, but the process, as I have tried to explain it, is more natural, and therefore, from an historical point of view, more true.

¹ Hincks, Egyptian Alphabet, p. 7.

What the Vicomte de Rougé did was to select the most ancient forms of the Phœnician alphabet, as they are found on the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar (or better still, on the Stone of Mesha, which was not known in his time), and to show how near they came, not indeed to the most ancient hieroglyphics, but to certain hieratic cursive signs which have the same phonetic values as their corresponding Phœnician letters. This was a most brilliant discovery, and I still possess a very scarce paper which he sent me in 1859. He never published a full account of his discovery himself, but after his death his notes were published by his son in 1874.

I know quite well that some scholars have remained sceptical as to the Egyptian origin of the Phœnician letters. My friend Lepsius was never quite convinced. Attempts have been made to derive the Phœnician letters from a cuneiform source or from the Cypriote letters, but the result has hitherto been far from satisfactory. The Phœnician letters must have had ideographic antecedents. Where are we to look for them, if not in Egypt? What has always made me feel convinced that Rougé was right, is the fact that we have to deal with a series, and that 15 out of the 23 letters of this series are almost identical in Phœnician and in Egyptian. We are perfectly justified therefore in making a certain allowance for some modifications in the rest. These modifications

are certainly not greater than the modification which the Phenician letters underwent later in their travels over the whole civilised world. But there is another argument in Rougé's favour which has often been ignored, namely, the fact that the Egyptians, whenever they had to transcribe foreign words, have fixed in many cases on the identical letters which served as the prototypes of the Phenician alphabet. This fact, first pointed out by Dr. Hincks, is one of the many valuable services which that ingenious scholar has rendered to hieroglyphic studies; and the Vicomte de Rougé has been the first to acknowledge how much his own discovery owes to the labours of Dr. Hincks, particularly to his paper on the Egyptian alphabet published in the Transactions of the Irish Academy in 1847. All the facts concerning the history of the alphabet have been carefully put together in Lenormant's great work: 'Essai sur la Propagation de l'Alphabet Phénicien.' Here then we have a clear line of communication between Egypt, Phenicia, and Greece, which Oriental scholarship has laid bare before our eyes. To judge from the character of the hieratic letters as copied by the Phenicians, the copying must have taken place about the nineteenth century B.C.¹; according to others, even at an earlier date. It is well known that hiero-

¹ J. de Rougé, Mémoire sur l'Origine Egyptienne de l'Alphabet Phénicien, 1874, p. 108.

glyphic writing for monumental purposes goes back in Egypt to the Fourth, or even the Second Dynasty¹, and on these earliest inscriptions we not only find the hieroglyphic system of writing fully developed, but we actually see hieroglyphic pictures of paper² and books, of inkstands and pens. But here again the beginnings escape us, and the origin of writing, though we know the conditions under which it took place, withdraws itself from our sight, almost as much as the origin of language itself. The question has been asked whether, as the oldest cuneiform writing clearly betrays an ideographic origin, its first germs could be traced back to the ideographic alphabet of Egypt. This would make Egypt the school-master, or at least the older school-fellow of the Mesopotamian Kingdoms. But whatever the future may disclose, at present Oriental scholarship has no evidence with which to confirm such a hypothesis.

The same applies to another hypothesis which has been advocated with great ingenuity by one of the Members of our Congress, M. de Lacouperie. He thinks it possible to show that the oldest cuneiform letters which, as is generally admitted, had an ideographic beginning, like that of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, owed their first origin to China. It is now

¹ In the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford is a monument of the Second Dynasty.

