

Inferences from Grammatical Evidence.

GRAMMATICAL TREATMENT OF CULTURE WORDS.

So far we have dealt only with words as such and with their analysis, where possible, into their constituent elements. Something of historical value may, further, be gleaned from the grammatical treatment of culture words. In every language there are a number of grammatical processes and elements that have ceased to be alive, as it were, that are no longer productive of new analogies, but that appear restricted in use to a limited number of stereotyped forms. Such grammatical features are clearly only survivals of features that were formerly more typical and more freely usable. They imply a considerable age for the words that they affect. This matter becomes of cultural interest when the words affected by irregular grammatical processes are of cultural reference. In this case we may infer a like antiquity for the culture concept itself. Thus, the antiquity that we have already demonstrated for cattle breeding in our own culture is further implied by such grammatical irregularities as the *-en* plural of *oxen*, the poetic plural *kine* for *cows*, and the change of *-f* to *-v-* in the plural *calves* and the verb *to calve*. Irregularities of this sort are not uncommon in American languages and are practically always indicative of the great age of the words that illustrate them and, generally speaking, of the associated concepts. Thus, in Nootka, three uncommon and evidently unproductive types of plural formation are the change of final *-l* to *-h*, reduplication with *a*-vowel, and reduplication with inserted *-l-*. Now these irregular types are respectively illustrated in *ha'wi-h* "chiefs" (singular *ha'wil*), *qaqo-l* "slaves" (singular *qo-l*), and *w:t-enil* "dogs" (singular *eni-il*; *ailic-* is used as stem in all derivatives); from which we can with some degree of safety infer that a clearly defined chief's class, the institution of slavery, and the domestication of the dog belong to a remote antiquity in this area. Similarly, the singular and plural of the Tsimshian term for "chief" (*səm'ɔ:gid*: *səmgigad*) form a quite irregular and unparalleled set of forms in that language, though they are in this case not incapable of at least partial analysis (*səm-* "very, real"; *gad* "man," *gigad* "men").