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External Evidences - American Traditions and Mythologies

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—AMERICAN TRADITIONS AND MYTHOLOGIES.

Turning from that branch of American antiquities which deals with the extent and location of ruined cities and monuments of the ancient American civilizations to the consideration of American traditions concerning the origin, migrations, cosmogony, and the religion of the people of the western world, we by no means leave behind us the difficulty of divided authorities, and varying opinions. One could not hope, even in an extended work on the subject, to bring order out of the chaos which obtains concerning American traditions and mythologies; therefore I need say nothing of the futility of attempting it in the few brief chapters which I have resolved to devote to these traditions. But this much must be evident respecting the relationship of the Book of Mormon to American traditions and mythologies, viz., that several epoch-making incidents in the Book of Mormon must have made such indelible impressions upon the mind of the ancient peoples of America that they would be perpetuated in various forms in their traditions. Such incidents, for example, as the Jaredite and Nephite migrations from the old world to the western hemisphere; and since the former colony came directly from the Tower of Babel, it is to be expected that they would bring with them a knowledge of the creation, the fall of man, the flood, the escape of Noah and his family by means of the ark, and the building of the Tower of Babel. Lehi's colony came from Jerusalem, bringing with them the Jewish scriptures, which speak so clearly of the creation, the flood, the escape of Noah, the

building of Babel and the confusion of tongues, hence it would be expected that they, too, would have a knowledge of these chief events in the history of man down to this last named event, and a knowledge also of the chief events in the history of Israel down to the time of the departure of Lehi's colony from Jerusalem—six hundred years B. C. It is but a reasonable expectation, I say, that these things would be perpetuated in American traditions and mythologies. Are traces of them to be found there? So also as to the signs given on the American continent of Messiah's birth; and certainly as to the signs of his crucifixion, witnessed by the terrible cataclysms which continued in the western hemisphere during three hours, followed by three days of awful darkness. Also some trace in their traditions would be found of Messiah's personal advent on the American continent to the survivors of those events. So, too, would the recollection of the golden age of peace and plenty which followed Messiah's advent, and the promise of Messiah's return at some future time—some memory of all this would most likely be perpetuated in native traditions. And while both traditions and mythologies may be regarded as troubled pools which, like mirrors shattered into a thousand fragments, distort into fantastic shapes the objects on their banks, still there is a basis of truth in them; and American traditions and mythologies may yield up something of value in the way of evidence to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Surely we would be greatly disappointed if this turned out not to be the case, for the historical incidents referred to in the Book of Mormon are so impressive that they would be found to live in the traditions of the people, whatever became of their written records. As remarked by H. H. Bancroft:

Every trace of the circumstances that give rise to a tradition is soon lost, although the tradition itself in curiously modi-

fied forms is long preserved. Natural convulsions, like floods and earthquakes, famines, wars, tribal migrations, naturally leave an impression on the savage mind which is not easily effaced, but the fable in which the record is embodied may have assumed a form so changed and childish that we pass over it today as having no historical value, seeking information only in an apparently more consistent tale, which may have originated at a recent date from some very trivial circumstances. * * * * *

But the traditions of savages, valueless by themselves for a time more remote than one or two generations, begin to assume importance when the events narrated have been otherwise ascertained by the records of some contemporary nation, throwing indirectly much light on history which they were powerless to reveal.^a

Accepting as reasonable these reflections, I wish to add that having in part the written records of the people among whom the events happened of which the traditions treat, we are in possession of that which makes these traditions assume the importance to which our author alludes. And while the record referred to—the Book of Mormon—gives the necessary importance to the traditions, the traditions bear testimony to the truth of the record at many points.

It should be remembered, however, that such were the conditions existing among the Lamanites after their triumph at Cumorah, that everything is confused and distorted into most fantastic shapes and relations by the idle speculations and vain imaginings of half, and sometimes wholly, barbarous minds, often bent on concealing or supplanting the truth by their fabulous inventions.

The limits of this work will not permit anything like an extended investigation of the field proposed. I shall merely take up the most important facts and historical events of the Book of Mormon, and seek confirmation of them in American traditions and myths.

^aNative Races, Vol. V., pp. 137, 138.

I.

The Creation.

I begin with the creation; and select upon that subject a passage from the book of the Quiches^a of Gautemala called "Popol Vuh," which, I believe, exhibits the fact that the ancient Americans held in their traditions conceptions of creation found in the Jewish scriptures. A word upon the Popol Vuh will be necessary. This is one of the most important of the native American books translated into modern languages. It was found by Dr. Scherzer, in 1854, among the manuscripts of Francisco Ximenez, "a Dominican father of great repute for his learning and his love of truth," who, while fulfilling the duties of his office of curate in a small Indian town in the highlands of Gautemala, translated this native book into the Spanish language. It was written by one or more Quiches in the Quiche language, but in Roman letters, some time after the Spaniards had occupied Guatemala. The meaning of "Popol Vuh" is "National Book," or "Book of the People," but the real original "National Book" had been lost, and this was written to replace it. The title of the book, however, is that given to it by the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg, who translated it into French; and by Ximenez, who translated it into Spanish. This name, Max Muller says, "is not claimed for it by its author. He [the native author] says that he wrote when the 'Popol Vuh' [that is, the real original National Book of the Quiches, and which this book in question was written to replace] was no longer to be seen. Now, 'Popol Vuh' means the Book of the People, and referred to the traditional literature in which

