

The perplexity I felt from this uncertainty in our Indian orthography, which so much increases the labour of studies that are in themselves sufficiently dry and forbidding to most persons, led me to consider more particularly than I had ever before done, the expediency of adopting *a uniform orthography* for the Indian, as well as other languages, which have no established written characters; and I now beg leave to submit to the Academy the few reflections which have occurred to me on this subject. Imperfect and little interesting as the remarks may be, they will be received, I have no doubt, with all that candour to which they may be entitled.* They will have produced some good, if they should stimulate any of my countrymen, who have more leisure and more favourable opportunities than fall to my lot, to pursue the inquiry; an inquiry, which, while it promotes the common cause of learning, is peculiarly within the province of American scholars, and will richly reward us in the honour we shall acquire with the learned of Europe; who, it should be remembered, have a right to expect from us, and are eagerly looking for every species of information respecting this continent.

Nor will discussions relative to the languages of the American Indians be among the least interesting which we can offer to Europeans, or the least important in themselves. For, if the origin of the population of this Continent is, as all admit, a most interesting and important question; and if we can more successfully arrive at the solution of it, by tracing the progress of the various nations of men over different regions of the globe, through the

* Those, who are acquainted with Mr. Du Ponceau's Essay on English Phonology (and no scholar in our country is ignorant of that valuable publication) will perceive, that the present paper is only an application of the general principles which are there stated, to the class of the *Indian Languages*.