

LANGUAGES OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS

It appears to be quite a common popular supposition that the American Indians all had one common language. This is entirely wrong; in reality there are about 1,000 languages spoken by the Indians of both American continents and about 500 of these are spoken north of Mexico, according to an article in the Scientific American.

All the family and tribal languages of the Indians may be classified into groups, the article goes on to say, so that the philologist is not obliged to learn each language; all that is necessary is to study the basic principles of the speech of a linguistic group then, by familiarizing himself with certain rules and exceptions, he can comprehend a large part of the speech of the several branches of the group. By keeping in mind the law evolved by Grimm, the compiler of the well-known fairy tales, namely, that certain consonants correspond in all related languages, the scientist is able to recognize the same word despite its disguises.

An Indian of one tribe does not give a word a pronunciation different from that given by other tribes in order to disguise his speech but for reason that he is unable to pronounce certain sounds. For example, the Sioux call themselves by a name which means "allies;" this is pronounced "Dakota" by the Indians of the eastern or Santee division, "Nakota" by those of the middle or Yankton division and "Lakota" by the western or Teton division.

Besides these and numerous other variations, the eccentricities in speech of the individual, of the family proper and of the camp-group, corresponding to the difference in the English language spoken by people in the different sections of the United States, have to be taken into consideration by the philologist and care must be taken to eliminate the local and colloquial accents because the speech of the Indians is not a written language with a grammar and a dictionary, except such as have been compiled by the white man after a study of their language.

WHY WOMEN CAN OUTTALK MEN

A woman can talk longer than a man because she uses less force in speaking than the man does, the New York Sun tells us. A German professor proved by actual and very delicate measurements that the barytone singer uses far more energy than the tenor and that the bass singer uses more force than either.

The range of voices differs greatly, so the percentage varies to the same extent, but as a general result it was proved that the tenor uses only from one-seventh to one-sixteenth of the lung power of the barytone or bass. The difference between the force used by the contralto and the soprano is also marked, and the

contralto who sings in very deep tones uses at least 10 times the force of the thrilling soprano.

The explanation is so simple that it is surprising that the investigation was not made long ago. It has long been known that the tenor or soprano brings the vocal cords close together and keeps the edges only vibrating by the emission of air. The bass or contralto leaves the space between the cords wider open and has to vibrate very much more of the membranes, so that a considerably larger amount of air is required and much more force is expended.

Persons with high, squeaky voices often seem to be very loquacious, and the reason is now plain—they can talk with far less effort than those who take a deeper tone and have to use more air to utter their words.

Here lies the real explanation of the ease with which a woman can outtalk a man. She has the advantage of using from one-seventh to one-sixteenth less lung power, and even though her lungs may be smaller, the difference is never so great as that between the amount of air required.

NEGRO NAMES

The Southern negroes often have strikingly odd and peculiar names, remarks A. L. Hunt, Miami, Fla., in a letter to the Pathfinder. The girls are frequently named after some beautiful flower, some grand personage or even some notable event. For example a girl born in 1876 was named "Philadelphia Centennial Johnson." The boys in many cases are named after presidents or other prominent men. This accounts for the preponderance of the Washingtons, Jeffersons, Lincolns, Jacksons, etc.

On one occasion, Mr. Hunt relates, a man was traveling through a mountainous section of Tennessee when, in passing a negro cabin, he overheard a negro mother scolding her children in this fashion: "Look here, yo' George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, git off dat floah, and shet dat doah and mind yo' tend Queen Elizabeth."

APPARENTLY ANOTHER METHUSELAH

In early Biblical times it was common for men to live for several centuries, according to records in the book of Genesis, but in modern times comparatively few live beyond the proverbial three score and 10 years. It is therefore very surprising to read the inscription on a tombstone which stands in a Germantown, Pa., burial ground, over the grave of one John Adam, the age of the deceased 969 years!

The records show that his age was actually only 69 years. It appears that in cutting the inscription on the monument the stonecutter cut the "9" first and then found that not enough room for the "6" remained. In order to correct the error he filled the "9" with cement and then respaced his figures. As the years passed the winds, rains, frost, etc., gradually ate away the cement until the original "9" was revealed as plainly as the other figures.