

wish to eat with him)—there is sufficient cause to wonder, particularly when we compare the complication of these languages with the simplicity of the Chinese and its kindred dialects in the ancient world. Whence can have arisen such a marked diversity in the forms of human speech? Nor is it only with the verbs that accessory ideas are so curiously combined in the Indian languages; it is so likewise with the other parts of speech. Take the adverb, for instance. The abstract idea of time is frequently annexed to it. Thus, if the Delawares mean to say—if you do not return—they will express it by *mattatsch gluppiueque*, which may be thus construed: *matta* is the negative adverb *no*; *tsh* (or *tsh*) is the sign of the future, with which the adverb is inflected; *gluppiueque* is the second person plural, present tense, subjunctive mood, of the verb *gluppiechdon*, to turn about, or return. In this manner, every idea meant to be conveyed by this sentence, is clearly understood. The subjunctive mood shows the uncertainty of the action; and the sign of the future tense, coupled with the adverb, points to a time not yet come, when it may or may not take place. The Latin phrase *nisi veneris* expresses all these meanings; but the English *if you do not come*, and the French *si vous ne venez pas*, have by no means the same elegant precision. The idea which, in Delaware and Latin, the subjunctive form directly conveys, is left to be gathered in the English and French, from the words *if* and *si*, and there is nothing else to point out the futurity of the action. And, where the two former languages express every thing with two words, each of the latter requires five, which yet represent a smaller number of ideas." Mr. Du Ponceau, then, justly asks, To which of all these grammatical forms is the epithet *barbarous* to be applied? This very cursory view of the general structure of the Indian languages, exemplified by the Delaware, will at least convince us, that a considerable degree of art and method has presided over their formation. Mr. Du Ponceau has summed up the general results of his laborious and extensive investigations of the American languages, including the whole continent, from Greenland to cape Horn, in three propositions—"1. that the American languages in general are rich in words and in grammatical forms, and that, in their complicated construction, the greatest order, method and regularity prevail; 2. that these complicated forms, which I call *polysynthetic*, appear to exist in all those lan-

guages, from Greenland to cape Horn; 3. that these forms appear to differ essentially from those of the ancient and modern languages of the old hemisphere." In North America, he selected for investigation the three principal mother tongues, namely, the Karalit (or language of Greenland and the Esquimaux), the Delaware, and the Iroquois; in Middle America, the Poconchi (spoken in Guatemala,) the Mexican proper, and the Tarascan dialect; in South America, the Caribbee and Araucanian languages. For the purpose of obtaining general results like those above stated, it was not necessary or useful, in the first instance, to go into minute details, nor to confound the reader by an extensive display of numerous idioms; but to take the widest possible range, so as to adduce examples from quarters the most remote from each other. In this manner, we can take a commanding position, assume our general rule, and call for exceptions. These and other results, when first announced, appeared so extraordinary in the languages of "savages," that superficial theorists, who relied upon their own visionary speculations, and mere practical men, who trusted implicitly to the loose information of illiterate Indian interpreters, boldly and arrogantly called in question the correctness of them. The learned author and his venerable friend, the reverend Mr. Heckewelder, who first drew the public attention to this subject, were most unceremoniously treated, the former as an enthusiast, whose feelings had outrun his judgment, and the latter, as at best an innocent ignoramus, and very near, if not quite, a downright impostor, in regard to a language which he had studied 40 years. Mr. Du Ponceau, like a real philosopher, a lover of true knowledge, repelled the unworthy insinuations by an appeal to facts, with a forbearance and dignity, and, we may add, a knowledge of his subject, which must have been felt by his adversaries as the severest of reproofs. The learned author, denying that he was an enthusiastic or exclusive admirer of the Indian languages, founded his arguments, in reply, upon incontrovertible facts, stated by missionaries and other writers of our own time; but, if he had thought it worth the pains, he was well aware, that proofs of the same kind might have been found in very ancient writers, whom even his adversaries would not have suspected of enthusiasm in philology; and these proofs ought to have been well known to those adversaries, and ought, in candid minds, to have repressed