On the Position of the Australian Languages

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The following paper was read :

VIII.—*On the POSITION of the AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGES.* By
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1. It was one of the important discoveries made by Sir George Grey, as Commander of the memorable expedition of 1838, that the languages spoken throughout the southern portion of the Australian continent are derived from one common stock. This fact has received additional confirmation from all subsequent researches, made chiefly under the direction and at the instigation of Sir George, as Governor of the colony of South Australia.*

2. Whilst a fertile source of research is hereby opened to the philologist and ethnologist, in the great variety of distinct, but kindred, languages spread over the vast area of this continent-like island, the speculative mind cannot but attempt to investigate the relations which exist between the Australian family of languages, and other varieties of human speech known to us.

3. The grammatical structure of their nearest neighbours, the POLYNESIAN languages, appears to be almost *diametrically opposite* to that of the Australian languages.

4. Analogies have been pointed out as existing between the Australian and the DRÂVIDIAN (or South-Indian) languages. With regard to this, I cannot do better than quote the words of the Rev. R. Caldwell, the best authority on these languages, who (at pp. 51-53 of his "Comparative Grammar") writes as follows :

"It seems proper here to notice the remarkable general resemblance which exists between the DRÂVIDIAN pronouns and those of the aboriginal tribes of Southern and Western AUSTRALIA. In whatever way it may be explained or accounted for, the existence of a general resemblance (which was first pointed out by Mr. Norris), seems to be unquestionable ; but it has not hitherto been observed that the Australian pronouns of the first person, are more nearly allied to the Tibetan than to the Drâvidian. This will appear from the following comparative view of the pronoun of the first person singular :

	DRÂVIDIAN.	AUSTRALIAN.	TIBETAN.	CHINESE.
I,	<i>nân, nâ, ên.</i>	<i>nga, ngai, ngatoo.</i>	<i>nga, nge, nged.</i>	<i>ngo, nganya.</i>

"Whilst the base of this pronoun seems to be closely allied to the corresponding pronoun in Tibetan, and in the Indo-Chinese family generally, the manner in which it is pluralised in the Australian dialects bears a marked resemblance to the Drâvidian, and especially to the Telugu. The Telugu forms its plurals by

* *Vide* "The Library of His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B. Philology. Vol. ii, part i, Australia". 1858. Trübner and Co.

suffixing *lu* to the singular ; the Australian dialects by a similar addition of *lu*, *li*, *dlu*, *dli*, etc.

"In this particular some of the dialects of the north-eastern frontier of India exhibit also an agreement with the Telugu : e.g., compare Dhimal *nâ* 'thou', with *nyel*, 'you'. In the Australian dialects I find the following plurals and duals of the pronoun of the first person, 'we', or 'we two', *ngalu*, *ngadlu*, *ngadli*, *ngalata*, etc. Compare this with the manner in which the Telugu forms its plural : e.g., *vad'-u*, 'he'; *vâdlu*, 'they'; and even with the colloquial Tamil plural of the pronoun of the first person : e.g., *nân*, 'I'; *nânggal*, 'we'. The resemblance between the Australian pronouns of the second person, both singular and plural, and those of the Drâvidian languages is more distinct and special, and is apparent not only in the suffixes, but in the pronominal base itself. The normal forms of these pronouns in the Drâvidian languages are, singular, *nîn*, plural, *nîm*. The personality resides in the crude root, *nî*, 'thou'; which is the same in both numbers, with the addition of a singular formative *n* (e.g., *nî-n*, 'thou'), and a pluralising formative *m* (e.g., *nîm*, 'thous', or 'you'). In some cases the pluralising particle, *m*, has been displaced, and *r*, which I regard as properly the sign of the epicene plural of the third person, has been substituted for it : e.g., *nîr*, 'you' (in Telugu *mîr-u*).

"This abnormal form *nîr* is most used in a separate form ; the older and more regular *nîm* retains its place in compounds, and in the imperative of the verb. Whilst *i* is the vowel which is almost invariably found in the singular of the pronoun of the second person, in the plural *i* often gives place to *u*, as in the classical Tamil *numa*, 'your', and the Brahui *num*, 'you'. It is to be noticed also that the modern Canarese has softened *nîm* into *nîvu* or *nîvu*, in the nominative.

"It is singular, in whatever way it may be accounted for, that in each and all of the particulars now mentioned, the Australian dialects resemble the Drâvidian. See the following comparative view. Under the Australian head I class the dual together with the plural, as being substantially the same.

DRÂVIDIAN.	AUSTRALIAN.
Thou, <i>nîn</i> , <i>nîn</i> .	<i>nînnâ</i> , <i>ngînnâ</i> , <i>ngîntoa</i> , <i>ngînte</i> .
You, <i>nîm</i> , <i>nîm</i> , <i>nîr</i> , <i>num</i> , <i>nîvu</i> .	<i>nîmedoo</i> , <i>nura</i> , <i>nîwa</i> , <i>ngurle</i> .

