

roots of the Slavonic and the Biscayan, have those resemblances of internal mechanism which are found in the Sanscrit, the Persian, the Greek, and the German languages. Almost everywhere in the New World we recognize a multiplicity of forms and tenses in the verb,* an ingenious method of indicating beforehand, either by inflexion of the personal pronouns, which form the terminations of the verb, or by an intercalated suffix, the nature and the relation of its object and its subject, and of distinguishing whether the object be animate or inanimate, of the masculine or the feminine gender, simple or in complex number. It is on account of this general analogy of structure,—it is because American languages which have no words in common (for instance, the Mexican and the Quichua), resemble each other by their organization, and form complete contrasts to the languages of Latin Europe, that the Indians of the Missions familiarize themselves more easily with an American idiom than with the Spanish. In the forests of the Orinoco I have seen the rudest Indians speak two or three tongues. Savages of different nations often communicate their ideas to each other by an idiom not their own.

If the system of the Jesuits had been followed, languages, which already occupy a vast extent of country, would have become almost general. In Terra Firma and on the Orinoco, the Caribbean and the Tamanac alone would now be spoken ;

* In the Greenland language, for example, the multiplicity of the pronouns governed by the verb produces twenty-seven forms for every tense of the Indicative mood. It is surprising to find, among nations now ranking in the lowest degree of civilization, this desire of graduating the relations of time, this superabundance of modifications introduced into the verb, to characterise the object. *Matarpa*, he takes it away : *mat-tarpet*, thou takest it away : *mattarpatit*, he takes it away from thee : *mattarpagit*, I take away from thee. And in the preterite of the same verb, *mattara*, he has taken it away : *mattaratit*, he has taken it away from thee. This example from the Greenland language shows how the governed and the personal pronouns form one compound, in the American languages, with the root of the verb. These slight differences in the form of the verb, according to the nature of the pronouns governed by it, is found in the Old World only in the Biscayan and Congo languages (Vater, Mithridates. William von Humboldt, On the Basque Language). Strange conformity in the structure of languages on spots so distant, and among three races of men so different,—the white Catalonians, the black Congos, and the copper-coloured Americans !