

NORTHWESTERN DÉNÉS AND NORTHEASTERN ASIATICS.

A STUDY ON THE ORIGIN OF THE FORMER.

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It is safe to remark that few questions have so exercised the minds of investigators, given rise to such fantastic systems and resulted in such a bewildering crop of conclusions as that of the origin of the American Indians. The harvest of theories it has occasioned is nothing short of marvellous, and, in many cases, the tenacity of their promoters has been well nigh unparalleled. In fact, so acrimonious have been the discussions it has led to that it has been almost tabooed, as it were, in scientific circles such as, for instance, the International Congress of Americanists.

Hence, though not writing for that learned body, I may as well defend myself at the outset from the intention of adding my own stone to the Babel it has already built up. I shall almost confine myself, in the following pages, to the examination of well-established facts and diligently compare data the genuineness of which is above suspicion. If some conclusions naturally flow from my investigations, they will, I believe, prove all the more irresistible as they will not have been sought.

The fact that, in the face of reiterated invitations, I have waited till the present day to broach this subject and have not dared treat it before I had spent fully thirty-two years in close study will, I hope, go some way towards shielding me against the accusation of temerity, and perhaps convince the reader that, in the present essay, I have no pet theory to uphold and am impelled by the promptings of no hobby.

Moreover, my disquisitions will not bear on the whole American race—if there is such a thing in the world—but shall have for almost exclusive object those Indians in the midst of whom I have lived so long and whose languages, archæology and technology, manners and customs I have studied with a delight which must be felt to be understood, I mean the Dénés of northwestern America.

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