

native ear as an unintelligible jargon. It was natural enough, therefore, that they should be regarded by the natives as all belonging to one great tribe. But after a time the Indians found themselves to be mistaken. They found that these white people consisted of French, English, Spaniards and Germans, all talking different languages and hailing from different countries.

Now, I have no doubt that a very great many white people make the same mistake in regard to the Indians, that the Indians, many years ago, used to make about them. Because these people resemble one another in the color of their skin, in their black hair and eyes, in their general physiognomy, habits and character, and because they talk what sounds like an unintelligible jargon, therefore they are Indians—just Indians—and nobody takes the trouble to enquire anything further about them.

It would surprise many, no doubt, to hear that upon this continent of North America there are at present spoken, or have within the past century been spoken, very nearly

A THOUSAND DIFFERENT INDIAN LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS, and that these languages and dialects have been proved to belong to no less than 56 distinct linguistic stocks, the so-called Indian dialects differing from one another, in many instances, as much as French does from English, and the stocks to which they belong having almost as wide a variation as, let us say, that which exists between English and Japanese, the very phonetic elements, letters of the alphabet, and grammatical structure being almost entirely distinct.

It surely seems a strange thing that there should be such a multiplicity of languages spoken by the aborigines of this continent, and I should think this circumstance alone might be adduced as one proof of the great antiquity of the origin of this remarkable people. Men of learning and science are beginning to regard the study of the Indians of North America, their early history, their folklore, their relics of the past, as an occupation well worthy of the most patient research and the profoundest attention. It has been said that the study of Ancient America is as well worthy of the attention of ethnologists and archaeologists as is the study of Ancient Syria and Ancient Egypt, and more and more is it becoming the subject of investigation and research.

The Indians, there can surely be no question, are a remarkable people. I have lived among them and studied them for 22 years, but I feel that I have not yet found the key to unlock

THE MYSTERY OF THEIR ORIGIN,

their peculiar traits and habits, their relationship, if any, to the rest of the world, and indeed their very existence. That these