

valleys and high mountain fastnesses, where they maintained their independence, as do the Circassians in our time in spite of the power of Russia.

In the Himalayan Mountains, from Assam to its extreme north-western limit, and generally in the more hilly parts of British India, the diversity of languages is surprisingly great, impeding the advance of civilisation and the labours of the missionary. In South America and Mexico, Alexander Humboldt reckoned the distinct tongues by hundreds, and those of Africa are said to be equally numerous. Even in China, some eighteen provincial dialects prevail, almost all deviating so much from others that the speakers are not mutually intelligible, and besides these there are other distinct forms of speech in the mountains of the same empire.

The philologist might next proceed to point out that the geographical relations of living and dead languages favour the hypothesis of the living ones having been derived from the extinct, in spite of our inability, in most instances, to adduce documentary evidence of the fact or to discover monuments of all the intermediate and transitional dialects which must have existed. Thus he would observe that the modern Romance languages are spoken exactly where the ancient Romans once lived or ruled, and the Greek of our days where the older classical Greek was formerly spoken. Exceptions to this rule might be detected, but they would be explicable by reference to colonisation and conquest.

As to the many and wide gaps sometimes encountered between the dead and living languages, we must remember that it is not part of the plan of any people to preserve memorials of their forms of speech expressly for the edification of posterity. Their MSS. and inscriptions serve some present purpose, are occasional and imperfect from the first, and are rendered more fragmentary in the course of time, some being intentionally destroyed, others lost by the decay