

of the American Philological Association for 1872, Mr. Trumbull notices specially the soft and musical character of the languages spoken by the western Algonkins, the Illinois and Miami tribes,—a softness arising from the fact that “the proportion of consonants to vowels in the written language is very small. Some words (he continues) are framed entirely of vowels, e. g., *uaua*, ‘he goes astray;’ *uau*, or, with imperfect diphthongs, *ua-ui*, ‘an egg;’ *uiuu*, ‘he is married;’ in many others there is only a single semi-vowel or consonant proper in half-a-dozen syllables, e. g., *aiuaakiini*, ‘there is yet room;’ *aiapia*, ‘a buck.’ In *acucuatenc*, ‘it leans, is not upright,’ we have but two consonants.”

This paucity of consonants is a well-known mark of that phonetic decay which distinguishes derivative languages. The Hawaiian is one of the youngest of the Polynesian dialects. The “Vocabulary” of this language, compiled by the Rev. Lorrin Andrews, shows many hundred words composed either of vowels alone, or of vowels with but a single consonant. *Aoaao*, the sea-breeze, *oiaio*, truth, *uiio*, to question, *hooicic*, proud, *mauauwa*, to trade, *uiiiki*, to glimmer, are words which may be compared with those quoted by Mr. Trumbull. Examples might also be drawn from our own speech, in which the German *auge* becomes *eye*, the German *legen* becomes *lay*, the German *machtig* becomes *mighty*, and so on, in numerous instances too well known to need recital. That the Algonkin languages of the Atlantic coast, which, if not harsh, are certainly hard and firm, abounding in consonants, should prove to be of more recent origin than the soft vocalic dialects of the west, is extremely improbable.

The traditions of the northern Algonkins do not, according to the native historians, Peter Jones and George Copway, trace their origin further back than to a comparatively late period, when their ancestors possessed the country which they still hold north of Lakes Huron and Superior. The Crees, from time immemorial, have wandered over the wide region extending between these lakes and Hudson’s Bay, and stretching eastward to the coast of southern Labrador. It is only in recent times, as the Rev. Father Lacombe, the author of an excellent dictionary and grammar of their language, assures us, that they have found their way west of the Red River, and have expelled the Assiniboin and the Blackfoot tribes from a por-

Iroquois nations, while the Tuteloes are to the Winnebagoes what the Hurons are to the Mohawks. That the emigration of the Dakota tribes from the east, which was inferred by me (after the discovery of the Tutelo language), from purely linguistic evidence, should be thus confirmed, must be regarded as a striking proof of the value of such evidence in ethnological science. It is gratifying to know that through the well-directed efforts of Major Powell and his able collaborators, the students of this science, in its American department, will soon have a large mass of valuable evidence at their command, in the publications of the Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnology.