

New World was not without its creative influence on the wild children of the forest and the plain, as well as on the more civilized communities of the tropics. Can I better supplement this hope than by a reference to a Caughnawaga poetess, Miss Emily Martin, a manuscript volume of whose poems was shown at the Indian exhibition of September, 1883? Some of her poems display poetic feeling and mastery of language—the English language. It will have been noted, indeed, that it is in another tongue than their own that most of the literary Indians of America have written. Some of them have written even in Latin, and there are instances of respectable Indian linguists. Although, as long as a large proportion of those who speak them are isolated from the rest of the population, there is little fear of the native tongues growing into disuse, it is more than likely that, as civilization advances, the number of persons speaking any Indian tongue will diminish. In the Indian Territory of the United States, in the schools of the more cultivated nations, the other branches of education are studied at the expense of the native languages. Miss Jenness, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April, 1879, mentions the case of a young Cherokee lady, a teacher of languages, philosophy and mathematics, who confessed to having understood only two words of a Cherokee sermon. Intermarriage, of course, tends to produce a like result. Miss Jenness sees therein the great solution of the Indian question, as regards the civilized tribes, and it may prove the solution not only of the Indian but of many questions which now look difficult. It is possible, therefore, that some of the existing languages may in time (some of them, perhaps, before very long) wholly disappear, as others have already done. But to allow any of them thus to vanish, without some effort to discover whatever tradition and comparative philology may be able to reveal concerning them, would be a neglect only less blameworthy than the destruction of the historical monuments of Central America and Mexico.

It has, I think, been brought out by manifold evidence that some of these languages are not unfit for literary uses, and that those who spoke them were not without a consciousness of their strength and beauty and comprehensive force of expression. Such gathered testimony, of which a small share has been presented in this paper, adds much to their interest, and suggests new inducements for their critical study as important members of the great family of human speech. A good deal has been done in that way during the last forty or fifty, and more especially during the last fifteen or twenty, years. Since Mr. Stephens bade adieu to the ruins of those cities of Yucatan, which he had done so much to bring to light, a new era has begun for American archæology, and its philology has not been forgotten. But notwithstanding all the conquests of recent years, there are still many provinces of knowledge that Americanists have not yet securely won. New vistas of investigation, new paths of research which inquirers, judicious and persevering, may follow out to fruitful conclusions, have been opened up, and from every such path numerous by-paths branch off, which may offer prizes of ascertained truth to the trained eye that looks for "good in everything." In the true sense, though nearly four centuries have passed away since Columbus caught the first glad glimpse of the "dashing silver-flashing surges of St. Salvador," America remains yet to be discovered. For, until its people and their languages have been traced home to their lost kindred in the far-off prehistoric past, the work so valiantly begun by that great explorer cannot be pronounced completed.