

tions, simply because they do not trace their immediate origin from the Eastern races, from whom we have received the priceless gift of alphabetical writing; but that they really possess such productions, as well as the Malays, Polynesians and South Africans, no one can doubt who has read of Indian prophets, orators and story-tellers, with their fluency and oratorical powers, who has listened to their multiform, sometimes scurrilous mythological tales or yarns, heard their war-shouts, the word accompanying their dancing tunes, or in the darkness of the night overheard some of their lugubrious, heart-moving dirges sung by wailing women, as they slowly marched in file around the corpse of some relative, the whole scene lit up by the flickering flames of the lurid camp-fires. A volume of Schoolcraft's "Indians" contains a large number of Odjibway songs, and the author of this article has himself obtained over seventy most interesting and popular songs from the Cayuses, Warm Springs, Klamaths, Taos, Iroquois and Abnákis, in their original form. So the white race alone is to blame for its imperfect knowledge of the unwritten, often highly poetical productions of an illiterate race.

The science of linguistics is of so recent a date, that few men have yet grasped its real position among the other sciences. We must henceforth consider it as a *science of nature*, and reject the old conception of it as a science of the human mind. Stylistics and rhetorics of a language may be called the province of the human mind, but language itself is a product of nature, produced through human instrumentality. Man does not invent his language, any more than a bird does its twittering, or a tree its leaves. It requires a whole nation to produce a language, and even then such nation must start from phonetic elements already understood.

The innumerable agencies which give to a country its climate will also, by length of time, shape man and his language. Nothing is fortuitous or arbitrary in human speech and its historical developments; the most insignificant word or sound has its history, and the linguist's task is to investigate its record. Thus every language on this globe is perfect, but perfect only for the purpose it is intended to fulfill; Indian thought runs in another, more concrete direction than ours, and therefore Indian speech is shaped very differently from indogermanic models, which we, in our inherited and unjustified pride, are prone to regard as the only models of linguistic perfection. The Indian neglects to express with accuracy some relations which seem of paramount importance to us, as tense and sex, but his language is largely superior to ours in the variety of its personal pronouns, in many forms expressing the mode of action, or