"Compare also the accusative of the first person singular in Tamil, *ennei*, 'me', with the Australian accusative, *emmo*.

"The grammatical structure of the Australian dialects exhibits a general agreement with the languages of the Scythian group. In the use of post-positions instead of prepositions, in the use of two forms of the first person, plural, one inclusive of the party addressed, the other exclusive (?); in the formation of inceptive,

causative, and reflective verbs by the addition of certain syllables to the root; and, generally, in the agglutinative structure of words and in the position of words in a sentence, the dialects of Australia resemble the Dravidian—as also the Turkish, the Mongolian, and other Scythian languages; and in the same particulars, with one or two exceptions, they differ essentially from the dialects which are called Polynesian.

“The brief vocabularies of the Australian dialects which have been compiled do not appear to give additional confirmation to the resemblances pointed out above; but it is difficult to suppose those resemblances to be unreal, or merely accidental; and it is obvious that the Australian dialects demand (and probably will reward) further examination.”

5. So far Caldwell, and there are certainly reasons which incline us to believe that all these belong to one very extensive class of similarly organised languages. Their chief characteristic appears to be the agglutinative formation of their structure, in which the grammatical relations of the words are generally indicated by suffixes. Prefixes occur but seldom in languages of this class, and the stems of the words are rarely affected by internal flexion. A grammatical gender does not exist in the greater number of these languages, but the nouns are generally declinable in an almost infinite variety of cases.

6. Most of the nations by whom languages of this class are spoken, are addicted to a nomadic manner of life; and when, adopting more settled habits, their speech is even found to lose, to some extent, the distinguishing characteristics of the languages of this class. Professor Max Müller has, therefore, distinguished this class of languages by the name of “nomadic”, and he has very ingeniously shown how the nomadic character of the people who speak them almost necessarily produces great dissimilarities in the external form of the language, affecting the vocabulary, as well as the suffixes by which the same grammatical relations are denoted in dialects closely akin to each other. After all, the outward appearance of a language is everywhere its most insignificant part, on account of the continual changes to which this is necessarily subject.

7. It is difficult to find an appropriate name for this large class of languages; and if we designate them, with Max Müller, by the term “TURANIAN” (in a far wider sense than the word can, strictly speaking, claim), it is only because all other names proposed are liable to still greater objections. “Turanian”, in this wider sense, is used to denote all such languages as appear to be of similar construction to those to which in the first instance the name Turanian was applied.

8. The threefold division of *Mandshu-Mongolian*, *Tatar-Turk-*

ish, and *Finnic-Hungarian* (constituting the *Ural-Altai* family), forms the centre of this wider class of Turanian languages. A West-European branch is formed by the *Euscara* or *Basque* language, spoken on both sides of the Pyrenees. In Africa, the *Mande* dialects (*Vei*, *Mandingo*, *Susu*, *Bambara*, etc.), the *Bornu* language, and probably also that of the *Tibbu* or *Teda*, belong to this class. The Bornu language, especially, shows curious points of resemblance to the language of the second style of Cuneiform Inscriptions, which, to whatever nation it may have belonged, must have been of extensive use and great importance throughout Persia.* To the North-West, the Turanian languages appear to have extended themselves over the continent of *America*, where at least a great number of the multifarious tongues exhibit the characteristics of this extensive class of languages.

In Southern Asia, the *Dravidian* languages constitute another branch. They are found not only in Southern India, but detached members of them have also been discovered to the north-west of the peninsula. And further southwards the *Australian* languages, as far as they are known to us, are recognised as belonging to the same class.

9. I have purposely, here, spoken only of a *class*, and not of a *family of Turanian languages*; as although they possess sufficient features in common to justify us in including them under the same head (in the absence of any evidence to the contrary) in a general classification of languages, it cannot be said that the points of resemblance are such as necessarily to constitute a closer affinity. On the contrary, it is not impossible that some or all of these languages exhibit only certain stages of development in one particular direction, taken either by members of different families, or by different branches of the same family.

10. The *genderless* character, which appears at first sight as one of their main characteristics, is only a negative quality which may be a mere consequence of the disappearance of a former grammatical gender; and is certainly to be recognised as such in the Persian language. And the other characteristic of the Turanian languages *viz.*, the *use of suffixes and postpositions*, is shared by them with the most primitive stages of the *Sex-denoting family*. The possibility, therefore, offers itself that some, at least, of the so-called Turanian languages may have branched off from the sex-denoting languages at a very early period in the development of the latter, losing the characteristic gender of the nouns, as the Persian has done at a later period.

* The so-called personal pronouns in both languages are entirely the same; and the plural prefix in Bornu is identical with that of the cuneiform inscriptions. *Nomina abstracta*, in both languages, are formed by the same prefix, etc. Is this, perhaps, an evidence of Tataric invasions of Africa before the time of Cambyse; or has the reverse been the case?

