

their want of fixed settlements, most of these idioms have been excluded from a definite participation in geographical terminology; while the spread of Hindostani over these districts has furthermore overlaid the last remnants of the original dialects. Even among tribes still existing in appreciable numbers, but of habits so savage, that they gradually approach extinction,¹ Hindostani words for settlements are frequently to be found as precursors of the predominant influence of their neighbours; numerous instances present themselves along the limits of the territories of the Gōds and Túdas in India, and of the Gárros, Ábors, Khássias, and Nágas in the northern hilly districts of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The gradual progress of civilization, whether rapid or slow, invariably implied the loss of some of the aboriginal languages of the ruder nations, and an uniform language spread over a large area may equally be the sign of the superiority of one tribe,² as the proof of the original identity of caste of the inhabitants. But also for the distinction of tribes the geographical names not unfrequently present data as important as the physical qualities; disfigured as the names may have become, there may often be recognized in them vestiges of nationalities which either have disappeared or changed their place of habitation. Names of mountains and rivers have a chance of longer vitality than those of towns or villages, the cause of this probably lying in the very nature of the object, which also excludes alteration of form or importance by human interference.

2. GENERAL FORMATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES.

Mythology and history, or physical description forming the two principal groups of names.—Direct transfer of generic words.—Modifications in the course of time.

By far the greater number of geographical names are formed by composition, and may be included about in the following groups:—³

¹ The disappearance of such savage tribes is not without an intimate connection with their bodily development, especially their cranial capacity. They may have existed an indefinite time by themselves, but rapidly succumb, whenever brought into rival contact with civilized nations. Positive details, based upon ethnographical measurements, will be given later; but I did not think it out of place to allude to the fact here in a few words.

² The physical constitution varies much less easily, than language, and, notwithstanding the most irregular inter-marriages of tribes, there remains a certain tendency in nature to produce well characterised original types. If this were not the case, it would have been impossible for any original type to have remained extant in Europe.

³ All the examples quoted in these concluding remarks are taken from the list of names explained above; I can therefore limit myself to the simple mention of the names without repeating the details.