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ART. I.—*On the Geographical Distribution of the principal Languages of India, and the feasibility of introducing English as a Lingua Franca.* By the Hon'ble Sir ERSKINE PERRY, President.

Presented July 1852.

INDIA, according to the most temperate authorities,* contains about one hundred and forty-one millions of inhabitants, who are distributed by Native geographers over fifty-seven, or, as some write, eighty-four provinces, all with peculiar languages.† Although this enumeration of different languages is, as we shall presently see, grossly exaggerated, there is no doubt that the diversity of tongues is very great; and the obstacle thereby interposed to free intercourse, and the diffusion of ideas from any central authority, is too obvious to be pointed out. My connection with the Board of Education at this Presidency having frequently led me to observe the complete isolation by which the intellectual movement of one province is separated from that of another, I have been induced to consider whether any means were at hand for encouraging the growth of a common medium of intercourse amongst

* Elphinstone's *India*, vol. i. p. 5.

† See Colebrooke, in *As. Res.* vol. xxiii. p. 220; but these are mythical numbers.

the educated minds of India. But the subject is too literary to allow of its being properly treated in a minute for a Government Board: it is, possibly, too political for discussion in a Society like this; yet, as the true object of the investigation of Oriental arts, sciences, and literature, for which this Society was established in 1804, is identical with that of politics, or *πολιτεία*, in its large sense, *i. e.* the art or science of increasing the happiness of man in civilized society; and as party feeling, fortunately, does not interpose in India, to cloud the judgment or awaken angry passions, I trust I may be allowed, without impropriety, to enter a field of inquiry, which, in some degree, touches upon the province of good government.

I.

I will first of all describe, as accurately as my means enable me, the limits of the principal languages of India; but, in our present state of knowledge, no such sketch can be anything more than an approximation to the truth, nor is it likely, for a long period to come, that an accurate language-map of India can be constructed. For, first of all, the limits of two neighbouring languages often occur in wild, unexplored, or unpeopled, tracts of country, so as to prevent the tracing of a precise boundary line; and, secondly, there have been such frequent vicissitudes among the governing Hindu races, each extending its language in turn over the territory of its neighbour, as to have created in many parts a complicated intermingling of languages, which would require for their unravelment a more minute inquiry, and closer study of the localities, than any European has yet been able to institute. Thus, in the country called, in Hindu nomenclature, *Karnátaka Désa*, or the high table-land above the Western and Eastern Gháts of the peninsula,—which the English call, with no very precise definition, the Deccan,* the Southern Maratha Country, and Mysore,—Canarese and Marátha dynasties have alternately succeeded each other, and both have been broken in upon by invading powers from the Coromandel Coast in the south, so that the Canarese, Maráthi, and Tamil languages, have penetrated, each with a deep indent, into the language-region of its neighbours. Thus, on travelling through the Sátára districts last January, I found Canarese spoken in villages much to the north of the

* The ancient Hindu geographers gave the name of Dakshina, or the South, to the whole of India south of the Narbadda: the Mahomedans confined this name to the country south of the Krishna, while the English apply it in a different sense from either, and seem to confine it to the table-land between Kandésh and the Krishna.

limits assigned to it by the best authorities, reaching nearly up to Pandarpur; Maráthi, on the other hand, extends far to the south of Pandarpur, and Canaresc and Marátha villages will be found to alternate throughout these districts, just as *Johannes von Müller* describes villages in Switzerland, where French is spoken on one side of a crooked street, and German on the other.

Notwithstanding, however, the numerous languages which have been assigned by Bráhmans to India, it was perceived by them from a very early period that a simple classification might be made; and a two-fold division was determined on, depending, mainly, on geographical considerations, by which five northern languages were grouped in one class, and five southern languages in another, under the denominations, so familiar to us in India, of *Panch Gaur* and *Panch Dravid*.

According to the enumeration of the Bráhman pundits, whom Colebrooke cites,* the following is the distribution usually given; and I need scarcely mention, that whilst the name of *Gaur*, or Bengal, is extended to the whole of Northern India, or Hindustan, the name of that part of the Coromandel Coast between the twelfth and thirteenth parallels of north latitude, called *Dravida*, is applied to the whole peninsula:—

<i>The five "Gaur."</i>	<i>The five "Dravids."</i>
1, Saraswati (extinct).	1, Tamil.
2, Kanoji.	2, Maráthi.
3, Gaur, or Bengáli.	3, Carnatic.
4, Maithila, or Tirhuti.	4, Telinga, or Telugu.
5, Orissa, or Urya.	5, Gujaráti.

