

NOTES ON INDIAN CHILD-LANGUAGE.

BY A. F. CHAMBERLAIN.

To the language of the Indian child but little attention appears to have been given. Its importance for comparison with the speech of children in other parts of the globe is very great, and its investigation may shed some light upon theories of the origin and development of language such as the one set forth by Mr. Horatio Hale. In the last few years there have appeared several valuable works relating to the general subject of child-language, its phonology and vocabulary. Besides the studies of Schultze<sup>1</sup>, von der Gabelentz<sup>2</sup>, and Taine<sup>3</sup>, we find in "Titin: A Study of Child-Language," by Señor D. A. Machado y Alvarez, of Seville<sup>4</sup>, a most interesting investigation of the language-development of the Señor's two children, both as regards sound and signification. Only last year Prof. A. H. Sayce<sup>5</sup> published a list of curious words belonging to the "Children's Language in the Omani Dialect of Arabia," and Mr. Hale<sup>6</sup>, in his elaborate essay on the "Development of Language," has dwelt upon many of the peculiarities of infantile speech, as also has Prof. Joseph Mikch<sup>7</sup> in his interesting essay "L'Idée et la Racine." The articles of Señor Machado and Professor Sayce will be of considerable value for comparison with the Indian data given in this paper.

Canon Farrar<sup>8</sup>, discussing the question whether children if left to themselves would evolve the rudiments of a language, makes this statement:

"It is a well-known fact that the neglected children in some Canadian and Indian villages, who are often left alone for days, can and do invent for themselves a sort of *lingua franca*, partially or wholly unintelligible to all except themselves."

<sup>1</sup> Die Sprache des Kindes, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> See Hale, Op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> In Revue Philosophique, 1876, pp. 1 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Trans. of Philol. Soc. (Lond.), 1885-'7, pp. 68-74.

<sup>5</sup> "Academy" (London), No. 915, November 16, 1889, pp. 324-'5.

<sup>6</sup> Proceedings of Canadian Institute, 3rd series, Vol. VI, 1887-'8, pp. 92-134. Espec. pp. 96, 97, 113, 132.

<sup>7</sup> Revue de Linguistique et de Philologie comparée. Tome XIX, 1886, pp. 189-206, 213-231. Espec. pp. 195-197.

<sup>8</sup> Chapters on Language. New Edition, London, 1873, p. 14.