

## MR. BRACE ON THE RACES OF THE OLD WORLD.

THE RACES OF THE OLD WORLD: A Manual of Ethnology. By CHARLES L. BRACE, author of "Home Life in Germany," "The Norse Folk," &c. 8vo. New-York: CHARLES SCRIBNER.

The prominent place occupied in the public mind by inquiries relating to the subjects constituting the science of Ethnology is one of the most noticeable features of the time. It is only of late years that philosophers have agreed to group together under that head the researches now making into the families or races of man—their affinities, dividing lines, and distinguishing characteristics. Yet in this brief space the science has taken titular rank with its elder sisters, and can show its societies, journals, &c., in three quarters of the globe—nay more, it has been rudely invoked to the political arena, where its aid is demanded by contending parties as a new and potent ally. It is impossible to take up a newspaper without observing a tone of argument and reflection on the destinies of nations that would have been scarcely intelligible to our fathers. Struggling and oppressed races, long dormant but reviving nationalities, are the themes orators now delight to dwell on, when they would move most deeply the sympathies of their hearers. So recently as the Congress of Vienna in 1814, it is probable that no considerations of this nature were present to the minds of a single member of it, when engaged in the settlement of the map of Europe, they were volcanic fires smouldering below unconscious feet. Now, however, they are ablaze, and it would seem that events are tending to produce a comparative disregard of the old conventional geographical boundaries of States, and a remodeling of that very map on principles purely ethnological, as national sympathies, popular affinities, indentities of language and religious beliefs. Old statesmen and ministers are vexed with thoughts beyond the reaches of their official souls, based on realities sterner than dynastic usurpation, subtler than political expediency. "Celt" and "Saxon," "Slave," "Teuton," "Scandinavian" and "Magyar," are no longer mere abstractions, but have become the watchwords of angry factions, the battle-cries of peoples struggling in the throes of political birth. The future of a continent even may hang on a despot's version of the theory of dominant races, and an appeal to that be considered sufficient to outweigh the ordinary considerations of right and justice. These facts, which it is impossible to ignore, meet us daily in some shape or other. They have a double operation; they stimulate men both of thought and action to the study of the races of man, and all such studies deepen the conviction that seeks expression by grappling with the facts to which they alone afford a satisfactory key or explanation. Some knowledge of the subject is indispensable to all intelligent persons, but the mass of information collected is so large that inquirers have been repelled by it, until the results are arranged and presented in some practicable shape. Neither French nor English literature offers us any portable work setting forth the existing landmarks of this progressive science. This task Mr. BRACE undertakes in the book now before us. A fair examination enables us to say that he has accomplished it in a manner eminently satisfactory. A traveler himself, and one who, like ULYSSES, has seen "many men and many cities," he combines with these personal advantages a thorough acquaintance with the literature of the science in the various European languages. Though perfect uniformity of opinion on points so open to dispute cannot be looked for, Mr. BRACE may be recommended as always a safe and intelligent guide in whose judgment his readers may place reliance. It may be mentioned that the work has undergone the ordeal of English scholarship, and is now publishing in London by Mr. MURRAY, from whose establishment issue the writings of LYELL, MURCHISON, DARWIN, OWEN, and most of the scientific lights of the age.

