

THE USE AND ABUSE OF PHILOLOGY.

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WE frequently hear in scientific circles of craniometry and other anthropological measurements; our literature is full of descriptions of the manners and customs of different peoples; their social organization is detailed and their psychological attainments studied, while the archæologist never tires of submitting the claims of his favorite science to our consideration. Yet, when it is a question of determining with precision and without fear of error the ethnic differences upon which is based the distribution of mankind into distinct races, philology alone is entitled to unqualified confidence and respect. In other words, philology is the best, nay, the only safe criterion of ethnological certitude.

This proposition I have repeatedly formulated, and my first intention, on being asked to contribute my mite towards the fund of information which is to become the Memorial Volume, was to try and put it beyond the possibility of cavil. Proofs of the fallibility of the other branches of ethnological science are many and weighty. They could readily be presented for the appreciation of the indulgent reader. Circumstances however, have arisen whereby I have been led to abandon, or at least postpone, such a course in favor of more timely considerations.

Let it suffice, just now, to state by way of an *a fortiori* argument that, not only is language the best criterion of racial differentiations, but it can even be represented as greatly subserving the ends of history through archæology and mythology. Had not Champollion and Sir Henry Rawlinson previously familiarized themselves with the dialects of ancient Egypt and Assyria, those hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions which for ages had puzzled legions of savants would still wait for a philologist equal to the task of deciphering them. And why is it, I may ask, that the researches of the American, French and German scientists relative to the Maya and other aboriginal characters have not yielded more practical results? Let Dr. D. G. Brinton answer for me. In the case of the former, it is largely, he says, "because none of the interpreters have