

quiring a knowledge of the natural character of the Earth's surface (as, for instance, the configuration of continents, the direction of mountain chains, and the relative height of elevated plateaux), and in the case of extended tracts of land, of presenting us with materials for expounding the general laws of nature. It is unnecessary, in this historical sketch, to give a connected tissue of events, and it will be sufficient, in the history of the recognition of nature as a whole, to refer merely to those events which, at early periods, have exercised a decided influence on the mental efforts of mankind, and on a more extended view of the universe. Considered in this light, the navigation of Colæus of Samos beyond the Pillars of Hercules; the expedition of Alexander to Western India; the dominion exercised by the Romans over the then discovered portions of the world; the extension of Arabian cultivation, and the discovery of the New Continent, must all be regarded as events of the greatest importance for the nations settled round the basin of the Mediterranean. My object is not so much to dwell on the relation of events that may have occurred, as to refer to the action exercised on the development of the idea of the Cosmos by events, whether it be a voyage of discovery, the establishment of the predominance of some highly-developed language rich in literary productions, or the sudden extension of the knowledge of the Indo-African monsoons.

As I have already incidentally mentioned the influence of language in my enumeration of heterogeneous inducements, I will draw attention generally to its immeasurable importance in two wholly different directions. Languages, when extensively diffused, act individually as means of communication between widely-separated nations, and collectively when several are compared together, and their internal structure and degrees of affinity are investigated, as means of promoting a more profound study of the history of mankind. The Greek language, which is so intimately connected with the national life of the Hellenic races, has exercised a magic power over all the foreign nations with which these races came in contact.* The Greek language appears in the interior of Asia, through the influence of the Bactrian empire, as a conveyer of knowledge, which, a thousand years afterward, was brought

* Niebuhr, *Röm. Geschichte*, th. i., s. 69; Droysen, *Gesch. der Bildung des Hellenistischen Staatensystems*, 1843, s. 31-34, 567-573; Fried. Cramer, *De Studiis quæ veteres ad aliarum Gentium contulerint Linguas*, 1841. p. 2-13.