

back by the Arabs to the extreme west of Europe, blended with hypotheses of Indian origin. The ancient Indian and Malayan tongues furthered the advance of commerce and the intercourse of nations in the island-world of the southwest of Asia, in Madagascar, and on the eastern shores of Africa ; and it is also probable that tidings of the Indian commercial stations of the Banians may have given rise to the adventurous expedition of Vasco de Gama. The predominance of certain languages, although it unfortunately prepared a rapid destruction for the idioms displaced, has operated favorably, like Christianity and Buddhism, in bringing together and uniting mankind.

Languages compared together, and considered as objects of the natural history of the mind, and when separated into families according to the analogies existing in their internal structure, have become a rich source of historical knowledge ; and this is probably one of the most brilliant results of modern study in the last sixty or seventy years. From the very fact of their being products of the intellectual force of mankind, they lead us, by means of the elements of their organism, into an obscure distance, unreached by traditionary records. The comparative study of languages shows us that races now separated by vast tracts of land are allied together, and have migrated from one common primitive seat ; it indicates the course and direction of all migrations, and, in tracing the leading epochs of development, recognizes, by means of the more or less changed structure of the language, in the permanence of certain forms, or in the more or less advanced destruction of the formative system, *which* race has retained most nearly the language common to all who had migrated from the general seat of origin. The largest field for such investigations into the ancient condition of language, and, consequently, into the period when the whole family of mankind was, in the strict sense of the word, to be regarded as one living whole, presents itself in the long chain of Indo-Germanic languages, extending from the Ganges to the Iberian extremity of Europe, and from Sicily to the North Cape. The same comparative study of languages leads us also to the native country of certain products, which, from the earliest ages, have constituted important objects of trade and barter. The Sanscrit names of genuine Indian products, as those of rice, cotton, spikenard, and sugar, have, as we find, passed into the language of the Greeks, and, to a certain extent, even into those of Semitic origin.*

* In Sanscrit, rice is *vrihi*, cotton *harpāsa*, sugar *'sarkare*, and spike-