Why the study of Man should be neglected until a period comparatively recent, is a problem to which no solution can be given. From the earliest ages, in all the civilizations known to us, natural productions and phenomena have commanded the attention of the highest class of minds, and familiarity with them has always been held to constitute true knowledge. Some of the most ancient Egyptian papyri, in the Demotic character yet deciphered, contain careful lists of natural substances, and their use or hurtfulness to man. Among the Jews we know how large a portion of the wisdom of Solomon, "wherein he excelled all the children of the East Country," consisted in a knowledge "of trees, of beasts, of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." The Greek deification of the human form is apparent to us in the priceless fragments of art happily still extant; and the Natural History of ARISTOTLE, which CUVIER declares he never consulted without admiration and astonishment, shows how earnest was the quest of the Grecian mind after the hidden things of Nature. The Romans, too, may point to their PLINY, and other followers on the same track of investigation, but none of these acute and searching nations ever conceived the idea of taking for the theme of their studies, MAN, the crown of creation, "the heir of all the ages," his varieties, families, and affiliations. The comfortable sense of superiority common to all ancient peoples which divided mankind into the one favored race and a crowd of outside barbarians, may probably afford a partial reason for this, though it did not prevent their historians from gathering materials which now, scanned by more critical eyes than those of the original collectors, afford us our surest and most indispensable guides. The campaigns of ALEXANDER the Great, the embattled hosts of XERXES, must have afforded opportunities for ethnological comparison and study that will probably never occur again, but the spirit to profit by them was not present, and questions that then might have been readily answered will continue to puzzle the learned of our own and coming generations. Under the Christian dispensation the corrective given to Pagan vanity by the promulgation of the great spiritual truth that God had made of one blood all the nations of the earth, may have checked the study of Races by the fear of arriving at results contrary to the Divine record. Moralists, indeed, in all ages, have told us that "The proper study of mankind is man," and have recommended us to "survey mankind from China to Peru," but the survey and study were alike barren, because the man they had in view was not what actually exists in nature, but a typical puppet or abstraction, wound up and set going to demonstrate their skill in the analysis of human motives and actions. The proper science of Ethnology can hardly be dated beyond the present century. As the history of all great discoveries proves, many minds without concert were engaged simultaneously in the same pursuit. No sooner had BLUMENBACH laid the foundation of the science by the direct application of physiology, as shown in his comparative examination of the crania of the different races, than FREDERIC VOX SCHLAEZEL demonstrated how important an element in the inquiry was language, and in what manner the evidence it afforded of a community of descent, corroborated and supplemented the conclusions drawn from historical and physiological sources, till it is now regarded as the safest and surest test. There is no need to enumerate the names of those who, in Europe and America have followed the clue given by the first inquirers, and which has conducted them to such splendid historical and archaeological results. They are world famous, and the nineteenth century has no prouder title to fame than the fact that in it flourished men such as Bunsen, Bopp, Grimm, Lepsius, Humboldt, Burnouf, Maury, Pictet, Renan, Champollion, Prichard, Rawlinson, Darwin, Layard, Owen, Morton, and Agassiz. To Dr. PRICHARD as the first who grasped in one work the whole extent of the science, his *Physical History of Man* forms an enduring monument in which his excellent good sense and sound judgment are always conspicuous. Not merely a recorder of discovery, but a discoverer himself, we can never deprive his work of value, though subsequent researches starting from his stand-point, have necessarily extended the boundaries of knowledge.

Before defining Ethnology, it may be as well to observe that it is not. Two subjects, the Unity or Diversity of Man, and the Antiquity of Man on the Earth, are usually connected with it in the popular mind, and the supposition that heterodox opinions on these points, contrary to the received interpretation of scriptures, are inculcated by it, has caused much

The fact is, however, that while a determination of these questions, and of many others, may be looked forward to hopefully as the noblest results of its successful prosecution, the science itself is tied to no theories on the subject whatever; its business is to collect materials, to weigh and sift evidence, which, in combination with the labors of the geologist and the natural historian, may in time supply the means for the resolution of these and like difficulties in whose investigation intelligent minds will always find congenial exercise. At present, science knows nothing of origins, and she is no longer science, but hypothesis when she begins to speculate on them.

