

[viii] As the mode of spelling a language which has never been reduced to a grammatical system, must be arbitrary, and principally depend on the ear, I have endeavoured to use such letters as best agree with the English pronunciation; avoiding a multiplicity of consonants, which only perplex: and to enable the reader to speak so as to be understood by the natives, it is necessary to observe that *a* is generally sounded broad; and *e* final never pronounced but in monosyllables.

The following are the motives which induced me to make the Vocabulary in the Chippeway language so copious.

In the first place it is, strictly speaking, one of the mother tongues of North America, and universally spoken in council by the chiefs who reside about the great lakes, to the westward of the banks of the Mississippi, as far south as the Ohio, and as far north as Hudson's Bay; notwithstanding many of the tribes, within the space of territory I have described, speak in common a different language.— This observation is confirmed by authors of established repute, and further proved by the concurrent testimony of the Indian interpreters.

Baron de Lahontan<sup>3</sup> asserts that the Algonkin is a mother tongue, and that it is in as much estimation in North America, as Greek and Latin in Europe: this being

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<sup>3</sup> Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, was a French officer who served in Canada, in 1683-93. While commanding a small fort on Detroit River, he started on a journey to the Western country. Going by way of Mackinac, he ascended the Mississippi from the mouth of the Wisconsin, and explored part of Minnesota. In 1703 he published an account of his travels, which was largely fabulous, although of some value. The work had, however, great vogue in the eighteenth century, was translated into several languages, and much studied. He also published a French-Algonquian dictionary, to which Long here refers.— ED.