

ments and deductions. He drew his information of the Iroquoian language from the works of Zeisberger and Pyrlaeus, chiefly those of the former. A careful and unbiased examination of Zeisberger's work shows that the worthy missionary had at best only a superficial and precarious knowledge of that language, for he lacked the very elementary acquaintance with it which would have enabled him invariably to distinguish its words from their derivatives and from its sentences and phrases.

The method of inflections, which is common to European and other tongues, need not detain us; the method of intercalation or interweaving vocal elements claimed to be peculiarly characteristic of the polysynthetic scheme demands some consideration. Had it a substantial basis of fact it would indeed serve to mark off from all others those languages in which it was found to prevail. The use of a process so singular and abnormal in its operation can be established only by the evidence of unequivocal facts. The data adduced as proof that such a method of combining vocal elements is one of the most characteristic traits of all known Indian tongues are of the most questionable character. This process is not a part of Iroquoian grammar, nor has a satisfactory example of it been cited from Algonquian speech, and Rev. J. Owen Dorsey states that it does not find a place in the Siouan grammatic processes; hence it follows that the languages of these three great stocks are not polysynthetic within the meaning of this term as used by Duponceau, because they do not use the so-called "artificial elements" nor the alleged process of "interweaving together" or "intercalation" of vocables, which alone constitute the characteristic traits of the supposed "polysynthetic construction." This raises the presumption that careful study will show that other less-known Indian tongues, which, like the three named above, have been classed as polysynthetic by Duponceau and his disciples, are not founded on that theoretic plan; because wherever the syntactic and morphologic processes have been ascertained from accurate and sufficient data they have been found at variance with the polysynthetic processes, and they likewise differ greatly among themselves in their ground plans. It has, in fact, been found that those Indian languages whose lexic and syntactic phenomena have been thoroughly analyzed have not, as Duponceau maintained, a peculiar construction of language, in which "the greatest number of ideas are comprised in the least number of words," which is the motive or object of his conjectured ground plan or "plan of ideas."