Ethnology is then a descriptive science, whose province consists in a knowledge of the Races of Men, using the word race in its widest sense, to express the relation derived from community of origin or identity of type. Mr. BRACE adds to his definition, "as determined by the evidence of language interpreted by history," and the paramount value of philological processes is so great that in the present stage of the science the limitation is probably correct. The tendency of modern scholarship, as shown in the writings of MAX MÜLLER and others, is strongly toward the opinion that no evidence can compete with that afforded by LINGUISTICS, as a mode of ascertaining the connection of races. Whether this conviction has not arisen from the disproportionate cultivation of a single branch of the inquiry, may be doubted—one charm of the science is that all studies become subsidiary to it. On extant races at least, Physiology should have something more to say. We are yet unacquainted with the fact whether or no structural peculiarities exist answering to the great ruling characteristics of the leading unmixed races of man. Archaeology, Art and Literature, if rightly questioned and as carefully studied, might supply conclusions as definite, for it is not the least remarkable among the operations of the mysterious force we call race—"the accumulated effect of a line of ancestors on their final progeny"—that its presence is traced in every mental and material work, so that the curve of a moulding, the popular tale or saga, may declare its origin as plainly as the conjugation of a verb or the similarity of the numerals. To give a broad example, we all feel instinctively how Chinese and Egyptian remains exemplify the first, and we know it is as impossible for the self-asserting and lyrical intensity of Semitic poetry to take the favorite dramatic or epic form of Aryan thought, as it would be for an artisan of China, "a nation that has never stumbled upon grace," to work in the spirit of PHIDIAS or PRAXITILES. However distinguished, the fact remains that everywhere we meet, in past and present history, families of men marked by a clear stream of inherited physical and mental peculiarities underlying the factitious divisions of empires and political aggregations, across which we see at the present day man calling unto his fellow man, yearning for the brotherhood of sympathy that flows from the consciousness of a common origin and associations. It is in the light that Ethnology gives us in the interpretation of the past, and the guidance to be derived from it for the conduct of the future, that the practical value of the science consists. Viewed without it History is a mere diary of facts, deficient in any link of connection to unravel the confused web of human affairs. Mr. BRACE's manual is offered to those who have felt this defect, as a means of supplying it. In his own words, "to present in brief and clear form the latest and most trustworthy results of scholarship and scientific investigation, bearing on the question of Races, and thus forming a guide—imperfect though it be—to the study of History. History is not merely a journal of battles and the reigns of kings, it is a description of the life of Man, and in no way can this be made so clear as by following down the different lines of descent among the various tribes of the Human Family. Events, institutions, forms of government, revolutions and changes, which before appeared isolated and arbitrary, become under this investigation the national and moral developments of the qualities of certain races, and History is made a clear and scientific record."

In pursuance of his plan, Mr. BRACE adopts eight divisions. After an introductory chapter on the objects of the science and the method of applying philology for the elucidation of ethnological problems, he commences with "The First Historical Races," of Asia and Africa, including the Egyptians, Assyrians, Hebrews, &c. He then discusses "The Primitive Races of Europe," "Leading Races of Asia in the Middle Ages," "Modern Ethnology of Asia," "Oceanic Ethnography," "Ethnology of Africa," "Ethnology of Modern Europe," and winds up, wisely, we think, with remitting to the two last supplemental chapters an examination of the theoretical topics already referred to, and other "General Questions in Ethnology." This arrangement of the matter is sufficiently comprehensive, but we think it errs in being formed on a geographical basis, and that simplicity would have gained and repetition been avoided by following the history of each race or people from its first appearance, instead of breaking and resuming the thread according to local divisions.

