

caprice and magnificence, we cannot contemplate the average size and number of the pyramids now extant (upwards of forty large and small), to say nothing of the monuments and inscriptions, without supposing them to have been the work of a long succession of generations. Long before the time of Homer, when Thebes had already attained such wealth and consequence, an indigenious civilisation must have been slowly matured, with its peculiar forms of worship, splendid religious ceremonial, the practice of embalming the dead, a peculiar style of sculpture and architecture, hieroglyphics, and the custom of embanking the great river to prevent the sites of towns and cities from being overflowed by the annual inundation.

In the temples are found pictorial representations of battles and sieges, processions in which trophies are carried and prisoners led captive; and if it be true, as Sir G. C. Lewis contends, that throughout the historical period the Egyptians were a peaceful and never a conquering people,* the wars to which these monuments would then refer must be so ancient as to confer on the Egyptians far higher claims to antiquity than those advanced by Bunsen and Lepsius.

Nevertheless, geologically speaking, and in reference to the date of the first age of stone, these records of the valley of the Nile may be called extremely modern. Wherever excavations have been made into the Nile mud underlying the foundations of Egyptian cities, as, for example, sixty feet below the peristyle of the obelisk of Heliopolis, and generally in the alluvial plains of the Nile, the bones met with belong to living species of quadrupeds, such as the camel, dromedary, dog, ox, and pig, without, as yet, the association in any single instance of the teeth or bone of a lost species.

In like manner in all the countries bordering the Medi-

* Lewis, Historical Survey, &c., p. 351.