

America was settled by the immediate descendants of Noah. That Joktan, son of Heber, founded a city in Peru, and that colonies from this, were planted by Ophir and Jobab, his sons; and that Ophir, the land of gold, to which the Tyrians sent their ships on three years voyages, must have been in America. Gomara, De Lery and Lescarbot concluded the Indians were descended from the Canaanites whom Joshua expelled from their country. Tornelli supposes the descendants of Shem and Ham to have reached America by way of Japan.

But the theory which traces them to the lost ten tribes of Israel, has found the most numerous advocates. Genebrard and Andrew Thevet were among the early advocates of this theory. It received a new impulse from Mayhew and Eliot, the New England missionaries to the natives. Thomas Thorogood published a book on the subject. The Earl of Crawford and Lindsay, a British officer in the war of the revolution, wrote in support of the same theory. Adair, Dr. Elias Boudinot, Rev. Ethan Smith, Lord Kingsbury and others, continued the train of zealous advocates of this view of Indian origin. *

These writers collected some remarkable coincidences in respect to language, manners and customs, between the Indians and ancient Hebrews,† and many more of a fanciful and puerile character, which, taken as a whole, are far from being conclusive when compared with other and more numerous facts of a contradictory nature.

In regard to this theory it may be remarked, that before giving ourselves much trouble, to account for an event, we should be sure that the event has actually occurred. That the Israelites

*Archæology of the United States, by S. F. Haven, in Smithsonian Contributions, vol. 8.

†Scholars who possessed the most extensive means of forming a correct judgment, have not hesitated to place the Indian tongues in the Shemitic class of languages. Further than this, it is doubtful whether any man has possessed sufficient data from which to form a very weighty opinion. To attempt to trace the Indian tongues to any one of the Shemitic languages, would require a somewhat familiar acquaintance with them all, both Asiatic and American—a qualification which no man ever yet possessed. The Hebrew scholar, acquainted with Indian languages, would be sure to find a relationship between them and the Hebrew; but he might find the same, or a stronger resemblance between them and a dozen other Asiatic languages, if he understood them equally well.