² Rougé, l. c. p. 103.

generally admitted that the cuneiform alphabet used by the Semitic inhabitants of Babylonia and Assyria was invented by a non-Semitic race, called Sumerians and Accadians, but whether this race can be identified with a race dwelling originally in the North and East of Asia must, as far as I can judge, remain for the present an open question. There are scholars who place the original home of the Accadians on the Persian Gulf, though the evidence for this view also is very weak. We must not forget that ideographs, such as pictures of sun and moon, or of the super-incumbent sky, of mountains and plants, of the mouth and nose, of eyes and ears, must of necessity share certain features in common, in whatever country they are used for hieroglyphic purposes. The scholar has the same feeling with regard to these very general ideographic pictures which he has with regard to the very indefinite roots of language, which are supposed to be shared in common by the Semitic and Aryan families of speech. Both are too protoplasmic, too jellylike, too indefinite for scientific handling. Still no researches, if only carried on methodically, should be discouraged *a priori*, and we must always be willing to learn new lessons, however much they may shock our inherited opinions. It is not so very long ago that the best Semitic scholars stood aghast at the idea that the cuneiform letters were borrowed from a non-Semitic race, and that some of the cuneiform

inscriptions should contain specimens of a non-Semitic or Accadian language. We have got over this surprise, and though there are still some formidable sceptics, the fact seems now generally recognised that there was in very ancient times an intercourse between the Semitic and non-Semitic races of Asia, as there was between the Egyptians and the Phenicians, and between the Phenicians and Greeks, that is between the greatest people of antiquity, and that these non-Semitic people or Accadians were really the school-masters of the founders of the great Mesopotamian kingdoms. But though we must for the present consider any connection between Chinese and Babylonian writing as extremely doubtful, there can be no doubt as to the rapid advance of the cuneiform system of writing itself, from East to West. This wonderful invention, more mysterious even than the hieroglyphic alphabet, soon overflowed the frontiers of the Mesopotamian kingdoms, and found its way into Persia and Armenia, where it was used, though for the purpose of inscriptions only, by people speaking both Aryan and non-Aryan languages. Here then we see again an ancient intercourse between people who were formerly considered by all historians as entirely separate, and we are chiefly indebted to English scholars, such as Rawlinson, Norris, Sayce, Pinches, and others for having brought to light some of

the ruins of that long buried bridge on which the thoughts of the distant East may have wandered towards the West.

Few generations have witnessed so many discoveries in Oriental scholarship, and have lived through so many surprises as our own. If any two countries seemed to have been totally separated in ancient times by the barriers both of language and writing, they were Egypt with its hieroglyphic and Babylon with its arrow-headed literature. We only knew of one communication between Egypt and its powerful neighbours and enemies, carried on through the inarticulate and murderous language of war, of spears and arrows, but not of arrow-headed writings. Who could have supposed that the rows of wedges covering the cylinders of Babylonian libraries, which have taxed the ingenuity of our cleverest decipherers, were read without any apparent difficulty by scribes and scholars in Egypt, about 1500 B. C. Yet we possess now in the tablets found at Tell-el-Amarna in Egypt, a kind of diplomatic correspondence, carried on at that early time, more than a thousand years before the invasion of Greece by Persia, between the Kings of Egypt and their friends and vassals in Babylon, Syria, and Palestine. These letters were docketed in Egypt in hieratic writing, like the despatches in our Foreign Office. They throw much light on the political relations then existing between

the Kings of Egypt and the Kings of Western Asia, their political and matrimonial alliances, and likewise on the trade carried on between different countries. They confirm statements known to us from hieroglyphic inscriptions in Egypt, more particularly those in the temple of Karnak. The spelling is chiefly syllabic, the language an Assyrian dialect. Doubtful Accadian words are often followed and explained by glosses in what may be called a Canaanite dialect, which comes very near to Hebrew. But how did the Kings of Egypt understand these cuneiform despatches? It is true we meet sometimes with the express statement that those to whom these missives were addressed, *had* understood them¹, as if this could not always be taken for granted. It is true also that these letters were mostly brought by messengers who might have helped in interpreting them, provided they had learnt to speak and read Egyptian. But what is more extraordinary still, the King of Egypt himself, Amenophis III, when writing to a king whose daughter he wishes to marry, writes a despatch in cuneiform letters, and in a language not his own, unless we suppose that the tablet which we possess was simply a translation sent to the King Kallimma Sin, and as such kept in the archives of the Egyptian Foreign Office.

