

A few remarks, by way of introduction, may not be out of place here, as to the character of the Ojebway Language.

The Ojebways (or Chippeways) are an ancient and extensive tribe of Indians spread over a tract of country some 1,200 miles square, partly in the States, and partly in the Dominion of Canada. Lake Superior is known by them as the great Ojebway Lake, and this would seem to point out that region as the centre of their ancient possessions. Their language, in common with those of other Indian tribes is not a written one, and, though by some considered musical, is very deficient in its phonetic elements, the Alphabet consisting only of nineteen letters, those which are wanting being C, F, H, L, R, V, and X. There are a few points in the character of the Grammar which might seem to indicate a relationship between this language and the Hebrew. Thus, it is undoubtedly a language of verbs, of roots, and stems, to which particles are affixed or prefixed to modify the meaning of the word. As, in the Hebrew, there is a causative (hiphil) form of the verb. As in the Hebrew, the termination of the third person singular of the present, indicative, determines the paradigm of a verb. And a rather singular coincidence also is, that the verb *to* is *uhyah*, pronounced very much as the Hebrew וְיָהִי.

Of nouns, the shortest in the language are naturally enough the names of wild animals, trees, and ancient Indian utensils; whereas a large number of the words now employed have been manufactured to express the idea that the object named has evidently conveyed to the Indian mind. Thus, such animals as the fox, the bear, the elk, and the beaver, which have been hunted by these people for centuries, are called *wahgoósh*, *muhquáh*, *ahák*, *aháák*; whereas animals which were unknown to them before the arrival of the white man, as horse, donkey, and monkey, receive such appellations as *papazhegóngukzhe*, the clump-footed, *mámáungesha*, the long-eared, and *nundoomáhkoomáshe*, the louse-hunter. So also with other objects that have only in modern days become familiar to the Indian. Bread is *buhquázhegun*, (that from which slices are cut off). Butter is *toodoosh-pémela* (teat-grease). A negro is *mukhdáweeyaus* (black-flesh); and a missionary, distinguished from other men by his sombre garb, receives the title of *mukkuhdá-wekonuhya*, the black-coat.

If we are inclined to find fault with our friends the Indians for expressing their ideas in such a round-about manner; they on their part may well retort that the white people must beat about just as much in order to render some of their simplest expressions. Thus: *twáhebe* means "he makes a hole in the ice for water"; *nagwáhqu* "he inserts a slip of wood into a maple tree as a spout to draw off the sap"; *pemahumáuso*, "he passes by in a canoe, singing"; *nebágoomoo*, "he lies in wait for game at night, in a canoe.