

Whence Came the American Indians?

An Answer.

In the February *Forum*, Major J. W. Powell, Director of the Bureau of Ethnology, under the first above title, presents a profoundly interesting statement of the conclusions drawn by him from an examination of the entire field of American Ethnology. Within this domain his opinion is entitled to very respectful consideration and may generally be accepted as conclusive; in this instance, however, there is such a divergence of thought amongst Americanists that this important and final decision ought not to pass without public dissent. Humboldt the philosopher, Prescott the historian of Mexico and Peru, and Gallatin and Henry the founders of the science of American Ethnology, after many years of careful investigation reached conclusions directly opposed to those now announced by Major Powell. Many well known Ethnologists of the present day—Putnam, Thomas, Mason and Wilson—find much in the civilization of America to convince them that there exists a bond of relationship therein with Asia, and the earlier conclusions of Humboldt, Prescott, Gallatin and Henry are concurred in and supported by an ever-widening circle of students; there ought, then, to be no effort to conclude the case upon the opening argument.

“What, then, does the science of Ethnology teach of the origin or derivation of the American Indian?” is the inquiry propounded by Major Powell, and his answer is found in this language: “We are therefore abundantly warranted in saying that the American Indian did not derive his forms of government, his industrial and decorative arts, his languages, or his mythical opinions from the Old World, but developed them in the New. Man thus seems to have inhabited the New World