

tions, and reasons are industriously sought for, not only to prove that inferiority in point of cultivation, which would readily be admitted, but also to show that their organization is comparatively imperfect. Thus a learned member of the Berlin academy of sciences—baron William von Humboldt—in an ingenious and profound Dissertation on the Forms of Languages (*Ueber das Entstehen der grammatischen Formen und ihren Einfluss auf die Ideen-Entwicklung*, Berlin, 1822), while he admits that those of the American Indians are rich, methodical and artificial in their structure, yet would not allow them to possess what he there called genuine grammatical forms (*echte formen*), because, says he, their words are not inflected, like those of the Greek, Latin and Sanscrit, but are formed by a different process, which he calls *agglutination*; and, on that supposition, he assigned to them an inferior rank in the scale of languages, considered in the point of view of their capacity to aid the development of ideas. We have understood, however, that this very learned writer has, upon further examination, yielded, in a great degree, if not entirely, to the opinions of Mr. Du Ponceau. He certainly must have found, in the Delaware Grammar of Mr. Zeisberger, since translated and published by the Philosophical Society, under the editorial care of Mr. Du Ponceau, those inflected forms which he justly admires, and that the process, which he is pleased to call *agglutination*, is not the only one which our Indians employ in the combination of their ideas and the formation of their words. This peculiar process of compounding words, as Mr. Du Ponceau observes, in his preface to Zeisberger's Delaware Grammar, is undoubtedly the most curious thing to be found in the Indian languages. It was first observed by Egede, in his account of Greenland; and Mr. Heckewelder explains it at large, in the 18th letter of his Correspondence with Mr. Du Ponceau (*Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society*). By this means, says governor Colden, speaking of the Iroquois, these nations can increase the number of their words to any extent. None of the languages of the old world, that we know of, appear to possess this prerogative; a multitude of ideas are combined together by a process, which may be termed *agglutination*, if the term be found agreeable, but which, whatever name it may receive, is not the less a subject of real wonder to the inquiring phi-

lologist. One example, from the Delaware language, will convey a clear idea of this process of compounding; "and I have chosen," says Mr. Du Ponceau, "this word for the sake of its euphony, to which even the most delicate Italian ear will not object. When a Delaware woman is playing with a little dog or cat, or some other young animal, she will often say to it, *Kuligatschis*, which I would translate into English—*Give me your pretty little paw*, or, *What a pretty little paw you have!* This word is compounded thus: *k* is the inseparable pronoun of the second person, and may be rendered *thou* or *thy*, according to the context; *uli* (pronounced *oolee*) is part of the word *wult*, which signifies *handsome* or *pretty*; it has also other meanings, which need not be here specified; *gat* is part of the word *wichgat*, which signifies a *leg*, or *paw*; *schis* (pronounced *sheess*) is a diminutive termination, and conveys the idea of *littleness*: thus, in one word, the Indian woman says, *thy pretty little paw!* and, according to the gesture which she makes, either calls upon it to present its foot, or simply expresses her fondling admiration. In the same manner, *pilape* (a youth) is formed from *pilsil* (chaste, innocent,) and *lenape* (a man). It is difficult to find a more elegant combination of ideas, in a single word, of any existing idiom. I do not know of any language, out of this part of the world, in which words are compounded in this manner. The process consists in putting together portions of different words, so as to awaken, at the same time, in the mind of the hearer, the various ideas which they separately express. But this is not the only manner in which the American Indians combine their ideas into words. They have also many of the forms of the languages which we so much admire—the Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, Slavonic, &c.—mixed with others peculiarly their own. Indeed, the multitude of ideas, which in their languages are combined with their verbs, has justly attracted the attention of the learned in all parts of the world. It is not their transitive conjugations, expressing, at the same time, the idea of the person acting and that acted upon, that have excited so much astonishment. These are found also, though not with the same rich variety of forms, in the Hebrew and other Oriental languages. But, when two verbs, with intermediate ideas, are combined together into one, as in the Delaware *n'schingwipoma* (I do not like to eat with him), which the abbé Molina also declares to exist in the idiom of Chile—*iduanctoclarin* (I do not