INDIAN LANGUAGES OF THE PACIFIC STATES
AND TERRITORIES.

A FEW decenniums of research in our newly acquired Western dominions have acquainted us with the singular fact that clusters of very numerous, and for the larger part narrowly circumscribed areas of languages exist in these vast and remote regions. In California, and north of it, one stock of language is generally represented by several, sometimes by a large number of dialects and sub-dialects; but there are instances, as in Shasta and in Klamath, where a stock is represented by one idiom only, which never had diverged into dialects, or the sub-dialects of which have become extinct in the course of time. Although certain resemblances between them may be traced in their phonological and morphological character, they are totally distinct in their radicals, and by this criterion we are enabled to attempt their classification by stocks or families. Any other than a *genealogical* classification is at present impossible, for we do not possess even the most necessary grammatical data for the majority of the languages spoken along the Pacific coast.

For the Western languages, and those of the great Interior Basin, our main sources of information are (and will be for many years to come) vocabularies of one hundred to two hundred terms each. Those obtained and published frequently bear the stamp of dilettantism, sometimes that of profound ignorance of linguistic science on the part of word-collectors, who wholly underrated the great difficulty of taking down a set of disconnected words in a totally unknown and phonetically unwieldy idiom. These word-gatherers would have fared much better, and collected more reliable material, if they had taken short sentences of popular import or texts containing no abstract ideas. For an Indian is not accustomed to think of terms incoherent, or words disconnected from others, or of abstract ideas, but uses his words merely as integral parts of a whole sentence, or in connection with others. This