

therefore forced to conclude, from the evidence of language, that the tribes inhabited this hemisphere anterior to the development of articulate or grammatic speech,—that is, before words were so crystallized by phonetic development that they might enter into the compounds necessary to the evolution of a body of speech, and etymological research should be able to abstract its roots and compare them with the fundamental elements of Eastern tongues. As in historic times languages have developed their vocabularies by compounding and adding foreign elements, and in the process have sloughed off cumbersome grammatic forms and replaced them by logical forms as parts of speech, so we must conclude that the same process was at work in prehistoric times.

A vast amount of investigation has been expended in a search for some primeval language as the foundation of the language of the Aryan or Indo-European peoples. But, the longer the investigation continues, the more hopeless the problem; for the greater is the number of the primitive languages found to be. Not one language became the Aryan languages; but the latter were derived from innumerable primordial tongues. There was no single primordial American tongue; but, when languages were formed, there were as many bodies of speech as there were tribes of men.

Let us now turn to contemplate the opinions of mankind. The history of opinions is the science of sophiology. Ethnologists have long been in search of these opinions as expressed in the cosmology and mythologies of the American Indian. We now know that all our tribes were primitively zoötheistic; that is, they worshipped beast gods, which beast gods were the primordial animals,—the progenitors and prototypes of existing animals. The gods of each tribe were the particular animals of the habitat of that tribe. True, they all worshipped the heavenly bodies; but they supposed them to be the primitive animals transported to the zenith world. They also worshipped certain animals of the nadir world,—the underground beasts. Thus they assigned the birds to the heaven; the badgers, moles, and other burrowing animals to the nadir; and the other animals to the four cardinal regions. Their progenitors or prototypes are still believed to inhabit these distant regions, and such birds and beasts as are now found here to have come from these regions as their primitive homes.

Thus, all the American Indians have a cosmology of regions and a theology of animal gods; but the tribes differ from district to district in the personages of their pantheon. The gods are always organized