11. This supposition receives support from the observation of a kindred fact in the history of African languages. Here, as is well known, *South Africa* is full of languages of one family (the *Bantu*), in which the nouns are divided into classes. This classification, although identical in principle with that of the sex-denoting languages, is yet entirely different from it in all its outward features—firstly, in *not* being based upon the representation of the nouns by their suffixes, but by their prefixes; and secondly, by *not* combining the classification of the nouns with any sexual distinctions.

12. Now, it is first to be remarked that many of the languages of the TURANIAN CLASS are either lying between those of the *Sex-denoting family*, or are contiguous to them.

13. As regards the *Dravidian* languages, the characteristic of genderless can by no means be applied to them; on the contrary they have different genders for their pronouns almost in the same way as the English language, and it is not improbable that this grammatical arrangement has descended, as in English, from a classification of the nouns that was originally grammatical and not logical. It does not necessarily follow, on this account, that the *Dravidian* languages belong to the same *Sex-denoting family*, which includes the *Aryan* or *Indo-European*, the *Semitic*, the *Egyptian*, and other *North-African* languages (*Berber*, *Haussa*, *Galla*, etc.), as well as the *Hottentots*. These sex-denoting languages clearly show by the original identity of their signs of gender that they belong to one great family, and we have lately learned that this also includes the *Khasi* or *Cassia* of Lower Assam. But this identity in the forms of the original signs of gender is not as clear in the case of the *Dravidian* languages; and we, therefore, hesitate to ascribe them to the same family. We are in the same doubt with regard to one of the *Oceanic* languages,—that of *Tarawa* (Gilbert or Kingsmill's Islands), which, according to Mr. H. Hale (United States Exploring Expedition, 4to, New York, 1846, p. 441), is sex-denoting. I have in vain searched throughout the *North American* languages for any which exhibit a sex-denoting character, but it is remarkable that *South America* affords us a number of them, in the *Arawack*, the *Betoi*, *Yaura*, *Moxa*, and the languages of the *Maipures*, and *Abipones*. This is not the place to inquire, by analysis, whether any of the South American languages belong to the same sex-denoting family as that which has received this name *par excellence*. But, in any case, the sex-denoting character can only have arisen in them from a system of Concords, which stamps them unmistakably as belonging to the larger group of PRO-NOMINAL languages.

14. Similarly, there can be no doubt that the systems of clas-

sifying the nouns, which exist in many *North American* languages, are clear evidences that the languages in which they occur belong also to the PRONOMINAL group. Until it can be proved that the grammatical classification of the nouns arose in a different manner (and there are no evidences discernible to me which tend that way), it must be presumed that here, also, classes, which were originally entirely of a grammatical nature, have been fashioned so as apparently to adapt themselves to logical distinctions, be they such as distinguish male and female, rational and irrational, or animate and inanimate, etc.

15. If a great number of the *American* languages thus bear certain evidences of belonging to the group of PRONOMINAL languages, it may appear very questionable whether there still exist any languages which can be safely excluded from this group. In fact, although a time must have undoubtedly once existed in the formation of language when true pronouns were unknown, it is clear that the possession of true pronouns must give so much additional vitality to a language, and prove so energetic a stimulus in the development of the nations using such languages, that it could not at all be wondered at if they had effectually swept all lower stages of language from the face of the earth.

16. This is a possibility, but it would, as yet, be premature to consider it even as a probability. If, however, it can be proved that the languages now spoken by the races who are lowest in the scale of civilisation, do belong to the PRONOMINAL GROUP, then the probability greatly increases that the lower stages in the development of language (*i.e.*, those preceding the formation of true pronouns) have all ceased to be represented.

17. In this respect, it is particularly important to examine carefully such languages as those of the *Bushmen* in *South Africa*,* of the lowest *American* tribes (those living to the west of the *Rocky Mountains* in North America, and the *Frugians* in South America), and also of the *Australian* tribes.

18. As far as I know, for none of these languages has so much reliable material been collected, as for the AUSTRALIAN; and in this respect it is probably more easy to determine their position than that of the other above-mentioned languages.

19. If, as maintained, the relationship of the *Australian* languages to the *Dravidian* holds good, then the existence of a three-fold gender in these latter languages (similar to that in the English language) appears to settle the question. For, in this

* The employment of the process of re-duplication for the purpose of forming the plurals of nouns is not as peculiar to the *Bushmen* language as I thought when writing my essay on that language; for I now see that it is also met with in several *North American* languages spoken to the west of the *Rocky Mountains*. (H. Hale, "United States Exploring Expedition", pp. 534, 537, 545, and 566.)

