

Language and Conquest.—A Retrospect and a Forecast.

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[Abstract.]

Real, permanent conquest is something more than that of mere physical force; and, though it may be initiated by the rough methods of war, is confirmed and perpetuated by moral agencies. It is a conquest of mind by mind, a conquest in which the victor is a teacher and the vanquished a learner. It is, in fact, a conquest of civilization. * Among the evidences of this kind of conquest, by which a people's ideas of politics, of ethics and of religion are gradually but surely changed, that of language holds a prominent place. For its language is the expression of a nation's mind and character, and comprises its spiritual and intellectual history.

As articulate speech, whether an inborn gift or developed as the need for it arose in the course of ages, is that faculty which distinguishes man from his humbler fellow-creatures, so there are grades in language which separate one race of men from another. The Aryan family is very definitely marked off from that of the Semites, while the differentiation is still more decided between either of these and the great horde of tongues outside their common pale.

THE ALLOPHYLIAN LANGUAGES.

The word Allophylian which has been applied to the latter is an expression of the defeat and despair which have hitherto attended all attempts at classification. Yet those languages, thus somewhat contemptuously lumped together under a common stigma of estrangement, are spoken by the vast majority of the world's inhabitants, and some of them have played no insignificant part in the drama of human development. They comprise the mother-tongues of the millions of dwellers on the steppes of Asia, in near and farther India, in China, Corea, and Japan, in Africa, Oceanica and America. They are spoken by men of every hue, of every type of feature, of nearly every class of intelligence. The value of philology, as Dr. Tylor points out, is shown by the fact that, whereas by features alone it would have been impossible to distinguish some of the Semitic peoples from the mass of the dark-white nations, in language there is found an infallible criterion, where from mere physique we would hesitate in pronouncing a decision. It is by this criterion we know that the Basque, the Finn or the Magyar, however closely he may resemble his neighbor, in Spain, Livonia or Hungary, is nevertheless of a totally different stock.

* "It is intellect after all that conquers, not the strength of a man's arm."—Theodore Parker, quoted in Winchell's *Predamites*, pp. 157, 158.