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ETHNOLOGY AND LANGUAGE.

At meeting of Asoc'n for Advancement of Science, Buffalo, N. Y., in Aug. '86, Mr. Horatio Hale, of Clinton, Ont., red a paper on the "Origin of Language," maintaining that it cud, wud, has, and does originate spontaneously, giving exampls of such, one in Kingston, Canada, where two children playing together developo a new language. It is thus posibl to hav new language-centers develop b cast-a-ways on out of the way coasts. To say that the hypothesis is plausible is to dam it with faint praise: it is highly probabl. We shal not be surpris'd at its verification, when time shal hav bit up a fortres of facts as a foundation.

The same riter, at meeting of the Asoc'n this year, red a second paper, propounding language as a beter basis for classifying races, than color of skin, or any artificial distinction. His more completed views on this constitute his articl on "Race and Language," in *Pop. Science Monthly* for Jan. This proposal of language as basis for ethnology indicates a new departure. The old classification is perhaps no more satisfactory than was the system of Linnæus in Botany.

"The Botany of Linnæus, a purely artificial system, was a contribution to human noledg, and did more in its day to enlarge the view of the vegetabl kingdom than all that had gon before. But all artificial systems must pas away. None new beter than the great Swedish naturalist that his system, being artificial, must pas away. Nature must be red in its own light. And as the botanic field became more luminous, the system of Jussieu and De Candolle sloyly emerged as a nativ growth, unfolded itself as naturally as the petals of one of its own flowers, and forcing itself upon men's intelligence as the very voice of Nature, banisht the Linnæan system forever." (*Drummond*)

Shud Language be the basis of Ethnology it wil require ful and acurat extension of the Sience of Speech-Sounds (in a word Fonetics) first, and Speech must be acuratly recorded. In this view, Speech-Analysis aquires new importance. *A word is composed of Sounds*: these ar to be studid, insted of, as hitherto, the leters, "the ded conventionalitis of orthografy." Linguists hav hitherto lookt at the leters too much as composing the word. This has led them into many absurd vagaris until the old etymology is but a series of fancis and wild geses. The new etymology is fast rising on a Sound basis. Even alredy, however, the correspondence of Race with Language is interesting and this can now be pusht as linguists ar now pursuin'g the study of living speech, or fonetics, with great vigor the world over.

Hale points out one aspect capabl of redy verification:

"Analyze carefully the dialects, nominally English, French, or Spanish, spokn by negro populations of America, and we find in them the best posibl evidence of origin of peopl who speak them. We find European words presented in corrupt state, brokn, distorto l, ofn hardly recognizable, the pronunciation strange, the gramr peculiar. Looking still more carefully, we find many words of African origin scattered thru the speech. If history wer silent, these alone wud satisfy us that ther is here a combination of languages, of which we cud detect the varius origins. Experience wud sho that in ovry such case where mixture of language exists, ther has been invariably mixture of blood. Whenever a negro or Indian community speaks a dialect mainly Eng. Fr., or Spanish, we may be certh that ther is in that community considerable infusion of Eng. Fr., or Sp. blood. Tho, in such mingling, the blood of one race and the language of another may preponderate, yet this is not perplexing Speech alone, rightly studid, wil indicate with sufficient clearnes the origin and circumstances of mixture."

SOUND-BLINDNES.

(From *Science*, 18th Nov., 1887.)

The phenomena of color-blindnes ar wel non, and hav been carefully investigated. We no that some can see great distances, discern minute objects, enjoy works of art and yet ar unable to distinguish certn colors. Physiologists, and especially psychologists, hav also found similar phenomena with hearing. 'Sound-defines' [tone-defines] wud naturally describe this, but many prefer 'sound-blindnes.'

A riter in *London Fur. of Education* uses the term 'sound-blindnes,' and comes to it from a pedagogic stand-point. He states that difficultis some hav in lerning to spel and in lerning to pronounce foren languages suggested sound-blindnes,--inability to distinguish particular shades of sound, arising from some organic defect in the ear, distinct from defines as comonly understood.

He notist that a small boy, riting down a line of poetry lern'd by hart, had speld *very* 'voght.' By experiment it was found that he cud hear no diference between 'very,' 'sorry' and 'polly,' and yet was not def. The boy had great difficulty in lerning to read. Teachers testified that it is quite comon to meet children very slo in lerning to read precisely, becaus sounds, diferent to the teacher, wer not diferent to them. When a clas red aloud, some of them ofn giv, insted of a word, its synonym, tho the later be quite diferent in sound from the former. "Boys apt to do this wer those whose power of hearing was alredy under suspision. I inferd that they asociated the printed leters not with their sound but with what they represented, much as if they had seen a picture."

Another interesting observation is that of a boy, aged 11, a bad speler, who, riting from dictation, makes mistakes in words which hav r or l. He cannot pronounce these leters.