

anna) is the Carrier equivalent not of mother (which is *nellu* in that language), but of the vocative mamma.

The foregoing will suffice to point out the danger of such an instrument as comparative philology in unskilled hands.

Nor would it seem that even trained philologists, widely known for their linguistic acumen, would always be equal to the task of properly comparing languages of which they have themselves no speaking knowledge. This is at least what we are warranted to infer from a paper presented in 1894 to the International Congress of Americanists by the late Dr. Daniel G. Brinton "on the affinities of the Othomi language with Athabaskan dialects". Therein that great anthropologist compared eighty-six words, of which he claimed that "fifty-four present considerable similarity in the two stocks, amounting in various instances to identity, twenty-eight show slight similarity, which might be weakened or strengthened by further investigation, and four present no similarity whatever".

Now I regret to have to state that, after my long years of personal study of five Déné dialects, one of which I came to speak more fluently than my own native French, I cannot with the best of will discover any single analogy between the terms Brinton quotes and those of any Déné idiom, not even between the Déné and Othomi words for father, which he rightly remarks after Alcide d'Orbigny belong "to the universal terms of human language". For the word *ta*, which he gives as the Déné equivalent of father, has that signification in no Déné dialect. It rather means lips, and there is in the eyes of a Déné just as much difference between that word and that for father as there is between it and *me*, which Brinton claims to be synonymous of mother.

What the learned doctor had in view was *-tha* (*a^hta*, or *netha*), which contains an aspiration (*t* plus *h*) which utterly differentiates this monosyllable from the non-aspirated *ta*.

The trouble with Dr. Brinton is that he took as a basis for his comparisons would-be Déné terms derived from a book by a German named J. C. E. Buschmann, which was published as early as 1856. Wherever that author may have taken his material I do not profess to know. Déné words, even when disfigured by the lack of the clicks and aspirations proper to the language, are easily recognizable as such, whether they be published by Drs. Matthews, Goddard, Sapir, or any of the northern missionaries. As to Buschmann's material, it is all Chinese to me. I do not understand a word of it.

Dr. Brinton was all the more unfortunate in his choice as he then had at his disposal my own vocabulary of Déné roots which had appeared