

of departure, they would converge and meet sooner in some era of the past than would the existing races of mankind; in other words, races change much more slowly than languages. But, according to the doctrine of transmutation, to form a new species would take an incomparably longer period than to form a new race. No language seems ever to last for a thousand years, whereas many a species seems to have endured for hundreds of thousands. A philologist, therefore, who is contending that all living languages are derivative and not primordial, has a great advantage over a naturalist who is endeavouring to inculcate a similar theory in regard to species.

It may not be uninteresting, in order fairly to appreciate the vast difficulty of the task of those who advocate transmutation in natural history, to consider how hard it would be even for a philologist to succeed, if he should try to convince an assemblage of intelligent but illiterate persons that the language spoken by them, and all those talked by contemporary nations, were modern inventions, moreover that these same forms of speech were still constantly undergoing change, and none of them destined to last for ever.

We will suppose him to begin by stating his conviction, that the living languages have been gradually derived from others now extinct, and spoken by nations which had immediately preceded them in the order of time, and that those again had used forms of speech derived from still older ones. They might naturally exclaim, 'How strange it is that you should find records of a multitude of dead languages, that a part of the human economy which in our own time is so remarkable for its stability, should have been so inconstant in bygone ages! We all speak as our parents and grandparents spoke before us, and so, we are told, do the Germans and French. What evidence is there of such incessant variation in remoter times? and, if it be true, why not imagine that