

past, we must be prepared to find the signs of retardation augmenting in a like geometrical ratio ; so that the progress of a thousand years at a remote period, may correspond to that of a century in modern times, and in ages still more remote Man would more and more resemble the brutes in that attribute which causes one generation exactly to imitate in all its ways the generation which preceded it.

The extent to which even a considerably advanced state of civilisation may become fixed and stereotyped for ages, is the wonder of Europeans who travel in the East. One of my friends declared to me, that whenever the natives expressed to him a wish 'that he might live a thousand years,' the idea struck him as by no means extravagant, seeing that if he were doomed to sojourn for ever among them, he could only hope to exchange in ten centuries as many ideas, and to witness as much progress, as he could do at home in half a century.

It has sometimes happened that one nation has been conquered by another less civilised though more warlike, or that, during social and political revolutions, people have retrograded in knowledge. In such cases, the traditions of earlier ages, or of some higher and more educated caste which has been destroyed, may give rise to the notion of degeneracy from a primæval state of superior intelligence, or of science supernaturally communicated. But had the original stock of mankind been really endowed with such superior intellectual powers, and with inspired knowledge, and had possessed the same improvable nature as their posterity, the point of advancement which they would have reached ere this would have been immeasurably higher. We cannot ascertain at present the limits, whether of the beginning or the end, of the first stone period, when Man coexisted with the extinct mammalia, but that it was of great duration we cannot doubt. During those ages there would have been time for progress of which we can scarcely form a conception, and