

ticular interest to us because, while based on descriptive data, it is strictly historical in character. It implies the former existence of a comparatively undifferentiated language which, by gradual phonetic and morphologic changes, has diverged into distinct forms of speech. Each of these, of course, may in turn become ramified, and so on. Hence a proper classification of genetically related languages always tends to assume the form of a genealogical tree. While it may be possible to say with certainty that a given number of languages are genetically related, it is a much more embarrassing task to prove the corresponding negative, that certain languages, because offering few, if any, obvious traits of similarity, cannot be considered as going back to a common origin. It is not difficult to realize that the process of linguistic differentiation may, after a vast lapse of time, bring about such profound dissimilarity of phonetics, structure, and vocabulary that the positive proof of genetic relationship may be a difficult or even impossible task. Even the most inclusive classification of aboriginal American languages that could be made would, therefore, have positive validity as far as it went without justly allowing the necessity of the negative corollaries that might be drawn.

Chronological Inferences from Linguistic Differentiation as to Movements of Population.

COMPARISON OF DISTINCT LINGUISTIC STOCKS.

The greater the degrees of linguistic differentiation within a stock, the greater is the period of time that must be assumed for the development of such differentiations. The greater the geographical extent covered by a linguistic stock, the greater is the period of time that must be allowed for the movements of the tribes speaking its languages. The latter criterion of relative age holds good, however, only insofar as geographical extent is proportionate to degree of linguistic differentiation. A tribe may overrun a large territory at a very much more rapid rate than a language splits up into two divergent dialects. Hence, while the extensive geographical spread of a language undoubtedly