

vague notions of the Semitic languages. Did motives supposed to be favourable to religion, give rise to this extraordinary theory? In the north of America, among the Choc-taws and the Chickasaws, travellers somewhat credulous have heard the strains of the Hallelujah* of the Hebrews; as, according to the Pundits, the three sacred words of the mysteries of the Eleusis† (*konx om pax*) resound still in the Indies. I do not mean to suggest, that the nations of Latin Europe may have called whatever has a foreign physiognomy Hebrew or Biscayan, as for a long time all those monuments were called Egyptian, which were not in the Grecian or Roman style. I am rather disposed to think that the grammatical system of the American idioms has confirmed the missionaries of the sixteenth century in their ideas respecting the Asiatic origin of the nations of the New World. The tedious compilation of Father Garcia, *Tratado del Origen de los Indios*,‡ is a proof of this. The position of the possessive and personal pronouns at the end of the noun and the verb, as well as the numerous tenses of the latter, characterize the Hebrew and the other Semitic languages. Some of the missionaries were struck at finding the same peculiarities in the American tongues: they did not reflect, that the analogy of a few scattered features does not prove languages to belong to the same stock.

It appears less astonishing, that men, who are well acquainted with only two languages extremely heterogeneous, the Castilian and the Biscayan, should have found in the latter a family resemblance to the American languages. The composition of words, the facility with which the partial elements are detected, the forms of the verbs, and their different modifications, may have caused and kept up this illusion. But we repeat, an equal tendency towards aggregation or incorporation does not constitute an identity of origin. The following are examples of the relations between the American and Biscayan languages; idioms totally different in their roots.

In Chayma, *quenpotupra quoguaz*, 'I do not know,' properly, 'knowing not I am.' In Tamanac, *jarer-uac-ure*,

* L'Escarbot, Charlevoix, and even Adair (Hist. of the American Indians, 1775).

† Asiat. Res., vol. v. Ouvaroff on the Eleusinian Mysteries, 1816.

‡ Treatise on the Origin of the Indians.