case, we must reckon the Australian among those languages which had originally a sex-denoting character,—although they need not on this account belong to our own great sex-denoting family. In fact, one of the *East Australian* languages (that of *Lake Macquarie*, described by Threlkeld) still clearly possesses sex-denoting pronouns. The forms of these pronouns are, indeed, not such as to bear any resemblance to the signs of gender in our sex-denoting family of languages; but it must be borne in mind that e. g., in English, *he, him, she, her*; in German, *er, ihm, sie, ihr*; and in Danish, *han* (he), and *hun* (she), do not bear the slightest trace of the original sex-denoting signs of gender. In fact, when once the sex-denoting character has been impressed upon a language, the distinction of sex may, with the disappearance of the old signs of gender, become attached to such particles as had originally no connection with the distinctions of gender. Similarly, a negative character has, in many languages, become attached to elements of speech which etymologically have a decidedly reverse meaning. Thus e. g., the German indefinite pronoun *uh*, “any”, forms, with the original negative particle *ni*, the negative indefinite pronoun *ni-uh*, “not any”. The latter combining with the numeral *ein*, loses its first syllable, and becomes in modern high German *kein*,—so that the *k* now appears to imply negative force, although it is etymologically identical with the *h* of *uh*, which possesses no meaning of this kind.

20. The shape of the pronouns distinctive of sex is due to similar processes, in the course of which the original signs of gender have been replaced by other particles which have, etymologically speaking, no connection with the distinction of gender. The difference between the apparent sex-denoting pronouns of the *Australian* as well as *Dravidian* languages, and the original signs of gender in the great *Sex-denoting family*, is, therefore, no absolute bar to the possibility that they may all have derived their sex-denoting division of nouns from the same source.

21. In this respect, it is to be remarked that the *Dravidian* languages show many other points of resemblance to the *Sex-denoting family*, and particularly to the *Aryan* or *Indo-European* branch. The latter may, indeed, be partly explained by the very probable supposition that the formation of the *Indo-European* languages took place under the influence of neighbouring *Turanian* languages,* just as in the formation of the *Semitic* languages,

* I do not wish to be understood as in any way upholding the theory of the Asiatic home of the Aryan mother-language. I believe, on the contrary, that Dr. Latham's common sense has rightly protested against the probability of a doctrine which derives a family of languages from a part of the world in which only *two* closely allied branches of it (the *Indian* and *Iranian*) are met with, whilst those branches which have deviated from the original stock in far older times, *Teutonic*, *Slavonic*, *Celtic*, *Italic*, and *Greek*,

the influence of the *African Prefix-pronominal* languages appears to be discernible. Yet some primary points of resemblance remain which do not easily allow of such a solution. We do not reckon among them the use of suffixes and post-positions; as we find many instances of inversion by which languages have adopted prepositions and prefixes,* where suffixes and post-positions were originally employed. So that the use of either post-positions and suffixes, or prepositions and prefixes, cannot in itself be recognised as a necessary sign of common descent. It is true that, as yet, no language has been historically proved to have exchanged the original prefixes and prepositions, for suffixes and post-positions; but I can see no clear reason why such might not have been the case, and I am inclined to believe that some approach to this inversion has been made in languages of the (African) *Gor* family. On this account, it is quite possible that a language, in which now only post-positions and suffixes occur, may be more nearly related to one in which prefixes and prepositions are found, than to another which agrees far better with it as regards the present position of the grammatical elements.

22. Something more is, therefore, needed, than a general similarity in the arrangement of the grammatical structure, in order to establish any near relationship between languages. A thorough knowledge of, at least, one of the *Australian* languages will be requisite to enable one to see clearly to what family these forms of speech truly belong. But all that I have been enabled to give to this subject are mere fleeting glances; and all that I, therefore, can adduce, are a few observations on points which have struck me as curious.

Thus it appears remarkable to me that in some *Australian* languages the names used for distinguishing either the position of *females* in the family or their caste, end in *-atha*, *-ata*, or *-ato*. In the *KAMILAROI* language, spoken near Sydney, the natives are divided into four castes, viz., *ippai* (masc.), and *ippāthā* (fem.); *murrī* or *baia* (masc.), and *mātha* (fem.); *kubbi* (masc.), and *kāpōta* (fem.); *kumbo* (masc.), and *būtha* (fem.). (W. Ridley's paper on the Kamilaroi Language in "Transactions of the Philological Society, 1855", p. 83. *Vide* also Norris's edition of Prichard, pp. 490-492).

Further to the west, the *TEREBOO* tribes at the *Condamine*

are without a single original representative in Asia. I should not, perhaps, have been so bold in this instance, in withstanding a deep-set superstition, had I not found that I was supported in my opinions by so excellent a Sanscrit scholar as Professor Benfey.

* The modern European languages do not stand alone in this respect. Both the *Coptic* and the *Khasi* have converted the former construction of the sex-denoting languages (with suffixes and post-positions) into one with prefixes and prepositions.

river ("Sir G. Grey's Libr., vol. ii, part 1, Australia," p. 29, vii, *B. p.*) distinguish two castes, viz., *Cobbi* (masc.), and *Cobbitha* (fem.); *Hippi* (masc.), and *Hippitha* (fem). These are evidently identical with two of the Kamilaroi castes.

