

This is from the writings* of an erudite author who was merely echoing one of Humboldt's declarations.¹

North of Mexico alone, we have not less than fifty-eight families, whose languages have not anything more in common than vague and exceedingly broad characteristics, which cannot be adduced as valid criteria of ethnic assimilation.² Not one word of a particular stock will ever be found repeated in another, unless it be a loan word due to commercial intercourse; the grammar and morphology of each are irreconcilably different, with scarcely any trait of resemblance.

Does not that wonderful diversity point to extraneous origins, to some accidental importation from unrelated quarters?

The answer is ready at hand, and we implicitly find it in a third ethnological fact which is no less established: "A marked feature of the distribution of Indian linguistic families north of Mexico is the presence, or former existence, in what are now the States of California and Oregon, of more than one-third of the total number, while some other stocks . . . have a very wide distribution. The Pacific coast contrasts with the Atlantic by reason of the multiplicity of its linguistic families as compared with the few on the eastern littoral".

These remarks are not mine. I take them from the sketch of the American linguistic families in the "Hand-book of American Indians" by our common lamented friend, the late Dr. Alexander Chamberlain.³

That anthropologist had chiefly in mind the aboriginal population of what is now the United States. If we turn to Canada, the appositeness of his last remark will be greatly enhanced. As everyone knows, fully five-sixths of the territory of that country lies east of the Rocky Mountains. Yet, within that immense stretch of land, we find only three aboriginal stocks, namely the Iroquois, the Algonquin and the Déné. I do not mention the Sioux, who are a recent intrusion, or the Eskimos, who can hardly be considered an American race, since they are found in Asia and the inter-continental islands. Moreover, they belong as much to the west as to the east slope of the Rockies.

Now there are no less than six unrelated families within the remaining sixth part of Canada's territory, that is, on the Pacific coast and the land intervening between it and the Rocky Mountains. These are the Kootenays, the Salish, the Kwakwiutl, the Haidas, the Tsimpians

¹ Cardinal Wiseman, "Twelve Lectures on the Connexion between Science and revealed Religion", pp. 78-79; London, 1842.

² I am well aware of the fact that an effort is now being made to find analogies between some of these stocks with a view to reducing their number (See "American Anthropologist", Vol. XV, p. 647 *et seq.*). But these pretended verbal assimilations will seem far-fetched and little convincing to more than one American philologist.

³ Vol. I, p. 767.