

changing; and since they are so, it is not likely that their idioms and words should be fixed and stable. An uniformity of speech depends upon an entire consent of a number of people in their manner of expression; but a lasting consent of a large number of people, is hardly ever to be obtained, or long to be kept up, in any one thing.*

From various reasons, we should be inclined to think, the Indians are all of one origin, and that their languages, howsoever diversified and dissimilar, were originally one.

1. Their manners, customs, observances, traditions, and superstitions, are all similar.

2. Their languages all resemble each other in *construction*.

3. Facts testify to the great changes which have been known to take place in certain languages. For some time the Hebrew, Chaldaic, Syriac, Canaanitish, Phœnician, &c. did not materially differ; as appears from the circumstance that Abraham could converse with the Chaldeans, Canaanites, and Philistines. No doubt all these languages, together with the Arabic, &c. had all one common root. But it must be evident to any one that this did not long continue so, but they became essentially different and unintelligible to each other. The same language is at one time different to what it is at another time. The Sallian verses, composed by Numa, were scarcely understood by the priests in Quintilian's time. The various modern languages of Europe, have, in three or four centuries, differed so much that it is extremely difficult to understand the languages of our forefathers. And some of the divisions of the Ochipwas and Wyandots, who have wandered to a distance from them and have remained separate for some time, have, in a considerable degree, changed their language.

In the present state of the Indian languages we may trace two or three great classes, to some of which all the rest may be found more or less to accord. Thus,

* Shuckford's Connexions, Book 2.