

ricans, who had no real writing, and whose most ancient traditions go no farther back than to some few centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards; and yet we still imagine that we can detect traces of the deluge in their rough hieroglyphics. They have their Noah, or their Deucalion, like the Indians, the Babylonians, and the Greeks. (1)

The negroes, the most degraded of human beings, whose forms are the nearest to those of brutes, and whose intellect has no where expanded so greatly as to attain a regular government, nor to the least semblance of connected information, have preserved no records, no traditions. They cannot then afford us any information concerning our inquiry, although all their characters clearly show that they escaped from the great catastrophe by some other point than the Caucasian and Altaic races, from whom they were probably separated long before this catastrophe happened.

But, it is said, if the ancient races have not left us any history, their long existence as nations is not the less attested by the progress which they made in astronomy; by observations which are easily dated, and even by the monuments still existing and which themselves bear their dates.

Thus the length of the year, such as the Egyptians are supposed to have determined it, according to the heliacal rising of Sirius, is correct for a period comprised between the year 3000 and the year 1000 before Christ, a period to which the traditions of their conquests, and the great prosperity of their empire also have reference. This accuracy

(1) See the admirable and splendid work of M. de Humboldt on the Mountains of Mexico.