

REMARKS.

In obtaining the phrases and sentences above, the student will be initiated into the best method of mastering an Indian tongue. The attempt to learn Indian words and then to construct sentences from them will only result in failure. Learn phrases and sentences first, after which you may easily discover the words and parts from which they are constructed. The student has also learned that the Indian tongue contains very few synonyms of English words, which is also true to an important extent in the more cultivated languages of the Indo-European stock; but the statement has a much wider application when we speak of Indian languages.

In proceeding further with the study of Indian languages get words in sets as much as possible, but get the sentences before the words.

The verbs "to go" and "to come," in all their forms and modifications will constitute a valuable contribution to linguistics. Generally each verb will be represented by a great number of words; for example, the verb "to go" may be represented by one word signifying to go home, another to go away from home; one to go to a place other than home, another to go from a place other than home; one to go from this place, without reference to home; one to go up, to ascend, another to go down, to descend; one to go around, and perhaps there will be a verb to go up a hill; another to go up a valley, another to go up a river, &c.

Purpose may be expressed in the verb, as to go on a visit, to go for water, &c., and the manner may also be expressed, as to go on foot, to go on horseback, to go in a canoe, &c. Distinct words may be used for each of these purposes, or a fewer number used, and these varied by incorporated particles. In like manner the English verb to break may be represented by several words, each of which will indicate the manner of performing the act, or the instrument with which it is done. Distinct words may be used, or a common word varied with incorporated particles. The verb "to strike," which appears so often in the schedule, may be represented by several words, as a word signifying to strike with the fist, to strike with a club, (to club,) to strike with the open hand, (to slap,) to strike with a whip, (to whip,) to strike with a switch, (to switch,) to strike with a flat instrument, (to paddle,) &c., &c., but there may be no word which signifies to strike in general.

In the phrases and sentences given above only the present, past, and future tenses are called for. In some languages there are elaborate systems of tenses, denoted by inflections; in others the tense-system, as denoted by inflections, is simple; and more complex tense distinctions are given by the use of adverbs.

There are about five hundred Indian languages spoken in the United States, but only a few of them have been carefully studied, and it is no easy task to give all the characteristics even of those languages which are known; but certain general facts will be observed in all, namely:

The parts of speech are meagerly differentiated—that is, one word may contain within itself two, three, or more parts of speech. A noun with its qualifications and limitations may form but one word; and the verb with its qualifications and limitations, with its subject, and with its direct and indirect object, may be but one word. Words may be used now as one part of speech, then as another. Adjectives may be declined as adjectives or conjugated as verbs.

By the use of all the other parts of speech as verbs the copula, or predicant, expressed in English by the verb "to be," becomes unnecessary, and such verbs are not found.

Incorporated particles are used to a great extent for a variety of purposes, and especially incorporated pronouns, the latter giving to many of the languages what has been known as a system of "transitions." These particles point out with special care the person and number and other class peculiarities of both the subject and object.

As an Indian word may be exceedingly complex or synthetic, containing in itself many parts of speech, when new ideas are to be expressed and hence new words coined, these new words may contain many elements, so that often their words seem to be excessively compounded. The circumstances under which we study Indian languages serve to exaggerate this characteristic. With the advent of civilized people among them new objects were seen, new ideas and thoughts were entertained, and new words needed for their expression. Such new words are often found to be elaborately compounded. Again, the missionaries or teachers among the Indians, having to convey to them ideas and thoughts new to the Indian mind, and for the expression of which the Indians had no adequate words, were compelled to coin such words, so that in many Indian languages there are words which have been introduced among them by missionaries or teachers coined from pre-existing words, and these also are often elaborately compounded. Such facts led the earlier students of Indian languages to classify them as distinct from all others, and they were called *agglutinated*.

Still another characteristic must be mentioned. Indian languages are elaborately inflected. Nouns, adjectives, and adverbs are declined, verbs are conjugated, and when different parts of speech enter into one word the different methods of inflection belonging to each appear in the single locution.

Indian languages then are excessively synthetic, excessively compounded, excessively inflected, many incorporated particles are used, and there is no verb used as a copula; all of which simply means that the parts of speech are very imperfectly differentiated. In these characteristics they differ not in kind, but only in degree, from the Indo-European tongues.