It is curious to observe that the King of Egypt,

¹ See tablets xxvi, lx, lxix, lxxxiv.

though quite willing to marry the daughters of smaller potentates, is not at all disposed to send Egyptian princesses to them. For he writes in one of his letters (p. 29), 'A daughter of the King of the land of Egypt has never been given to a "Nobody".' Whatever else we may learn from these letters, they are not patterns of diplomatic language, if indeed the translation is in this case quite faithful. In these despatches, dating from 1400 B.C., a number of towns are mentioned, many of which have the same names as those known to us from hieroglyphic inscriptions. Some of these names have even survived to our own time, such as Misirîm for Egypt, Damascus, Megiddo, Tyre (Şurrii), Sidon (Sîdûna), Byblos (Guble), Beyrut (Birûta), Joppa (Yâpû), and others. Even the name of Jerusalem has been discovered by Sayce in these tablets, as *Uru'salim*, meaning in Assyrian the town of peace, a name which must have existed before the Jews took possession of Canaan. Some of these tablets (eighty-two) may be seen at the British Museum, others (160) at Berlin, most of the rest are in the Museum at Gizeh. We are indebted to Mr. Budge for having secured these treasures for the British Museum, and to Dr. Bezold and Mr. Budge for having translated and published them.

To us this correspondence is of the greatest importance, as showing once more the existence of a literary and intellectual intercourse between Western

Asia and Egypt, of which historians had formerly no suspicion. If we can once point to such an open channel as that through which cuneiform tablets travelled from Babylonia and Syria to Egypt, we shall be better prepared to understand the presence in Egypt of products of artistic workmanship also, from Western Asia, nay, from Cyprus, and even from Mycenae. I possess potsherds sent to me by Schliemann from Mycenae, which might have been broken off from the same vessels of which fragments have lately been found in Egypt by Mr. Flinders Petrie. Mr. Flinders Petrie in the *Academy*, June 25th, 1892, writes: 'Mykenaeen vase-types are found in Egypt with scarabs, &c. of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and conversely objects of the Eighteenth Dynasty, including a royal scarab, are found at Mykenae. And again, hundreds of pieces of pottery, purely Mykenaeen in style, have been found in various dateable discoveries in Egypt, and without exception every datum for such lies between 1500 and 1100 B. C., and earlier rather than later in that range.' I do not wish to rely on evidence which is contested by some of the best Egyptian scholars; otherwise I should gladly have appealed to the names of the Mysians, Lycians, Carians, Ionians, and Dardanians, discovered in the Epic of Pantaure about 1400 B. C., in the reign of Rameses II; and to the name of Achaeans read by certain Egyptian scholars in an inscription at

Karnak, ascribed to the time of Meneptah, the son of Rameses II. What we shall have to learn more and more is that the people of antiquity, even though they spoke different languages and used different alphabets, knew far more of each other, even at the time of Amenophis III, or 1400 B. C., than was supposed by even the best historians. The ancient world was not so large and wide as it seemed, and the number of representative men was evidently very small. The influence of Babylon extended far and wide. We know that several of the strange gods worshipped by the Jews, such as Rimmon, Nebo, and Sin, came from Babylon. The authority of Egypt also was felt in Palestine, in Syria, and likewise in Babylon. The authenticity of the cuneiform despatches found at Tell-el-Amarna in Egypt has lately received an unexpected confirmation from tablets found at Tell-el-Hesy, probably the ancient Lachish. Here a letter has been found addressed to Zimrida, who in the Tell-el-Amarna tablets was mentioned as governor of Lachish, where he was murdered by his people¹. In the same place cylinders were found of Babylonian manufacture, between 2000 and 1500 B. C., and copies, evidently made of them in the West. Similar cylinders occur in the tombs of Cyprus and Syria, helping us to fix their dates, and showing once more the intercourse between East

¹ *Academy*, July 9, 1892.

and West, and the ancient migration of Eastern thought towards Europe.