Among the *South Australian* tribes from the neighbourhood of ADELAIDE, the children in each family are distinguished by the following names:

MALE.		FEMALE.	
First child.....	<i>Kertameru</i> (<i>Kartammeru</i>).	<i>Kertanya</i> (<i>Kartanya</i>).	
Second child.....	<i>Warritya</i> .	<i>Warriarto</i> .	
Third child	<i>Kudnatya</i> .	<i>Kudnarto</i> (<i>Kudnato</i>).	
Fourth child.....	<i>Monaitya</i> (<i>Munaitya</i>).	<i>Monarto</i> (<i>Munato</i>).	
Fifth child.....	<i>Milaitya</i> (<i>Midlaitya</i>).	<i>Milarto</i> (<i>Midlato</i>).	
Sixth child	<i>Marrutya</i> .	<i>Marruarto</i> (<i>Marruato</i>).	
Seventh child ...	<i>Wongutya</i> .	<i>Wongwarto</i> .	
Eighth child.....	<i>Ngarlaitya</i> .	<i>Ngarlarto</i> .	

(Mr. Moorhouse's Report, etc., in Manuscript No. 3 of Sir. G. Grey's Library.—Vol. ii, part 1, Australia, vii, p. 66).

In the PARNKALLA dialect, these names have the following forms:

MALE.		FEMALE.	
First child.....	<i>Piri</i> .	<i>Kartanye</i> .	
Second child.....	<i>Wari</i> .	<i>Wayuru</i> (<i>Waruyu</i>).	
Third child	<i>Kunni</i> .	<i>Kunta</i> .	
Fourth child.....	<i>Munni</i> .	<i>Munnaka</i> .	
Fifth child.....	<i>Marri</i> .	<i>Marrukko</i> .	
Sixth child	<i>Yarri</i> .	<i>Yarranta</i> .	
Seventh child ...	<i>Milli</i> .	<i>Mellakka</i> .	
Eighth child.....	<i>Wangguyu</i> .	<i>Wanggurtu</i> .	
Ninth child	<i>Ngallai</i> .	<i>Ngallka</i> .	

PERSON BEREFT OF HIS
ELDER BROTHER.

Warnpuyu.

WOMAN BEREFT OF HER
ELDER BROTHER.

Warnpurtu.

The *k* of *-ka* and *-ko* in the above terminations is evidently derived from an original *t*, a letter which is frequently commuted in this manner in the Parnkalla dialect.

24. The termination of so many AUSTRALIAN female names in *-atha*, *-ata*, or *-ato*, reminds us forcibly of the endings of feminine nouns in languages of the SEX-DENOTING family, i.e., *-at*, obj. *-ata*, in Semitic dialects, and also in Indo-European languages, *-t* in the same, and in Egyptian, Coptic, Berberic, Hausa, etc. (*Vide* "De Nominum Generibus Linguarum Africae, Australis, Copticae, Semiticarum, aliarumque Sexualium").

25. That we have not yet discovered any certain traces of the original termination of masculine nouns, is not to be wondered at; for this ending has very generally disappeared in the sex-denoting languages;—a circumstance which appears to be mainly

due to the softer and less tenacious nature of the labial consonant of this termination.*

26. Not too much stress is to be laid upon these points of resemblance, which may be accidental; for these AUSTRALIAN feminine endings may be merely abbreviations of a noun indicating "woman". Yet they deserve to be noticed; particularly in connection with the DRÂVIDIAN termination of feminine nouns, *-atti* or *-tti* in Tamil,† *-iti* or *-ti* in Canarese, and *-adi* or *-di* in Telugu. It is true that Caldwell (pp. 180 and 181), from whom I quote, considers these as neuter terminations applied to the distinction of the feminine gender. But this explanation appears to me by no means probable; on the contrary, it is far more natural and in keeping with the general modes of change in the classification of nouns, that when the old form of the suffix and pronoun of the feminine singular had become homophonous with that of the neuter gender, both genders were combined into one. This appears also to be the case in the Telugu pronoun *adi* (or *idi*), which means "she" as well as "it" (Caldwell, pp. 173 and 174, 182 and 334).

27. But now, let us suppose that these comparisons of AUSTRALIAN and DRÂVIDIAN features of language, with those of the SEX-DENOTING family, hold good. It may yet be objected that languages of the *Turanian* class might still be nearly related to the *sex-denoting* family, without this necessarily involving, as a consequence, that these Turanian languages had ever possessed the distinguishing peculiarity of a division of the nouns into genders, as still found in the sex-denoting languages. But such a supposition would only be admissible in case it were proved that the distribution of nouns into classes or genders in the sex-denoting languages was due to a comparatively recent acquisition. This feature of the structure, however, instead of being newly gained by the 'sex-denoting' languages, is with them only the residuum of a much fuller organisation, which contained a far greater number of different genders, based upon the different derivative particles of the nouns and the pronouns derived from them. Consequently, if these Turanian languages have *not* descended from a structural condition similar to this, they cannot be, in any way, nearly allied to the sex-denoting languages; but would have to be considered as even more distant from them than

* The termination *-tya* of names of male children among the ADELAIDE tribes is possibly to be considered as derived from an original *-ba*, or *-pa* (masc. sing. obj. of the Hottentot language), by palatalisation of the labial sound. In a similar way, the Semitic language has converted the prefix-pronoun *w* of the masculine into *y*.

