

claims, their beginnings obscured by fable ; nor is it probable that the Egyptian history is an exception to all the others, or that its laboriously inscribed and painfully interpreted hieroglyphics were more exclusively devoted to the recording of real events than characters simpler of form and easier of perusal. If, as some contend, man has been a denizen of this world for some ten or twelve thousand years, what, I would ask, was he doing during the first five or six thousand? It was held by Sir Isaac Newton, that the species must have been of recent introduction on earth, seeing that all the great human discoveries and inventions, such as letters, the principles of geometry and arithmetic, printing, and the mariner's compass, lie within the historic period. The mind of man could not, he inferred, have been very long at work, or, from its very constitution, it would have discovered and invented earlier ; and all history and all archæological research bear out the inference of the philosopher. The older civilized nations lie all around the original centre of the race in Western Asia ; nor do we find any trace of a great city older than Nineveh, or of a great kingdom that preceded in its rise that of Egypt. The average life of great nations does not exceed twelve, or at most fifteen, hundred years ; and the first great nations were, we find, living within the memory of letters. Geology, too, scarce less certainly than Revelation itself, testifies that the last-born of creation was man, and that his appearance on earth is one of the most recent events of which it submits the memorials to its votaries.

But to return : The glacial or ice period in Scotland seems to have extended from the times of the stratified beds, charged with sub-arctic shells, which underlie the boulder-clay, until the land, its long period of depression over, was again rising, and had attained to an elevation less by only fifty or a hundred feet than that which it at present maintains. Such is the height over the sea level,