

determining the commutability of the consonants in the languages from which the compared words are extracted. As far as the Déné languages are concerned, the complete list of commutable consonants will be found, in a tabulated form, in the Grammar which is to precede my great Carrier dictionary. Pending the publication of either, even a conscientious philologist may be satisfied with the instances of such convertibility noted in a previous paper, "Déné Roots."\*

While, as we have seen, some apparently different consonants are essentially the same, others, which seem co-affin and related, are so hopelessly distinct that they cannot possibly admit of commutation. Here I refer more particularly to the American languages which are celebrated for the delicacy of their phonetic elements. Perhaps none surpass the Déné in this respect. These have three *t*, seven *k* or guttural consonants, etc., all so strictly distinct that their phonetic peculiarities are often the only means of differentiating the meaning of words which, to the careless observer, would otherwise appear identical. Thus in Carrier *ta* means "lip," *tha*, "three" (things), and *'ta* "feathers." Edge (of a cutting tool) is *Ka* in the same dialect, arrow is rendered by *'kra*,† *kra* is an interjection, etc. As it is with simple consonants, even so it is when the articulation to express is double or multiple. *Tsi* in Carrier is the equivalent for "head," while *t'si* means "intestines," and *t'si* is the word for "canoe." These examples might be multiplied almost *ad infinitum*.

We have in Déné two sets of words wherein the *th* sound (Petitot's *t'*) is radical and characteristic in all the different dialects. They are synonyms for water and are proper to all words expressive of things even distantly related to water (*thú*, *thó*; *tha* in composition, *thér*, bottom of the water, etc.) and the various equivalents of the adjective "three" (*tha*, *that*, *thane*, *thanh*, etc.) In the latter words the *th* (= *t + h*) is the means of distinguishing them from the number "four," all the Déné equivalents of which begin with a simple *t*. Dr. Campbell could have learned as much by a mere glance at my published Vocabulary of Déné roots; Petitot is no less explicit in his polyglot Dictionary. Therefore I am at a loss to understand why the former should have destroyed the identity of all those words by taking away the differentiating *h* and writing *to*, *toh*, etc.‡

It was with no smaller amount of astonishment that I came, some time ago, upon a comment on two American myths wherein the author

\* Transactions of the Canadian Institute, Vol. III., p. 150.

† The *r* of this and the following word is so faintly pronounced that I regard *kr* as expressing a single articulation.

‡ See the Appendix.