† *Vellâl-atti*, "a woman of the cultivator caste"; *vellâl-an*, "a man of the same caste"; *oru-tti*, "one woman, una"; *oru-(v) an*, "one man, unus"; *vannâ-tti*, "a washerwoman"; *vannâ-n*, "a washerman"; etc.

are the Kafir and other prefix-pronominal languages ; since the structure of the latter is really founded on the same basis as that of the suffix-pronominal languages.

28. If, on the contrary, these TURANIAN languages have merely lost the most striking features of the PRONOMINAL languages, and are to be included in the class of SUFFIX-PRONOMINAL languages,—then, that member of the latter class which has best preserved its primitive organisation, becomes of the greatest importance for the comparative study and analysis of the structure of any of these Turanian, as well as of the sex-denoting languages. This consideration, of course, greatly increases the value of whatever we may be still able to preserve of the most primitive among the sex-denoting languages, *viz.*, that of the HOTTENTOT tribes, who are now so rapidly vanishing from the face of the earth.

29. It must, however, be remembered that a language, which has retained some very original structural features, is by no means necessarily to be regarded as if in every way exhibiting the original state from which the structure of all the kindred languages is to be derived. No language is entirely stationary ; but while some pass rapidly through a great variety of stages, in which their form may be almost entirely changed, others advance but very little from their primitive condition. Yet the latter may, in their slower progress, have obliterated some traits which the former may have faithfully retained in all the phases through which they passed. There are some points in which even modern English is more original than the most ancient Sanscrit. In a similar manner the AUSTRALIAN languages may, through the process of accelerated decomposition, have lost the ancient and original division of the nouns into genders, and yet they may be found in other respects to be more conservative than even the most primitive SEX-DENOTING language, and may thus throw light upon many features which have already been obscured in the HOTTENTOT dialects.

30. For the same reason, the OTYIHERERÓ and other languages of the west coast of South Africa, which are, in general, far less primitive than the KAFIR and ZULU dialects, have retained the ancient number of sixteen different classes of the nouns, while three of these classes have disappeared in the latter dialects. And the POLYNESIAN and PAPUAN languages, which have almost entirely lost this division of the nouns into classes, are yet, in some other respects, evidently much more primitive than any African member of the Prefix-pronominal class of languages. *E.g.* the distinction of exclusive forms of the plural and dual of the first person, is restricted to the Oceanic members of this class of languages.

31. I have here taken for granted a fact which I consider as sufficiently established, and which I have more fully elucidated in a paper on the PAPUAN and POLYNESIAN languages. I may here merely add that the evidence to show that the *Polynesian* dialects belong to the class of PREFIX-PRONOMINAL languages, and that the *Papuan* tongues form the link connecting them with the SOUTH AFRICAN members of this class, is of a much more direct and conclusive nature than that which is yet found to connect any of the Turanian languages with the Suffix-pronominal class. We may, therefore, well assume it as a fact, that the *tropical regions* of the *Oceanic* world, as well as those of the *African* continent, are mainly occupied by languages of the PREFIX-PRONOMINAL class, whilst the SUFFIX-PRONOMINAL languages are found rather on the outskirts of the tropics, and in the more temperate and cold latitudes. The full Negro blood of Africa and of the Papua Islands is, with very few exceptions, restricted to nations speaking Prefix-pronominal languages. The AUSTRALIAN native is probably mainly a degenerate offspring of the SOUTH INDIAN race, and it is possible that the latter may have a share of Negro blood in their veins, although neither their physiognomy nor their hair shews the least trace of such an origin; whilst the colour of the skin can be but of minor importance in deciding ethnological questions. It is, however, not at all improbable that some portion of the Negro race originally occupied the tropical districts of India, and that, through intermixture with conquering tribes from the north, they exchanged their own Prefix-pronominal dialects for a Suffix-pronominal tongue. The physical appearance of the POLYNESIAN race is perhaps still more perplexing in this respect; but we have here certain proofs of the admixture of a *yellow or light-coloured race* from the north, with the original *Papuan* or *Negrito* blood. The latter seems, in this instance, to have prevailed in retaining its own language, or, at least, the fundamental features of its structure.