Mr. Elphinstone† gives a somewhat different division, assigning Gujaráti to the northern, and Urya to the southern languages; and the *Haiga* Bráhmans, in Cánara, give a third list of the *Dravids*, excluding, strangely enough, the country on the Malabar Coast where they themselves are domiciled.‡

But it is unnecessary to examine these Bráhminical divisions further, as they are founded on no scientific principle, and convey little accurate information, although, by accident, the binary or mechanical division which geography, or, perhaps, a fanciful notion of symmetry, seems to have suggested, is the same which the increased knowledge of philology in the present day enables us to adopt. It would be unjust, however,

* See Colebrooke, *As. Res.* vol. xxiii. p. 219.

† *India*, vol. i. p. 278.

‡ *F. Buchanan's Mysore*, vol. iii. p. 90.

not to add that the largeness of views, and the great amount of observation which rendered a generalization so nearly approaching to the truth possible, does infinite credit to Bráhmínical intellect at the early period when these conclusions were drawn.

When European scholars first began to study the languages of India with diligence, they were inclined to suppose that the southern languages, as well as the northern, were derived from the Sanskrit. Dr. Cary, Wilkins, and Colebrooke, were all of this opinion. Mr. Campbell, in his Grammar of the Telugu or Telinga language, was the first to dispute this affiliation, and he pointed out the mode in which the Bráhmans had made large importations from the sacred language of their religion into all the southern tongues, so as to give the latter the appearance of a derivation from the Sanskrit. Ellis, who is the great authority on the southern languages, carried the investigation further; and he showed that the chief languages of the peninsula,—viz. (1) Kárnátaca, (2) Telugu, (3) Malayálam, (4) Tulu, (5) Tamil,—all belong to one family,* of which the latter is the most cultivated; and now, Campbell, Ellis, Rask, and Lassen, all seem to agree with the Revd. Mr. Taylor, that the Tamil and Sanskrit languages belong to essentially distinct stocks.† Mr. Taylor further thinks that there was originally one simple, homogeneous dialect, spoken by rude aborigines, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, of which the Tamil is the cultivated representative.

It scarcely, however, accords with the philological experience of other parts of the world, that at a period when the Native of India was a rude savage, one homogeneous tongue should prevail over the vast limits comprehended between the Himalayas and the Equator—for Ceylon, the Laccadives, and the Maldives equally fall within the Tamiloid zone. It would rather seem, that, if such a wide extension of one language or of closely allied languages can be demonstrated, its diffusion must be owing to the operations of some race already arrived at a considerable degree of culture. Undoubtedly the evidence of this wide diffusion of what I term, (in order to avoid theorizing,) a Tamiloid language, is very strong, and it is accumulating every day. Thus Mr. Reeve points out, in the Preface to his Canarese Dictionary, that “the affinity between the Teloo goo and Karnátaca is so great, that frequently it is only necessary to change an initial or an inflection to make the correspondence complete.” But Ellis, as we have seen, shows both of

* See note in Campbell's Telugu Grammar, p. 3.

† See Preface to Rottler's Tamil Dictionary.

these languages to be cognate with Tamil. Again: the Tamil-speaking inhabitants of the Coromandel Coast can make themselves intelligible when they get into the districts on the opposite side of the peninsula, where Malayálam is vernacular.* So "the language of Tulava, (on the Coast of Canara,) has a strong resemblance to that of Malayála,"† though, as I gather from the Tulu-speaking Natives of the Malabar Coast whom I have met in Bombay,‡ they are unable to understand their Malayálam neighbours. But it is not only in the fertile lowlands near the sea on either side of the peninsula, and on the easily-traversed plains of the plateau, that the Tamil family of languages is to be found. The valuable collection of manuscripts accumulated by Colonel Mackenzie, and the inscriptions gathered at great expense and pains by Mr. Walter Elliot,|| afford us evidence of those wide provinces having been reigned over by Tamil and Canarese dynasties within historical periods, and hence the diffusion of these languages is explained. It is only when we penetrate the more remote and wild localities of India,—that singular language-group, or isle of languages (as Ritter terms it), 'the Nil Giris, where, it is said, five distinct languages are vernacular, the wilds of Gondwana, the hill tops of Central India and of Sindh,—and listen to the evidence as to the traces there discoverable of a Tamiloid tongue, that we become convinced of its wide and early diffusion. Captain Harkness, who was the first scholar to examine closely the language spoken by that remarkable race the *Todas* on the Nil Giris, pronounces it to be closely allied to the Tamil,§ and the subsequent investigations of the German Missionaries confirm this conclusion.¶ The inhabitants of the mountains of Coorg, who in independent bearing, good looks, and all the outward signs of well being, are by far the finest race I have seen in India, speak a language called *Kodagu*, which Mr.