^aThe reader will find preceding the Table of Contents in this volume a pronunciation of the principal Spanish and Mexican proper names found in this work.

all that was known about the early history of the nation, their religion and ceremonies, was handed down from age to age.”^b Nadaillac, however, says that “Popol Vuh” may be translated “Collection of Leaves.”^c In the conclusion of a long note on the subject Bancroft says, “We seem justified, then, in taking this document for what Ximenez and its own evidence declare it to be, viz., a reproduction of an older work or body of Quiche traditional history, written because the older work had been lost and was likely to be forgotten; and written by a Quiche not long after the Spanish conquest.”^d

As the passage I quote is from Bancroft’s abridgment of the Popol Vuh, I give also his brief explanation of the book:

Of all American peoples the Quiches, of Guatemala, have left us the richest mythological legacy. Their description of the creation as given in the Popol, Vuh, which may be called the national book of the Quiches, is in its rude, strange eloquence and poetic originality, one of the rarest relics of aboriginal thought. Although obliged in reproducing it to condense somewhat, I have endeavored to give not only the substance, but also, as far as possible, the peculiar style and phraseology of the original. It is with this primeval picture, whose simple, silent sublimity is that of the inscrutable past, that we begin:^e

And now the passage on the creation:

And the heaven was formed, and all the signs thereof set in their angle and alignment, and its boundaries fixed toward the four winds by the Creator and Former, and Mother and Father of life and existence—he by whom all move and breathe,

^bChips from a German Workshop, Vol. I., p. 325.

^cPre-Historic America, p. 144, note.

^d“Native Races,” Vol. III., pp. 42, 43.

^e“Native Races,” Vol. III., pp. 42, 43.

the Father and Cherisher of the peace of nations and of the civilization of his people—he whose wisdom has projected the excellence of all that is on the earth, or in the lakes, or in the sea.

Behold the first word and the first discourse. There was as yet no man, nor any animal, nor bird, nor fish, nor crawfish, nor any pit, nor ravine, nor green herb, nor any tree; nothing was but the firmament. The face of the earth had not yet appeared, only the peaceful sea and all the space of heaven. There was nothing yet joined together, nothing that clung to anything else; nothing that balanced itself, that made the least rustling, that made a sound in the heaven. There was nothing that stood up; nothing but the quiet water, but the sea, calm and alone in its boundaries; nothing existed; nothing but immobility and silence, in the darkness, in the night.

Alone also the Creator, the Former, the Dominator, the Feathered Serpent, those that engender, those that give being, they are upon the water, like growing light. They are enveloped in green and blue; and therefore their name is Gucumatz. Lo, now how the heavens exist, how exists also the Heart of Heaven; such is the name of God; it is thus that he is called. And they speak; they consulted together and meditated; they mingled their words and their opinion. And the creation was verily after this wise: Earth, they said, and on the instant it was formed; like a cloud or a fog was its beginning. Then the mountains rose over the water like great lobsters; in an instant the mountains and the plains were visible, and the cypress and the pine appeared. Then was the Gucumatz filled with joy, crying out: Blessed be thy coming O Heart of Heaven, Hurakan, Thunderbolt. Our work and our labor has accomplished its end.

The earth and its vegetation having thus appeared, it was peopled with the various forms of animal life. And the Makers said to the animals: Speak now our name, honor us, as your mother and father; invoke Hurakan, the Lightning-flash, the Thunderbolt, that strikes, the Heart of Heaven, the Heart of the Earth, the Creator and Former, him who begets, and him who gives being, speak, call on us, salute us! So was it said to the animals. But the animals could not answer; they could not speak at all after the manner of men; they could only cluck,

and croak, each murmuring after his kind in a different manner. This displeased the Creators, and they said to the animals: Inasmuch as ye can not praise us, neither call upon our names, your flesh shall be humiliated; it shall be broken with teeth; ye shall be killed and eaten.

Again the gods took counsel together; they determined to make man. So they made a man of clay; and when they had made him, they saw that it was not good. He was without cohesion, without consistence, motionless, strengthless, inept, watery he could not move his head, his face looked but one way; his sight was restricted, he could not look behind him; he had been endowed with language, but he had no intelligence, so he was consumed in the water.

Again is there counsel in heaven: Let us make an intelligent being who shall adore and invoke us. It was decided that a man should be made of wood and a woman of a kind of pith. They were made; but the result was in no wise satisfactory. They moved about perfectly well, it is true; they increased and multiplied; they peopled the world with sons and daughters, little wooden mannikins like themselves; but still the heart and the intelligence were wanting; they held no memory of their Maker and Former; they led a useless existence, they lived as the beasts lived; they forgot the Heart of Heaven. They were but an essay, an attempt at men; they had neither blood, nor substance, nor moisture, nor fat; their cheeks were shrivelled, their feet and hands dried up; their flesh languished.