Nor should we, when looking for channels of communication between the ancient kingdoms of Asia, forget the Jews, who were more or less at home in every part of the world. We must remember that they came originally from Ur of the Chaldees, then migrated to Canaan, and afterwards sojourned in Egypt, before they settled in Palestine. After that we know how they were led into captivity and lived in close proximity and daily intercourse with Medians, Persians, Babylonians, and Assyrians. They spoke of Cyrus, a believer in Ormazd, as the anointed and the shepherd of Jehovah, because he allowed them to return from Babylon to Jerusalem. Darius, likewise a follower of Zoroaster, was looked on by them as their patron, because he favoured the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem. When we consider these intimate relations between the Jews and their neighbours and conquerors, we can easily imagine what useful intermediaries they must always have been in the intellectual exchange of the ancient world.

There are two countries only which really remained absolutely isolated in the past, China and India. It is true that attempts have been made to show that the Chinese influenced the inhabitants of India in very ancient times by imparting to them

their earliest astronomy. But Biot's arguments have hardly convinced anybody. And as to Chinese porcelain being found in ancient Egyptian tombs, this too has long been surrendered for lack of trustworthy evidence.

Nor have the attempts been more successful which were intended to show that the ancient astronomy of India was borrowed from Babylon. It is well known that the Babylonians excelled in astronomy, and that in later times they became the teachers of the Greeks, and indirectly of the Indians. But the twenty-seven Vedic Nakshatras or Lunar Stations are perfectly intelligible as produced on Indian soil, and require no foreign influences for their explanation. If the Indians had in Vedic times been the pupils of the Babylonians, other traces of that intercourse could hardly be absent. It was, indeed, thought for a time that one word at least of Babylonian origin had been discovered in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, the Babylonian *maná*, a certain weight of gold. This word has certainly travelled far and wide. We find it in the tablets of Tell-el-Amarna, in Hebrew, in Arabic, in Greek, and in Latin¹, *mina*, a mine. But the verse in the Rig-Veda in which this *maná* was supposed to occur, requires a different interpretation, nor would one word be sufficient

¹ Possibly in Egyptian, *Zeitschrift der D. Morgenl. Gesells.* Vol. xlv, p. 111.

to indicate a real intellectual intercourse between Babylonians and Vedic Indians. On the same ground we can hardly use the word *sindhu* in the Babylonian inscriptions, as proving a commercial intercourse between India and Babylon. *Sindhu*, as my learned friend, Professor Sayce, informed me, occurs in cuneiform texts as far back as 3000 B. C. as the name of some textile fabric. In Sanskrit *saindhava* would mean what grows on the Sindhu or the Indus¹, and would therefore be a very good name for cotton or linen. But so long as this word stands alone, it would not be safe to build any conclusions on it as to an ancient trade between India and Babylon.

For the present, therefore, we must continue to look upon China and India as perfectly isolated countries during the period of which we are here speaking. But though in the eyes of the historian the ancient literature of these two countries loses in consequence much of its interest, it acquires a new and peculiar interest of its own in the eyes of the philosopher. It is entirely home-grown and home-spun, and thus forms an independent parallel to all the other literatures of the world. It has been truly said that the religion and the philosophy of India came upon us like meteors from a distant planet, perfectly independent in their origin and in their character. Hence, when they do agree with other

¹ M. M., Physical Religion, p. 87.

religions and philosophers of the ancient world, they naturally inspire us with the same confidence as when two mathematicians, working quite independently, arrive in the end at the same results¹.

It is true that in these days of unexpected discoveries we are never entirely safe from surprises. But as far as our evidence goes at present—and we can never say more—the idea once generally entertained, and lately revived by Professor Gruppe, that there was some connection between the ancient religion of India and those of Egypt and Babylon is, from a scholar's point of view, simply impossible. Before the time of Alexander the Great, it would be very difficult to point out any foreign intellectual importation into the land of the Indus or the Seven Rivers. The knowledge of the alphabet may have reached India a little before Alexander's invasion. We know that Darius sent Skylax on a scientific expedition down to the mouth of the Indus. This expedition, like other scientific expeditions, was the forerunner of Persian conquests along the Indus. The people called in the cuneiform inscriptions *Gadâra* and *Hidhu*, that is in Sanskrit, *Gandhâra* and *Sindhu*, occur among the conquests of Darius, at least in his later inscriptions. It is quite possible, therefore, that even at that early time a knowledge of reading and writing may have been communicated