Starting from prehistoric times, it is wonderful to reflect how the latest discoveries in geology and paleontology coincide with the view of the earliest ages discerned by the "vision and faculty divine" of the poets, rather than that of philosophers and historians. The latter have sometimes dreamed of an original stock of the human race, endowed with superior intellectual powers, and rich in knowledge supernaturally communicated, a status which all our progress is but a painful attempt to regain. The clearer evidence of facts shows the reverse of this supposition, that man is found as far back as we can reach, in as low a condition as is compatible with the existence of human society, gaining his subsistence from the woods and waters with the rudest weapons and implements imperfectly shaped, to answer his pressing needs. That every progressive improvement was won with toll and labor, and that the forward march, when once begun, was never seriously interrupted, although confided to the hands of races favored by nature and situation to take a prominent part in the world's movement is calculated to raise our ideas of the possibilities within reach of humanity, and to incite us to continuous exertion. By some mysterious law, all national life and motion seems connected with conquest, collision or intrusion. At the earliest dawn of historic time, the first ripple that catches the light is the rise of Hamitic civilization in Egypt, and on the shores, now so lone and desolate, of the Persian Gulf. This reaches its highest expression in Egypt and remains dormant, a spent force, incapable of further extension, though brought face to face with Europe. In Asia it was soon superseded by Semitic influences, in the great Assyrian empire at the rise of that marvelous people who are yet present with us, and still "rule us from their urns." Limited in area and restricted in numbers, when compared with the other great families of mankind, the highest intellectual place must undoubtedly be conceded them, as the founders of commerce, the inventors of alphabetical writing, and the propagators of the three great religions of history—Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. The material sceptre of the world passed from them at the rise of the Empire of the Persians—an Aryan tribe of the race that henceforward becomes dominant in history. We can still, through the Sanscrit Vedas, trace the steps of this great family as a conquering people from Central Asia to the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges. Their Western migration, by which they became possessors of all Europe, except a few mountain fastnesses, by intrusion on an inferior race, before history opens, are unknown to us, though philological research indicates that the Gaelic and Keltic branches were the earliest comers, and the tribes afterward known as Romans and Greeks among the later. By what extraordinary concurrence of circumstances and influences, whether of lineage, soil or climate, the latter attained their unrivaled height of mental and physical development, will always elude discovery. It is almost as difficult a question to say what has become of them—whether, as Mr. BRACE holds, they must be sought among the degraded modern occupants of their ancient seats, or whether, as some ethnologists maintain, they were a compound and mixed race, fortuitously produced, and long since resolved into its original elements. A like uncertainty attends the fate of the Roman people, though they were always less homogeneous than the Greeks, and

formed rather a political organization than a family or race.

With a few exceptions, as when the Turcoman tribes, under their Tartar Khans, overran Asia and Eastern Europe, or the Semites, under MAHOMET and his successors, strove with indomitable energy to recover dominion of the world, the Aryan races have been the governing people of the earth, and there is no chance of the sceptre passing from their sway. Fortunately for interest of the subject, the characteristics of each division of it are strongly marked and clearly defined; and the great charm of history is to trace the play and opposition of these enduring national qualities, as displayed by the turbulent, imaginative and superstitious KELTS; the law-abiding, philosophical and reflective TEUTONS; the frank and fearless SCANDINAVIANS; the lithe and subtle SOLAVONIANS; the politic and artistically-gifted ROMANS; the coarse-fibred but practical SAXONS. Not only these prominent races, whom we have briefly indicated, will be found described in Mr. BRACE's *Ethnographical Panorama of the World*, but the unhistoric races, whose influence has been minute and unappreciable on the main stream of human progressive development, are also included in his survey—as the oceanic races of the Pacific, the varied populations who occupy the vast continent of Africa; the scattered fragments of an older Europe, including the Basques, Finns, ALBANIANS, and other anomalous tribes, in relation to whom arise many of the most interesting questions of the science.

We have not alluded to the important inquiries which occupy the debatable ground between Ethnology and Physiology, because the shortest possible discussion of them requires more space than a newspaper can command in these stirring times. Such topics are: the origin and permanence of race characteristics—their possible modification by climatic and hygienic influences,—the comparative stability and capacity for improvement of mixed and pure races,—the gradual elimination of inferior races by the principle of natural selection,—on all these and similar questions where his limits do not allow space for dilation, the soundest lines of information are indicated by Mr. BRACE, to whose book we again confidently refer all inquirers.