32. However this may be, there is no doubt that consanguinity of race and of language do not always coincide. The dialects of the jet black SOUTH INDIANS and AUSTRALIANS seem to be derived from more northern zones, whilst those of the light-coloured *Polynesians* are distinctly of tropical origin, and appear to belong to a class of languages which is generally restricted to nations of true Negro descent. The yellow race from the north, who apparently mingled their blood with that of the original Negrito population, probably fared no worse with regard to their language than did the Norman invaders of England with their own. We know that it was through the influence of the latter that the German dialect spoken by the Anglo-Saxons was re-

moulded, and exchanged its primitive, but clumsy, structure for one poor in grammatical forms, but far more convenient and logical; and the original *Papuan* type of the *Polynesian* language seems also to have been simplified through the influence of the *yellow* race that, in this case, overran original *Negrïto* territory. It was, to a great extent, through this process of being cast in a new mould, that the original grammatical gender of the nouns in the English language was converted into a logical one; and, also, that the *Polynesian* languages lost, in their formation, the last traces of that distribution of the nouns into classes which is peculiar to the original type of the PREFIX-PRONOMINAL languages, and which is still clearly visible in *Papuan* languages. That the *Australian* and other *Turanian* languages have lost the grammatical gender of the nouns, is perhaps also due to similar influences, *i.e.*, admixture of foreign blood, or the transfer of the language of a conquering tribe to a subjugated nation.

33. We have here seen that the physical descent of nations is by no means indicative of the family or class to which their form of speech belongs. But their mental characteristics, their religious ideas, and their customs and habits, may generally be supposed to be derived from the same source as their language. It is especially remarkable, in this respect, that the two great classes of PRONOMINAL languages exhibit each a different principle of primitive *Mythology*. On the one hand, the nations whose languages belong to the *Prefix-pronominal* class are principally addicted to *Ancestor Worship*, whilst *Sidereal Worship* is common to those who speak languages of the *Suffix-pronominal* class. The religious ideas of the *Kafirs* in South Africa, the *Temnes* at Sierra Leone, the *Maories*, and other *Polynesian* peoples, are evidently originally the same; whilst the principle of *Sidereal Worship*, common to the most ancient nations of the *sex-denoting* family in Africa, Asia, and Europe, belongs also to the AUSTRALIAN, and, as far as I know, to most of the other *Turanian* nations. It is, indeed, true that the spread of one religious belief over nations of quite different descent in language as well as in blood, is by no means a rare occurrence. But proselytising religions generally possess a more substantial form and dogmatical character than the fairy tales of the worshippers of the Pleiades and other sidereal objects. The Greeks cannot be said to have been over-zealous in converting foreign nations to their own beautiful mythology; and as to ancestor-worship, its very nature renders it a merely tribal and national religion, one which can only be inherited, and not transplanted.

34. It is here difficult for me to refrain from entering more fully into the details of a subject so pre-eminently interesting, which I have treated more at length in the preface to my treatise

tise "On the Origin of Language." I may, however, be allowed to express the hope, that the time will soon come when the mythological ideas and traditions of all other branches of human kind will be as faithfully recorded as those of the Maori race have been by the exertions of Sir George Grey. Then shall we be enabled to construct a Comparative Mythology of so high and universal a character as has at present not even been imagined by the most sanguine ideologist.

35. With regard to the Australian aboriginal mythology and religious customs and observances, the library of Sir George Grey already contains several very important documents. It would appear from these as if the religious ideas now entertained by the Australian natives were the remains of a fuller and more consistent system of mythology; and, in general, the present state of their manners, customs, and habits, seems to favour the idea that they have fallen from a higher stage of civilisation. The artificial nature of their weapons, their knowledge of the art of spinning, the peculiar system of castes existing among them, and many other circumstances besides, tend to confirm this view. It is, doubtless, not too much to say, that their having been spread in small numbers over a vast continent, produced almost necessarily with them (as it has done with many European settlers in new countries) the loss of many of those acquirements of civilisation which they had originally possessed.

DISCUSSION.

Dr. CHARNOCK, after stating that the Dravidian languages were named from *Drávida*, a term used in Sanskrit writings for the southern parts of the Indian peninsula, and that the principal of these (of which there are nine) are the Tamil, Telugu, Karnáta and Malayálam, defined the area in which they are spoken. Dr. Bleek thought there was an affinity between the Australian and Drávid languages, because both were sex-denoting, but he (Dr. Charnock) doubted if this amounted to much, when the large number of this class of languages was taken into account. Dr. Bleek suggested a resemblance between the Australian and Drávid pronoun of the first person A., *aga*, D., *nán*; but it would have been nearer had the latter been written with *ng* instead of *n*; and it appeared from the paper itself that the Australian pronoun was nearer the Tibetan and Chinese. It must, however, be noted that the Chinese word was properly *wo* or *go*, although in the manuscript dictionary it was found written *ngo*. But in six of the languages of southern and western Australia (to which part of the continent the paper referred) and also in the Cornu language a different pronoun was used. Dr. Bleek suggested an affinity between the Australian feminine terminations in *atha*, *ata*, *ato*, and the Drávid feminine terminations, viz., in Tamil, *alte*, *titi*, *iti*, *ti*, *adi*, *di*; and this might seem to be corroborated by certain feminine vocables in Sanskrit, and the Tatar and Finnic-