* F. Buchanan's *Mysore*, vol. ii. p. 346.

† *Ibid*, vol. iii. p. 90.

‡ Hundreds of these men (they call themselves two thousand) are to be found in Bombay as palanquin bearers, and hamalls; but the bearer caste generally in Bombay, called Camatties, and the *Bui* above the Gháts in the Deccan, who carry palanquins, are from Telinghana. The Camatties in Bombay have been settled here for a long period, but retain their Telugu language, and by the last census it appears that the part of the native town where they are located contains above eleven thousand souls.

|| See article on Hindu Inscriptions. *Jl. Rl. As. Soc.* vol. iv. p. 8.

§ Description of a singular aboriginal race, &c. by Captain Harkness. London: 1832.

¶ See paper by Dr. Stevenson in this *Journal*, vol. i. p. 155; and a note by Dr. Schmid, *ibid*, vol. iii. p. 84.

Ellis informs us is a dialect of Tulu.* On the crest of that high and romantic range, extending from Cochin to Cape Comorin, and reaching to eight or nine thousand feet above the sea, Francis Buchanan found that the rude tribes spoke "a dialect differing only in accent from Tamil."† Again: Mr. Ellis points out that the language of the mountaineers of Rajmahal, dividing Bengal from Bahar, abounds in terms common to the Tamil and Telinga; and Mr. Hodgson, who has paid particular attention to this subject, after comparing the vocabularies of seven languages now spoken by rude tribes in Central India, pronounces all of them to belong to the Tamil;‡ and the Brahui, on the mountains of Sindh, are said to have a language very like that of the Todas. Indeed, the interesting inquiries which our colleague Dr. Stevenson is now conducting in this Journal respecting the grammatical structure of Indian languages, render it not impossible that a Tamiloid tongue will be hereafter found to have constituted the original staple of all the languages of India, although it has become obscured, and in some instances, like Celtic by the Anglo-Saxon, completely effaced by the preponderance of the intruding Arian element from the north.

However this may be, in the state of knowledge which we now possess, we are able to determine that a closely allied family of languages extends over the whole of Southern India, cropping out on the hill tops in Central India, and on the mountains of the West, and, perhaps, also traceable on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. According to Rask, who, with great lingual qualifications, examined the language of Ceylon on the spot, Cinghalese also, contrary to the received opinion, belongs to this family;|| and Lassen states that the languages of the Laccadives and Maldives come within the same category.§

Advancing towards the north, we are met by the intruding languages of a different family, of which Maráthi, or its dialect Konkani, is the southernmost representative; and, according to the evidence which Lassen with great industry has collected, it would appear that a race

* Campbell's Telugu Grammar; but I learn from the Rev. Mr. Mögling of Mangalore that it is more closely allied to Tamil and Malayálam than to Tulu.

† Mysore, vol. ii. p. 338.

‡ Paper read before the Calcutta Asiatic Society, December 1848.

|| Preface to *Singalesisk Skriflaera*. Colombo: 1821. Cited by Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, i. p. 199.

§ The Missionary Woigle attributes the language of these islands to the Malayan family, but apparently without reason.—*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1848, p. 258.

from Central Asia, entering India at the north-west,* had diffused themselves and their language, their religion and their Bráhmínical distinctions, over the plains of India, at a period before true history begins. We may even see traces on record of the mode by which, within a comparatively recent period, the priestly race from the north insinuated themselves into Southern India. In a manuscript in the Malayálam language, written on palm leaves, and forming part of Colonel Mackenzie's collection, an account is given of the introduction of Bráhmans from the north, which seems to contain some glimpses of true history. After describing the elevation of the land on the Malabar Coast by the power of Parasu Rama,—a tradition which, from its recurrence in one shape or another along the whole coast, and from geological evidence, may possibly shadow forth a true physical fact, the gradual elevation of the sea-board,—it is said “he made the ocean withdraw, and Kerála was created.” Rama then “brought Bráhmans from many points, and placed them in Kerálam, but they would not stay there. Therefore, having considered, he brought the Arya Bráhmans from the *Utara Bhumi*, [Land of the North,] and settled them there. The Arya Bráhmans continued to reside with constancy in Malayálam. This being heard by those that went away at first, they returned again, and these are called the Pattan Tulawar; but having originally come from different quarters, and of different tribes, the Pattan Tulawar *still use different languages*. Afterwards numbers of Tamuler came thither, and between the Tamuler Bráhmans who came, and the Bráhmanar who were already residing, there arose disputes about the burning of a dead body, &c. &c. But how they became Tamuler, and what the truth was, and how the *Bráhma Uat'ya* which had been incurred was cleared from them, Iswar only knows.”†

