

## THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

not of enriching, but of disturbing, the mind, and with old age there comes a gradual decay of the brain, just as happens in all other organs. In any case, this change of views is in itself an instructive psychological fact; because, like many other forms of change of opinion, it shows that the highest psychic functions are subject to profound individual changes in the course of life, like all the other vital processes.

For the profitable construction of comparative psychology it is extremely important not to confine the critical comparison to man and the brute in general, but to put side by side the innumerable gradations of their mental activity. Only thus can we attain a clear knowledge of the long scale of psychic development which runs unbroken from the lowest, unicellular forms of life up to the mammals, and to man at their head. But even within the limits of our own race such gradations are very noticeable, and the ramifications of the "psychic ancestral tree" are very numerous. The psychic difference between the crudest savage of the lowest grade and the most perfect specimen of the highest civilization is colossal—much greater than is commonly supposed. By the due appreciation of this fact, especially in the latter half of the century, the "Anthropology of the uncivilized races" (Waitz) has received a strong support, and comparative ethnography has come to be considered extremely important for psychological purposes. Unfortunately, the enormous quantity of raw material of this science has not yet been treated in a satisfactory critical manner. What confused and mystic ideas still prevail in this department may be seen, for instance, in the *Völkergedanke* of the famous traveller, Adolf Bastian, who, though a prolific writer,