Tatar languages; but, as Mr. Caldwell had shown, the proper feminine singular in Tamil is *al* (Karnáta, *alu*); and the terminations *atti*, etc., are derived from a Telugu neuter. The author of the paper might have shown an affinity between Australian and Drávid in the absence of the sibilant, and the presence of the nasal *ng*. On the other hand there was a paucity of elemental sounds in the Australian, the principal being the dental and the nasal, whereas the Drávid had also the aspirate, guttural, cerebral, labial, and palatal. With regard to the Australian languages themselves (they were languages, not dialects) there was some resemblance between the words of the languages of the north, those of the south, those of New South Wales, and those of the west, and to some extent between those of the south and of the west. There was considerable affinity, particularly and otherwise, between the Kamilaroi and the Wiraturei, the former being spoken about Hunter's River and Lake Macquarie, the latter at Wellington Valley, which were about two hundred miles apart. With these exceptions, there was perhaps no country in which the languages had so little in common as those of Australia. It had been said that there were two races in Australia—the Papuan and Malay. As far as languages went, after an examination of about twenty of these, he (Dr. Charnock) had only found two Papuan words; but he had not been able to trace any to the Malay.

Mr. W. C. DENDY remarked that the papers which had been read that evening were replete with statistical and philological information; yet it was to be regretted that the comparative philology of Oceania absorbed so much of the time. No doubt there was much similarity in the languages of the Pacific, but regarding monosyllabic and disyllabic dialects different and even remote tribes might constantly adopt the same syllables and names, without any concert or even knowledge of each other. So the ethnic conclusions on philology would often be very vague. The latter pages, however, of Mr. Wake's paper afforded some important subjects for debate. What were the aborigines of Australia, the present natives? If we are to believe that Australia was the cradle of our race, why do the Maoris, etc., after so many centuries, display so rude and barbarous a nature? They were, whether primitive man or not, the real savages of the earth, and probably, like the negroid, would ever remain so. The uncivilised type of the Creation, they would never attain the exaltation of the Archencephalic or Caucasian family to the standard of high intellect. He thought that the term savage should be restricted to those beings of a low organisation, who could make no progress in civilisation, but remained in their primal state of barbarism. It was a great ethnic error to stigmatise such a being as Caractacus with such an epithet, even though he were a wild uncouth Briton in his rudest state, for he was naturally endowed with all the elements of intellect, sooner or later to be developed. The speaker regretted that a flood of simple speculative philology should have so completely interfered with the full discussion of Mr. Wake's interesting paper.

Dr. R. KING referred to the use of the throwing-stick among the Esquimaux, and to the existence of polyandry among these people.

Colonel LANE FOX remarked that an instrument resembling the Australian boomerang was used by certain hill-tribes in India, and that a similar weapon was also used by the ancient Egyptians, as figured upon some of their monuments. He considered that this fact lent support to Professor Huxley's views on the relation between the Australians, Dravidians, and ancient Egyptians, as deduced from a study of their physical characteristics. The speaker also pointed out some analogy between the shields used by these peoples.

The PRESIDENT observed that the throwing-stick was certainly not peculiar to the Australians. He believed that the so-called Indian boomerang was thrown *directly* at the object, and consequently its principle was different from that of the true Australian boomerang. The system of lending wives was common among many of the lower races, and by no means restricted to the Australians. He doubted whether there was any evidence of polyandry in Australia.

Mr. WAKE, in reply, said that no doubt the throw-stick or *wommer* was as Dr. King said, used by the Esquimaux, and was known in principle to the ancient Romans. As to the boomerang, Colonel Fox pointed out that the ancient Egyptians had, as the Kolis of Southern India still have, an instrument resembling it in form. This is true, but the peculiar action of the boomerang, as described by the President, was special to itself. The possession by these peoples of the same instrument was, moreover, no real evidence of affinity, as it might have been accidentally improved in the same direction, by each of them independently, from a much simpler form, which, like the Australian *dowak* or *dwirri* (the Kafir *kerrie*), might also have been used for throwing at game. As to the moral condition of the Australians, of course the custom of wife-lending alone was no proof of especial moral degradation, but it must be taken as part of the general evidence. Although recognised polyandry did not exist among them, yet wife-lending and the system of allowing young wives to have lovers is practical polyandry. There is literally no evidence that the Australian aborigines have fallen from a higher state of civilisation. Probably they possess an Asiatic element, but, when introduced, this was doubtless as barbarous as that with which it became blended. Mr. Dendy's opinion that, as they are unimprovable, they could not be the primitive race of man is untenable. If man originated in Australia, he would ultimately spread into countries where the conditions were better fitted for progress, and where improved races would be formed from which the present ones were more immediately descended.