

who has himself recorded this westward movement of the Crees, is disposed to question the fact of the corresponding movement of the Blackfeet. In his last letter, in reply to my inquiries, he expresses a doubt as to their former sojourn in the Red River region, and adds: 'They affirm, on the contrary, that they came from the south-west, across the mountains—that is, from the direction of Oregon and Washington Territory. There were' (he adds) 'bloody contests between the Blackfeet and the Nez-percés, as Bancroft relates, for the right of hunting on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains.' Mr. McLean, who mentions the former residence of the Blackfeet in the Red River country as an undoubted fact, also says in the same letter, 'It is supposed that the great ancestor of the Blackfeet came across the mountains.'

Here are two distinct and apparently conflicting traditions, each having good authority and evidence in its favour. One of the best tests of the truth of tradition is to be found in language. Applying this test in the present instance, we are led to some interesting conclusions. It has been seen that Mackenzie, to whom we owe our first knowledge of the Blackfoot tribes, declared that their language had no affinity with that of any other Indians whom he knew of. He was well acquainted with the Crees and Ojibways, who speak dialects of the great Algonkin stock, but he recognised no connection between their speech and that of the Blackfeet. Another traveller (Umfreville), whose book was published in 1791, gave a list of forty-four words of the Blackfoot language. The distinguished philologist Albert Gallatin, whose great work, the 'Synopsis of the Indian Tribes' (which still remains the best authority on North American philology), appeared in 1836, examined this list of Umfreville, and pronounced it sufficient to show that the language of the Blackfeet was 'different from any other known to us.' A few years later he received from an Indian trader a more extended vocabulary, and he then, in a second memoir on the subject, corrected his former statement, and showed that there was a clear affinity between the Blackfoot speech and the language of the Algonkin family. More recently the French missionaries made the same discovery, which seems to have been to them equally unexpected. M. Lacombe writes to me: 'The Blackfoot language, although far from, belongs to the same family as the Algic, Ojibway, Sauteux, Maskegon, and Cree. We discovered this analogy by studying the grammatical rules of these languages.'

Here will be noticed the rather remarkable fact that some of the ablest and most experienced of North American linguists have at first supposed the Blackfoot language to be distinct from all others, and have only discovered its connection with the Algonkin family by careful study. M. Lacombe has been good enough to send me a pretty extensive vocabulary of Blackfoot words, compared with the corresponding words in the Cree and Ojibway languages. He has added what, for the purpose in view, is equally important—many paradigms of grammatical forms in the Blackfoot, compared with similar forms in the Cree and Ojibway tongues. The Blackfoot language is thus shown to be, in its grammar, purely Algonkin. The resemblance is complete in the minutest forms, and in examining these alone it would seem incomprehensible that any doubt of the connection of this language with that stock could have been entertained. But when we turn to the vocabulary, by which the first judgment of a language is necessarily formed, the origin of the early error becomes apparent. Many of the most common words are totally different