

News-Supplement.

CHARLESTON, FRIDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 19, 1869.

AN INDIAN TRADITION.

The Story of the Deluge on this Continent.

The following rather singular tradition which exists among the Papago Indians respecting Montezuma, their founder, and the deluge, has, we believe, never yet appeared in print, at least not in its present shape. It was related by Captain Con Ouan, an aged and intelligent member of the tribe, and was taken down from his lips by an interpreter for Judge Henry T. Beckus, of Arizona Territory. Judge Beckus has visited many of the places mentioned in the legend, and has been an eye-witness of the quadrangular feast still celebrated at the cave. He represents the Papagos as being nominally Catholics, yet clinging to their national traditions with great tenacity, and cherishing the memory of Montezuma with even more than saintly veneration.

The tradition of the deluge is interesting in its relation to the origin of the Indians of the country, and especially of the ancient tribes who lived in the twilight of civilization, until the Spanish Christians annihilated them. Did they bring this tradition with them from the Asiatic continent? Or did they come in contact with the people of the deluge, and receive from them this tradition? Or did they receive it from whom they derived this tradition?

These are inquiries naturally suggested by the following narrative. Montezuma, it will be understood, is not a monarch in the general term of their rulers, like Pharaoh, Cassar, &c.

Before the flood men lived to a great age, so that they lost their teeth and grew about like teeth. After a time they would get new teeth, and walk upright again like men in the prime of life. Then it was that the Great Spirit created the mountains and peopled the earth on all sides. Then, too, animals talked like men, and were the first to tell of the approaching flood. About this time appeared Montezuma, who collected a large quantity of gum from a plant called chuchi, and with this gum, which is said to be insoluble in water, and with other materials, he built a large vessel, in which he took refuge, closing and sealing the door behind him. In like manner a coyote or prairie dog crept into a large cave, and stalked close the ends against the water. The flood came up to the highest mountains, and reached even the birds, which cried like men with fright. When the waters came down, Montezuma and the coyote landed at Cerro Pretita, which mountain some believe to be Montezuma's vessel.

According to another tradition they landed in the centre of the earth, and having come out of their vessels, Montezuma noticed the tracks of a beetle, which he followed until he found the beetle first in the mud. He then turned back, and meeting the coyote, they embraced each other in grief. Montezuma sent the coyote southward to find the cave, which it soon found and returned, when it was sent on the same errand to the northward, but returned unsuccessful. They then lay down to sleep, when Montezuma dreamed that he should form men and women out of clay, which he accordingly did, making two for each nation. Meanwhile the coyote sat behind him also making men, but the latter were ill-formed, so that Montezuma ordered them to be reformed. His own people multiplied rapidly, and built a large city on the north bank of a river, supposed to be at the mouth of Salt River, in Arizona, where the remains of large ditches are still visible.

Montezuma next travelled southward, in accordance with a dream, he thrust a rod into the earth, and water flowed thence, which is the origin of the springs at Santa Rosa and elsewhere. After a time the Great Spirit appeared to Montezuma as an old man, and asked to baptize the people, that they might live beyond the sky after death, but Montezuma became angry and refused. Then the Great Spirit descended from the dead by night and repeated the request, when Montezuma grew angry again, declared that he would take his people to Heaven by a tower, and killed the Great Spirit's son, leaving him on the ground, where he was dragged about as a plaything for four years. He then returned to Heaven, removing the sun further from the earth, he ascended.

After a long interval he descended again with the same request as before. At this time Montezuma was living at the Casa Blanco, or white house, close to the Pimo villages on the Gila River. The inside of this house was overgrown with a third time he saw the Great Spirit, but the latter now becoming angry, threw a loose iron, which led to an invasion by the Spaniards. Twice did Montezuma meet and repel the invaders, but before the third engagement the golden ring flew from the finger of his daughter to the finger of the Spanish commander, and the silver ring of the latter flew to the finger of the former. This did the Spaniards become leagued with the enemy, and when they were out of provisions she persuaded upon her people to throw them to the sea instead of arrows, and thus they were led at Montezuma's request to the Spaniards, who conflicts the Spaniards were victorious, when the traitorous princess demanded the hand of the commander in marriage. He agreed to this on condition that she should be set free, should she die on a prickly pear tree. The eagle did so, and the commander started to celebrate the marriage at the pear tree, being followed by a large train of warriors, powder, &c. he travelled on and on until the Indians all deserted him.

Henceforth, as the story goes, Montezuma made no improvements, and his people were scattered over the country. He afterwards deposed the archives of the Papago and Pimo nations in a cave near Santa Rosa, and ordered that they celebrate a feast there every fourth year, which custom is still observed. The feast gradually diminished, and Montezuma wandered about until the Indians have lost all traces of him.

INTELLECTUAL CORRUPTION.

[From the Saturday Review.]

It is curious to reflect how much an author may do to corrupt the heart of the reader, and how he may nevertheless, so long as he does nothing in one point, escape all censure. If he can only keep his book free from what is called immorality—that is to say, if he can either ignore one side of human conduct altogether, or else only touch upon it in the most respectful, conventional manner—he may give his readers the falsest notions of human life, he may pervert their taste, he may render them as weak as sentimentally alone can render them, he may even lead them to believe that nothing is so unseasoned with the most outrageous incidents and coincidences, and he may still remain an author whose works would be placed by any mother in the hands of any daughter. It is strange how blind the respectable world usually is to all literary faults save one. So long as a book is not licentious, it is held that it cannot be a bad book. We are inclined to question, however, whether that is much more than which corrupts the so-called morality. The tendency of a great deal of the literature of the present day is to give people a thoroughly false idea of life. Our novels, with their over-sentimentality, their morbid self-analysis, their hateful sensationalism, help to train up a set of young men and young women quite unfit for the humdrum duties and pleasures which must constitute the greater part of each one's life. It is not merely the rank and file of our novelists who offend. Their tendency is now, as it always has been, merely to exaggerate the errors of their chiefs. There is not one of our leading novelists who has not much to answer for, and we hardly know on whom we should lay most blame. Mr. Dickens, perhaps, ranks as the chief offender, for he it is who has worked sentimentality to such an extent as would have amazed, if that were possible, a bluish even on Sterne's brow. When the author of the Sentimental Journey was going to play his tricks on his reader's eyes, at all events he chose as his subject a man, and a decent one, even on Sterne's brow. When the author of the Sentimental Journey was going to play his tricks on his reader's eyes, at all events he chose as his subject a man, and a decent one, even on Sterne's brow.

PHILOSOPHY OF MARRIAGE.

A NEW COURSE OF LECTURES, as delivered at the New York Museum of Anatomy, embracing the subjects: How to Live and What to Live for; Youth, Maturity and Old Age; Manhood generally Reviewed; the Cause of Indigestion; Flatulence and Nervous Diseases accounted for; Marriage Philosophically Considered, &c. These Lectures will be forwarded on receipt of four stamps by the Secretary BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ANATOMY, No. 14 West Baltimore street, Baltimore, Md. apr19 m1719

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