¹ Deussen, *Die Sûtras des Vedânta*, p. vi.

to India. Travellers from India were seen by Ktesias in Persia at the beginning of the fifth century B. C., and he describes some whom he had seen himself, as being as fair, or actually as white, as any in the world. Others he describes as swarthy, not by exposure to the sun, but by nature. This was probably written at the same time when Buddha, in a sermon which he delivered (the Assalayana Sutta), said: 'The Brahmans are the white caste, the other castes are black.' This refers to their colour (*varna*), not, as has been supposed, to their character. But we have no real evidence of writing, not even of inscriptions, in India before the time of Asoka, in the third century B. C. The Indian alphabets certainly came from a Semitic alphabet, which was adapted systematically to the requirements of an Aryan language. We can see it still in a state of fermentation in the local varieties that have lately been pointed out by my friend, Professor Bühler, the highest authority on this subject. As to the religion of Buddha being influenced by foreign thought, no true scholar now dreams of that. The religion of Buddha is the daughter of the old Brahmanic religion, and a daughter in many respects more beautiful than the mother. On the contrary, it was through Buddhism that India for the first time stepped forth from its isolated position, and became an actor in the historical drama of the world.

A completely new idea in the history of the world was started at the third Buddhist Council in the third century B. C., under King Asoka, the idea of conquering other nations, not by force of arms, but by the power of truth. A resolution was proposed and carried at that Council to send missionaries to all neighbouring nations to preach the new gospel of Buddha. Such a resolution would never have entered into the minds of the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, not even of the Brahmans. It presupposed quite a new conception of the world. It announced for the first time a belief that the different nations of the world, however separated from each other by language, religion, colour, and customs, formed nevertheless one united family ; that each of its members was responsible for the rest, in fact, that humanity was not an empty word.

It is a curious coincidence, if no more, that the name of the missionary who, according to the chronicle of Ceylon, was sent to the North, to the Himalayan border-lands, namely, *Madhyama*, should have been found in a Stûpa near Sanchi, as well as that of his fellow-worker, Kâsyapa. We read in an inscription : 'These are (the relics) of the good man of the family of Kasapa, the teacher of the whole Haimavata,' that is, the Himalayan border-land¹. We seldom find such monumental confirmations in Indian history.

¹ Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii, p. 234, c. xxxix.

This important discovery, like so many others, was due to General Cunningham, in one of his earlier works (*The Bhilsa Topes*, pp. 119, 187, 317).

China, the other isolated country of antiquity, was soon touched by the rising stream of Buddhism, and thus brought for the first time into contact with India and the rest of the world. The first waves of Buddhism seem to have reached the frontiers of China as early as the third century (217 B.C.), and so rapid and constant was its progress, that in 61 B.C. Buddhism was accepted by the Emperor Mingti as one of the three state-religions of China. We soon hear of Buddhists in other countries also, and if we consider that we have now arrived at a third period in the history of antiquity, which may truly be called the Alexandrian or Alexandrinian period, we need not wonder that the military roads which had been opened from the Indus to the Euphrates and to the Mediterranean, were soon trodden by peaceful travellers also, carrying both industrial and intellectual merchandise from East to West. From Kashmir, Buddhist missionaries seem to have penetrated into Hellenised Bactria. Alexander Polyhistor, who wrote between 80 and 60 B.C., attests¹

¹ See Cyrillus, *contra Julian*. lib. iv, 133 : *ἱστορεῖ γούν Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ ἐπίκλην Πολυῆστωρ—ἐφιλοσόφησαν δὲ—καὶ ἐκ Βάκτρων τῶν Περσικῶν Σαμαναῖοι καὶ παρὰ Πέρσαις οἱ Μάγοι καὶ παρ' Ἰνδοῖς οἱ Γυμνοσοφισταῖ.* Lassen, l. c. ii, p. 1073.

