

of termination with that most perfect language, the Greek, I must consider these usages, *per se*, as beautiful and advantageous.

An adequate acquaintance with the Indian languages in this quarter would throw a trustworthy and most interesting light on so much of their early history as consisted of their migrations. Passing from one Aht tribe to another Aht tribe on the outside coast of the island, even a cursory notice is sufficient to prove to the traveller the close similarity of the language, and therefore relationship of the people; but suddenly he comes to a sharp boundary, across which the speech of the people (phonetically at least) is almost or quite entirely changed, so much so, that even numerals and other radical forms contain no sign of similarity. This marked contrast appears about Cape Scott at the northern end of Vancouver Island, where the Aht language meets the language of the Quoquoulth; and again towards the south end of the island at a point between Pacheenah and Victoria, where the Aht language comes in abrupt contact with the Kowitchan. There is a decided resemblance between the Aht language and many words of the Chiniok jargon, which is a portion of the language of the Chiniok tribe at the mouth of the River Columbia, supplemented by French, English, and perhaps Spanish words. I know about a hundred words of the Chiniok jargon, and probably five hundred of the Aht language, and among these I can recall many words in both extremely similar. The correct meaning and pronunciation of these five hundred words I have had confirmed by several of the chiefs in different parts of the coast.

No knowledge connected with this people could possess a more general interest than that of their religious ideas and practices; but the subject is one as to which a traveller might easily form erroneous opinions, owing to the practical difficulty even to one skilled in the language, of ascertaining the true nature of their superstitions. Generally speaking, it is necessary, I think, to view with suspicion any very regular account given by travellers of the religion of savages; their real religious notions cannot be separated from the vague and unformed, as well as the grotesque and bestial mythology with which they are intermixed. My observations are the result of more than four years inquiry made unremittingly under favourable circumstances, and I can say thus much of the religion of the Aht Indians; it clearly exercises an influence over them, and, within the limits of its operation, almost governs their practical affairs. They are extremely unwilling to speak of what is mysterious, or akin to the spiritual, in their ideas; not, it appears, from a sense of the sacredness of the ideas, but from a notion that evil will result from any free communication on such subjects with foreigners. Even after long acquaintance, it is only now and then, when "i' the vein," that the