As a general conclusion, therefore, we may say that the whole of India may be divided between two classes of language—the language of the intruding Arians, or Sanskritoid, in the north, and the language of a civilized race in the south of India, represented by its most cultivated branch, the Tamil. Just as the greater and most civilized part of Europe may be divided between two distinct families of language, the Teutonic and the Romanesque. According to this division, the principal languages of India will be ranged as follows :—

* *Indische Alterthumskunde*, i. p. 400, et seq. Dr. Weber, however, contends, that the Arians entered India from the north. See *Indische Studien*, p. 165. Leipsic : 1849.

† Mackenzie Collection, vol. ii. p. 83.

<i>Arian, Sanskritoid, or Northern Family.</i>		<i>Turanian, Tamiloid, or Southern Family.</i>
1, Hindi.	2, Kashmiri.†	1, Telugu, or Telinga.
<i>a</i> Hindustani, or	3, Bengáli.	2, Karnátaka.
Urdu.	<i>a</i> Tirhuti.	3, Tamil.
<i>b</i> Brij Básha.	4, Gujaráti.	4, Malayálam.
<i>c</i> Rangri Básha.*	<i>a</i> Kachi.‡	5, Tulu.
<i>d</i> Panjábi.	5, Maráthi.	6, Gondwani?
<i>e</i> Multáni.	6, Konkani.	
<i>f</i> Játaki.	7, Urya.	
<i>g</i> Sindhi.		
<i>h</i> Marwádi.		

Speaking generally, the whole of Upper India, including the Panjáb, from the Himalayan to the Vindhyan range, but exclusive of Bengal, may be said to be possessed by one language, the Hindi. Nor is it only on the plains of Hindustan that it is to be found. On the southern slope of the Himalayas, in Kumaon and Gehrwal, Mr. Trail informs us the language is pure Hindi;|| and generally along the sub-Himalayan range as far as the Gogra river, the impure Hindi dialect introduced by the Gorkhas from the plains appears to be extirpating the vernacular Thibetan tongues of the aboriginal mountaineers.§ Even beyond the limits I have mentioned, the genius of the language seems to prevail, as Mr. Masson found that with Hindi he could make himself intelligible throughout the whole of Kohistan.¶ It is not meant by the use of the word "Hindi" to denote a language of fixed characters, like French or Latin, or even like Bengáli and Maráthi: the term is only used to comprehend under a common designation the various dialects of a language essentially one, but which has received no great cultivation in any of its forms. According to the Bráhmaṇ pundits of Benares, "there are hundreds of dialects equally entitled to the name."** The Brij

* Malcolm's Central India, vol. ii.

† In the language-map accompanying this article, Kashmiri ought to have been denoted as a distinct language rather than as a branch of Hindi.

‡ Kachi, or the language of Cutch, might, probably, have been better classed under Hindi.

|| Official Reports on Kumaon, published by the orders of the Lieutenant Governor. Agra: 1848.

§ Mr. Hodgson, As. Res. vol. xvi. p. 415.

¶ Masson's Journey, vol. i. p. 220; Ibid, vol. ii. p. 277.