their presence there under the name of *Samanaioi*, which stands for the *Pāli* name *Samana*, a Buddhist friar. Their presence in Bactria is attested somewhat later, at the beginning of the third century A.D., by Clement of Alexandria¹, who speaks of the *Samanaioi* as powerful philosophers among the Bactrians, and again by Eusebius² at the beginning of the fourth century, who writes that among the Indians and Bactrians there are many thousands of Brāhmans. With regard to Bactria this can refer to Buddhists only, for the old orthodox Brāhmans did not leave their country, and Brāhman has always been retained by the Buddhists as a title of honour for themselves. Early traces of the Buddhist religion have been discovered likewise in the countries north of Bactria, in Tukhâra, and in the towns of Khoten, Yarkand, and Kashyar. M. Darmesteter has shown that in the second century B.C. Buddhist missionaries were hard at work in the western part of Persia, and it is a significant fact that the name of *Gautama*, the founder of Buddhism, occurs in the Avesta, in the Fravardin Yasht³. This shows how closely the

¹ Strom. i, p. 359: Φιλοσοφία τοίνυν—πάλαι μὲν ἤκμασε παρὰ βαρβαροῖς—προέστησαν—καὶ Σαμαναῖοι Βάκτρων—Ἰνδῶν τε οἱ Γυμνοσοφισταί. Lassen, l. c. ii, p. 1075; Schwanbeck, Megasthenis Indica, p. 139.

² Praep. Ev. vii. 10: Παρ' Ἰνδοῖς καὶ Βάκτροις εἰσὶ χιλιάδες πολλὰ τῶν λεγομένων Βραχμάνων. Lassen, l. c. ii, p. 1075.

³ Sacred Books of the East, vol. xxiii, p. 184.

most distant parts of the world had been brought together by the genius of Alexander the Great, and by the genius of that still greater conqueror, Gautama Sâkyamuni. Here, again, it is mainly due to the labours of Oriental scholars that so many traces of the work done by Alexander and his successors have been rediscovered. With Alexander we have entered a new period in the history of the world, a period marked by the first strong reaction of the West against the East, inaugurated in the fifth century B. C. by the victories of Marathôn, Thermopylae, and Salamis, which were almost contemporary with the first conquests of Buddha, who is still the ruler of the majority of mankind.

If now, after having reached a period which is illuminated by the bright daylight of well-authenticated history, we turn our eyes back once more to the two preceding periods, we may assert without fear of contradiction that our knowledge of the very existence of the first period is entirely due to Oriental scholarship, while it is equally due to the discoveries of Oriental scholars that the second period has been invested for the first time with a truly human interest. The ancient history of the world may be said to have assumed, under the hands of Oriental scholars, the character of a magnificent dramatic trilogy. The first drama tells us of the fates of the Aryan and Semitic races, as compact

confederacies before their separation into various languages and historical nationalities. The second drama is formed by the wars and conquests of the great Eastern Empires in Egypt, Babylon, and Syria, but it shows us that besides these wars and conquests, there was a constant progress of Eastern culture towards the West, towards the shores and islands of the Mediterranean, and lastly towards Greece.

The third drama represents the triumphant progress of Alexander, the Greek far more than the Macedonian, from Europe through Persia, Palestine, Phenicia, Egypt, Babylon, Hyrcania, and Bactria to India, in fact through all the great empires of the ancient East. Here we see the first attempt at re-establishing the union between East and the West. It is said¹ that among the papers of Alexander, a plan was found how to unite all these conquered nations into one Greek Empire by a mixture of families and manners, and by colonies, and thus to raise humanity to a higher level. Common religious services and commercial unions were meant to teach Europeans and Asiatics to look upon each other as fellow-citizens. Though this plan, worthy of the pupil of Aristotle, was never realised, his wars and victories have certainly drawn the most distant nations closely together, and enabled

¹ See Johannes von Müller, *Allgemeine Geschichte*, p. 63.

