

INDIAN MIGRATIONS, AS EVIDENCED BY LANGUAGE.

The only satisfactory evidence of the affiliation or direct relationship of two communities, apart from authentic historical records, is to be found in their speech. When the languages of two nations or tribes show a close resemblance in grammar and vocabulary, we may at once infer a common descent, if not of the whole, at least of some portion of the two communities. This is a rule which, so far as experience goes, admits of no exception. The cases which are frequently referred to, of negroes in the West Indies and the Southern States who speak English, French, Spanish and Dutch, and of Indians in Canada and Mexico who speak French and Spanish, are not exceptions, but may, in fact, be reckoned among the strongest evidences in proof of the rule; because we know historically that, in every one of these cases, there has been not merely an intimate connection of these negroes and Indians with people of the nations whose languages they have adopted, but a large infusion of the blood of those nations. It may be affirmed with confidence that no contrary example can be shown. If an explorer should find in the heart of Africa, or in some newly discovered island of Australasia, a black and woolly-haired people whose language showed in its numerals, its pronouns, its names for near relationships, and the conjugation of its verbs, indubitable traces of resemblance to the Arabic tongue, we should infer without hesitation not merely that this people had been at some time visited by Arabs, but that an Arabian people had been in some way intermingled among them for generations, and had left, along with their language, a large infusion of Arab blood. If, besides the resemblance of speech, there should be a resemblance of physical traits,—if the people not only spoke a language similar to the Arabic, but had the stature, features, complexion and hair of Arabs,—we should entertain no doubt that they were, in the main, of Arabian descent.

When the evidence of language has satisfied us that two communities are thus connected, our next inquiry relates to the nature of the connection. Is one of them derived from the other, and if so, which was the ancestral stock? Or is this connection that of brotherhood, and do they deduce their origin