** Report of Bombay Board of Education, 1848, p. 5.

Básha, (or Bhákha, as it is pronounced on the Ganges,) and the Panjábi, are the two most cultivated varieties of it,* but the Panjábi passes into Multáni, which a good philologist has shown in this journal to be a corrupted form of Panjábi; whilst Játaki, again, further to the south, is a corrupted form of Multáni,† and Síndhi and Hindi, in the opinion of an excellent Hindi scholar, are only provincial varieties.‡ But Síndhi, according to Lieut. Burton, who has studied it carefully on the spot, is “directly derived from Sanskrit, yet is a perfectly distinct dialect.”|| When the Maráthas extended their conquests into Hindustan, they found Hindi everywhere prevalent, from the limits of the desert to the frontiers of Bundelcund; and, finding it different from their own tongue, they called it, contemptuously, Rangri Básha, *quasi*, barbarous jargon.§ Sir John Malcolm extends the Rangri Bhákha as far west as the Indus, and east as far as the frontier of Bundelcund, where, according to Ritter,¶ the Bengáli tongue begins; but this is an error, for in Bundelcund, as in all the country to the Indus from the western frontier of Bengal, dialects of Hindi prevail.** The Marwádi and other dialects of Rájputána are said to be little connected with one another, but it is clear that they are varieties of Hindi, introduced by the intruding Rájput races; and, on travelling through Rájputána, it strikes the most cursory observer what a small element in the population the dominant Rájput constitutes.

Hindi, according to Mr. Colebrooke, and the Serampore translators of the Bible, owes nine-tenths of its vocables to Sanskrit roots: when it is spoken by Musalmans, and enriches itself from Persian or Arabic roots, it becomes Urdu or Hindustáni, in which form Garcin de Tassy observes it is employed by all Hindu reformers, or religious innovators; but this remark seems rather to apply to Hindi proper than to Hindustáni. When Hindi is spoken by Hindus, and draws on Sanskrit for enrichment or embellishment, it more appropriately deserves and bears the name Hindi; but the term is used so loosely all over India to denote the vernacular tongue of the district, that it is not easy to attribute to it a very precise signification.

Limits of Bengáli. Bengáli, from its well-marked geographical limits towards the west, north, and east,

* Colebrooke, in *As. Res.* vol. vii. p. 230.

† Lieut. Burton. *Bombay Journal*, vol. iii. p. 84.

‡ James Prinsep. *Beng. As. J.* May 1837.

|| Burton's *Sindh*, and the Races inhabiting it, p. 69. London: 1851.

§ Malcolm's *Central India*, vol. ii. p. 191.

¶ *Asien*, vol. vi. p. 768.

** See Hamilton's *Hindustan*, vol. i. p. 218.

according with the province of Bengal,—from its being the language of at least thirty million souls,—and from the cultivation which has been given to it, well deserves the name of a distinct language, though its relation to Sanskrit is, perhaps, not other than that of so-called Hindi. According to Colebrooke,* there are but few words in Bengáli not derived from Sanskrit; and the same writer observes of Tirhuti, on its north-eastern border, that it has great affinity with Bengáli. It may, perhaps, be observed at once, that, of all the languages belonging to the Arian class, our present state of knowledge does not enable us to determine whether they are developments of some tongue, of which Sanskrit is the cultivated representative, and of which *Magadhi* or *Pali*, at the æra of As'oka and the introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon, was a spoken form, or whether Sanskrit has been superinduced upon some aboriginal tongue, as it has been demonstrably, though in much smaller quantity, upon the Tamiloid languages of the south, and as French has been introduced into Anglo-Saxon. Certain it is, that in every Arian tongue, a considerable, and apparently primitive element is found, (in Gujaráti it is reckoned at one-third of the whole language,) which is not traceable to Sanskrit.

On descending southwards, we find the Gujaráti in a sufficiently compact and characteristic form to constitute it a language, and owing its unity of character, no doubt, like the Bengáli, Urya, Maráthi, Canarese, and Tamil, to an early and powerful dynasty, extending over the country where it is spoken, and of which we have ample traces in history. The dialects of Kachi and Sindhi are quite intelligible to our Gujaráti interpreters in the Supreme Court, but Kachi seems to be a transition dialect between Sindhi and Gujaráti,† and the intelligibility of these languages is probably owing to the common relation of all of them to Hindi; though, occasionally, inhabitants of those countries use a *patois* that is quite incomprehensible to a Native of Gujarát. This, however, is no more than occurs amongst inhabitants of different provinces of Europe, such as Italy or France, where the language is but one. Gujaráti is bounded by the Marwádi a little to the north of Deesa, to the north and east by the Hindi or Rangri Básha of Malcolm‡ in Rájputána and Malwa respectively, and in the south it dove-tails with Maráthi in the valleys of the Narbadda and Tapti, ending at *Hámp*, on the former river, and running into *Nandobúr* on the latter.

* As. Res. vol. xxiii. p. 224.

† See Lieut. Burton's *Sindh*, p. 60.

‡ Malcolm's *Central India*, vol. ii. p. 191.