

‘When animals,’ he says, ‘first crept forth from the newly formed earth, a dumb and filthy herd, they fought for acorns and lurking-places with their nails and fists, then with clubs, and at last with arms, which, taught by experience, they had forged. They then invented names for things, and words to express their thoughts, after which they began to desist from war, to fortify cities, and enact laws.’ They who in later times have embraced a similar theory, have been led to it by no deference to the opinions of their pagan predecessors, but rather in spite of very strong prepossessions in favour of an opposite hypothesis, namely, that of the superiority of their original progenitors, of whom they believe themselves to be the corrupt and degenerate descendants.

So far as they are guided by palæontology, they arrive at this result by an independent course of reasoning; but they have been conducted partly to the same goal as the ancients, by ethnological considerations common to both, or by reflecting in what darkness the infancy of every nation is enveloped, and that true history and chronology are the creation, as it were, of yesterday. Thus the first Olympiad is generally regarded as the earliest date on which we can rely, in the past annals of mankind, only 776 years before the Christian era.

When we turn from historical records to ancient monuments and inscriptions, none of them seem to claim a higher antiquity than about fifteen centuries, B.C. Those now extant of Rome, Etruria, Greece, Judæa, and Assyria, carry us back no farther into the history of past ages than the temples, obelisks, cities, tombs, and pyramids of Egypt, and the exact date of these last, after they have been studied with so much patience and sagacity for centuries, remains uncertain and obscure. Nevertheless, by showing the advanced point which the civilisation of mankind had reached in the valley of the Nile, in times which were regarded by the Greeks, more than two