them to pour the stores of their ancient wisdom into one common treasury. The rays from the Pharos of Alexandria may be said to have pierced across Egypt, Persia, Babylonia, and Bactria into the dark shades of Indian forests, while the name of the dwellers in these Indian forests, the *Samanas* or *Semnoi*, the Venerable, as they were called by the Greeks, might be heard in the halls of the Alexandrian Library. The very name of Buddha (*Βούττα*) was not unknown to the later philosophers of Alexandria, for we see that the mind of Clement of Alexandria¹, in the second century A.D., was occupied with the question whether Buddha really deserved to be worshipped as a God, though we know now that this was the very last thing that the real Buddha would ever have desired. Clement knew also that the Buddhists built some kind of temple or *Kaityas* in which they preserved the bones and other relics of Buddha and his disciples, the earliest specimens of stone architecture in India, some of them preserved to the present day².

After the seeds which Alexander had transplanted

¹ Strom. i, p. 131, Sylb. : Εἰσὶ δὲ τῶν Ἰνδῶν οἱ τοῖς Βούττα πειθόμενοι παραγγέλμασιν, ὃν δι' ὑπερβολὴν σεμνότητος ὡς θεὸν τετιμῆκασιν ; possibly resting on Megasthenes ; see Megasthenis Indica, ed. Schwanbeck, p. 46.

² Clem. Alex. Strom. i, 3, p. 539, ed. Potter : οἱ καλούμενοι δὲ Σεμνοὶ (i. e. Samana) τῶν Ἰνδῶν—σέβουσιν ἑνὴν πυραμίδα ὑφ' ἣν ὁστέα τινὸς θεοῦ νομίζουσι ἀποκείσθαι.

from Greece to Egypt and the different parts of the East had begun to grow and abound, Alexandria became more and more the centre of gravitation of the ancient world, the point to which all the streams of ancient thought converged. Here in Alexandria the highest aspirations of Semitic thought, embodied in the Sacred Scriptures of the Jews, became blended with the sublime speculations of Aryan thought, as taught in the Platonist and Neo-Platonist schools of Philosophy, so that Alexandria may truly be called, after Jerusalem, the second birthplace of that religion of universal love, which more than any other religion was meant to re-unite all the members of the human race, scattered in the East and in the West, into one universal brotherhood. In this way the whole history of the world becomes indeed a *Preparatio Evangelica*, if only we have eyes to see in Christianity not a mere *refacimento* of an ancient Semitic faith, but a quickening of that religion by the highest philosophical inspirations of the Aryan, and more particularly of the Greek mind.

I have so far tried to show you what Oriental scholarship has done for us in helping us to a right appreciation of the historical development of the human race, beginning on the Asiatic continent and reaching its highest consummation on this Asiatic peninsula of ours, which we call Europe, nay, on this very spot where we are now assembled, which has

truly been called the centre of the whole world. It is due to Oriental scholarship that the gray twilight of ancient history has been illuminated as if by the rays of an unsuspected sunrise. We see continuity and unity of purpose from beginning to end, when before we saw nothing but an undecipherable chaos. With every new discovery that is made, whether in the royal libraries of Babylonia, or in the royal tombs of Egypt, or in the sacred books of Persia and India, the rays of that sunrise are spreading wider and wider, and under its light the ancient history of our race seems to crystallize, and to disclose in the very forms of its crystallization, laws or purposes running through the most distant ages of the world, of which our forefathers had no suspicion. Here it is where Oriental studies appeal not to specialists only, but to all who see in the history of the human race the supreme problem of all philosophy, a problem which in the future will have to be studied, not as heretofore, by *a priori* reasoning, but chiefly by the light of historical evidence. The Science of Language, the Science of Mythology, the Science of Religion, aye, the Science of Thought, all have assumed a new aspect, chiefly through the discoveries of Oriental scholars who have placed facts in the place of theories, and displayed before us the historical development of the human race, as a worthy rival of the natural development displayed

before our eyes by the genius and patient labours of Darwin.

