

that the Prākrits, or dialects of modern India, do to the literary and sacred Sanskrit. Thus the people of Quito spoke a dialect which differed scarcely at all from that at the capital ; no greater difference subsisting between them than subsists between the Queen's English and the dialect of Yorkshire, if indeed there was so much. In the northern and central parts of the sierra of Peru the Chinchay-Suyu was spoken. The Yunca was the language of the Peruvian coast, the Lama of the tribes near the great River Huallaga and the Cauqui of the people of Taayos in Central Peru. Round the shores of Lake Titticaca the Aymara language is still spoken, from the city of Puno to the south of Bolivia. Aymara is certainly very different from Quichua in pronunciation, but not more than Lowland Scotch from English south of Tweed, the vocabulary being on the whole the same, and the grammatical construction is identical with that of Quichua. Further south, in Tucuman, in the Argentine Republic, the Calchaqui, a variety of Aymara, is spoken. With the exception of the Lama, which is a branch of the great Tupi family of languages, all these dialects, and a large number more, are from one common stock, and Quichua is to be considered the elder sister and representative of the group, even if we do not regard it as the parent of them all. During the period of Inca ascendancy, Quichua superseded all the other dialects as the language of the governing race ; it was the language of a people far advanced in civilization ; it was assiduously cultivated by learned men for several centuries ; and it may therefore be selected as the most perfect of the extensive American group of languages. Hence its importance to the philologist. Through the rapid diminution of the aboriginal population, and the constantly increasing corruption of their ancient tongue, through the substitution of Spanish for Quichua words, the introduction of Spanish idioms and the loss of all purity of style, this language, once so flourishing, which was used by a polished—and we might even say splendid court—and a well-established Government, which was once spoken throughout a vast empire, is fast disappearing. Ere long, perhaps, it will entirely fade away from the memory of living generations. With it will disappear the richest form of the great American group of languages—no small loss to the student of philology. With it will be lost all the traditions which yet remain of the old glory of the Incas—all the poems, elegies and love songs which stamp the character of a once