

their paternal inheritance except their language, have incurred only the contempt of the people of Europe and their descendants on this continent; all of whom, with less justice than is commonly supposed, have proudly boasted of the superiority of their own more cultivated languages as well as more civilized manners. But, at length, in consequence of the impulse originally given by the Empress Catherine of Russia, and subsequently by the illustrious Adelung, Vater, and other German literati, whose indefatigable diligence and zeal will not suffer the remotest corner of the globe nor the most uninviting department of human knowledge to remain unexplored, we are beginning to inquire into the history and character of our degraded fellow-men of this continent, and to investigate the wonderful structure of their various dialects; which, indeed, to the philosophical inquirer, will now perhaps be found to be the most curious and interesting of all the languages of man.*

* My learned friend, Mr. Du Ponceau, first directed my attention to the fact here stated respecting the Empress Catherine; and I am indebted to him for the perusal of that interesting account of the eminent services rendered to literature by this extraordinary princess, entitled "*Catherinens der Grossen Verdienste um die Vergleichende Sprachenkunde:*" which may be rendered, *The Merits of Catherine the Great in promoting the Comparative Science of Languages.* This work was published at St. Petersburg in the year 1815, by the Hon. Frederick Adelung, whom Mr. Du Ponceau, in his *Report on the Indian Languages* (p. xix) states to be "the nephew and worthy successor of the great Adelung," and "not inferior to his predecessor." The volume contains a particular account of the extensive plan of the Empress, and the measures taken by her to obtain vocabularies of all the languages in the world. She directed her Secretary of State to write to the powers of Europe, Asia, and America; and application was accordingly made to President Washington for our *Indian lan-*