But before I conclude, may I be allowed to tax your patience a few minutes longer, and to ask one more question, though I know that many here present are far more competent to return an authoritative answer to it than your President. Is the benefit to be derived from Oriental studies confined to a better understanding of the past, to a truer insight into that marvellous drama, the history of the human race in the East and in the West, whether in historic or prehistoric times? May not our Oriental studies call for general sympathy and support, as helping us to a better understanding of the present, nay, of the future also, with regard to the ever increasing intercourse between the East and the West? Why should so many practical men, so many statesmen, and rulers and administrators of Eastern countries, have joined our Congress, if they did not expect some important practical advantages from the study of Eastern languages and Eastern literature?

If the old pernicious prejudice of the white man against the black, of the Aryan against the Semitic race, of the Greek against the Barbarian, has been inherited by ourselves, and there are few who can say that they are entirely free from that *damnosa haereditas*, nothing, I believe, has so powerfully

helped to remove, or at least to soften it, as a more widely spread study of Oriental languages and literature.

England is at present the greatest Oriental Empire which the world has ever known. England has proved that she knows not only how to conquer, but how to rule. It is simply dazzling to think of the few thousands of Englishmen ruling the millions of human beings in India, in Africa, in America, and in Australasia. England has realised, and more than realised, the dream of Alexander, the marriage of the East and the West, and has drawn the principal nations of the world together more closely than they have ever been before. But to conquer and rule Eastern nations is one thing, to understand them is quite another. In order to understand Eastern nations, we must know their languages and their literature, we must in a certain sense become Orientalised, students of the East, lovers of the East. In this respect much remains to be done. I believe that the small Kingdom of Saxony, counting fewer inhabitants than the city of London, does more for encouraging the study of Eastern languages and literature than England. It is quite true that when new and really important discoveries had to be made, English scholars, men of true genius, have always been in the van of the victorious progress of Oriental scholarship. Their work has always been what in

German is called *Bahnbrechend*, breaking the first road through a dark and impervious forest. But it has long been felt that we are deficient in providing instruction in Eastern languages, such as is offered to young men in Russia, France, Italy, and Germany, at the expense of the State. We have lately made one step in the right direction. Under the personal patronage of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, a School of Modern Oriental Studies has at last been established at the Imperial Institute. This is the realisation of a plan for which I pleaded forty years ago, and which was warmly advocated at the time by that most far-sighted statesman, the late Prince Consort. But we want help, we want much larger funds, if this excellent scheme is to grow and bear fruit. If the public at large could only be made to see the practical advantages that would accrue to English commerce from a sufficient supply of young men qualified to travel in the East and to carry on a correspondence in Eastern dialects, we should probably get from our rich merchants that pecuniary support which we want, and which in other countries is supplied from the general taxation of the country. But far higher interests than the commercial supremacy of England are at stake. The young rulers and administrators who are sent every year to the East, ought to be able to keep up much more intimate relations with the people whom they are

meant to rule and to guide, than exist at present. It is well known that one of our Royal Dukes, during his stay in India, acquired a knowledge of Hindustani in order to be able to converse freely with his soldiers. It is no secret that even our Queen, as Empress of India, has devoted some of her very limited leisure to a study of the language and literature of India. Here are bright examples to follow. Without an intimate knowledge and an easy conventional command of a common language, a real intimacy between rulers and ruled is impossible. It has been truly said by the *Times* (July 9, 1892), that if the Transatlantic Cable had been available in 1858, there would have been no Trent Affair. One may say with the same truth, that if there had been a more free and friendly intercourse between the rulers and the ruled, between officers and soldiers in India, an intercourse such as can only be kept up by the electric current of a common language, there would have been no Indian Mutiny.

When I accepted the honourable post of President of this Congress, it was chiefly because I hoped that this Congress would help to kindle more enthusiasm for Oriental scholarship in England. But that enthusiasm must not be allowed to pass away with our meeting. It should assume a solid and lasting form in the shape of a permanent and powerful Association for the advancement of Oriental learning,

having its proper home in the Imperial Institute. If the Members of this Congress and their friends will help to carry out this plan, then our Congress might hereafter mark an important epoch in the history of this the greatest Eastern Empire, and I should feel that, in spite of all my shortcomings, I had proved not quite unworthy of the confidence which my friends and fellow-labourers have reposed in me.

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