Then was the Heart of Heaven wroth; and he sent ruin and destruction upon those ingrates; he rained upon them night and day from heaven with a thick resin; and the earth was darkened. And the men went mad with terror; they tried to mount upon the roofs and the houses fell; they tried to climb the trees and the trees shook them far from their branches; they tried to hide in the caves and the dens of the earth, but these closed their holes against them. The bird Xecotcovach came to tear out their eyes; and the Camalotz cut off their head; and the Cotzbalam devoured their flesh; and the Tecumbalam broke and bruised their bones to powder. Thus were they all devoted to chastisement and destruction, save only a few who were preserved as memorials of the wooden men that had been; and these now exist in the woods as little apes.

Once more are the gods in counsel; in the darkness, in the night of a desolate universe do they commune together, of what shall we make man? And the Creator and Former made four perfect men; and wholly of yellow and white maize was their flesh composed. These were the names of the four men that were made: the name of the first was Balam-Quitiz; of the second Balam-Agab; of the third, Muhucutah; and fourth, Iqui-Balam. They had neither father nor mother, neither were they made by the ordinary agents in the work of creation; but their coming into existence was a miracle extraordinary wrought by the special intervention of him who is preeminently the Creator. Verily, at last, were there found men worthy of their origin and their destiny; verily, at last, did the gods look on beings who could see with their eyes, and handle with their hands, and understand with their hearts. Grand of countenance and broad of limb the four sires of our race stood up under the white rays of the morning star. Sole light as yet of the primeval world stood up and looked. Their great clear eyes swept rapidly over all; they saw the woods and the rocks, the lakes and the sea, the mountains and the valleys, and the heavens and were above all; and they comprehended all and admired exceeding. Then they return thanks to those who had made the world and all that therein was: We offer up our thanks, twice—yea verily, thrice! We have received life; we speak, we walk, we taste; we hear and understand; we know, both that which is near and that which is far off; we see all things, great and small, in all the heaven and earth. Thanks then, Maker and Former Father and Mother of our life! we have been created; we are.

But the gods were not wholly pleased with this thing; Heaven they thought had overshot its mark; these men were too perfect; knew, understood, and saw too much. Therefore there was counsel again in heaven: What shall we do with man now? It is not good, this that we see; these are as gods; they would make themselves equal with us; lo, they know all things, great and small. Let us now contract their sight, so that they may see only a little of the surface of the earth and be content. Thereupon the Heart of Heaven breathed a cloud over the pupil of the eyes of men, and a veil came over it as when one breathes on the face of a mirror, thus was the globe of the

eye darkened; neither was that which was far off clear to it any more, but only that which was near.

Then the four men slept, and there was counsel in heaven: and four women were made, to Balam-Quitze was allotted Cahapaluma to wife; to Balam-Agab, Chomiha; to Muhucutah, Tzununiha; and to Iqui-Balam, Cakixaha. Now the women were exceedingly fair to look upon; and when the men awoke, their hearts were glad because of the women.

Notwithstanding some incongruities in the foregoing passage a comparison of it with the account of creation in Genesis will not fail to convince the thoughtful reader that the Quiche story of the creation, and that of Genesis doubtless had the same origin, and after reading it again and again, as suggested by Max Muller, one must come to the conclusion that "some salient features standing out more distinctly, make us feel that there was a ground work of noble conceptions which has been covered and distorted by an aftergrowth of fantastic nonsense."^f Indeed, so "startling," as Muller further remarks, are some of the coincidences between the Old Testament and the Quiche manuscripts that it has been suspected by some authors^g that the Quiche writers followed rather the Spanish, Christian teachings than the Quiche tradition in that part of their work; "yet even if a Christian influence has to be admitted," remarks our author, "much remains in these American traditions which is so different from anything else in the national literature of other countries that we may safely treat it as the genuine growth of the intellectual soil of America."^h In

^fChips from a German Workshop, Vol. I., pp. 328-9.

^gNadaillac Pre-Historic America, p. 144, note. This writer says of the book in question. "It contains several details strangely resembling those of Genesis, and some have seen in them an adaptation by a pious fraud of Indian mythology to the dogmas of Christianity."

^hChips from a German Workshop, p. 128.

the light which the Book of Mormon throws upon the subject, however, we are not under the necessity of admitting the "Christian influence" referred to by Muller; that is, that the natives arrived at the Biblical knowledge of the creation facts after the advent of the Christians among them, since the Jaredites brought with them a knowledge of creation as held by antediluvians, and the Nephites brought with them a knowledge of that same account of creation as crystallized in the writings of Moses, which undoubtedly became permanently fixed both in the written records and traditions of the native inhabitants of America; and which are reflected in this old Quiche book, "Popol Vuh."

There is a quotation from another authority that I wish to add to the statement of Professor Max Muller in the foregoing, relative to the creation ideas of the Quiches, being a "groundwork of noble conceptions which has been covered and distorted by an aftergrowth of fantastic nonsense." That additional authority—though the remark I quote has reference to another people, the Aztecs, is in the same line of thought as that which Professor Muller suggests, but applied to the whole religion of the natives—is from Prescott:

In contemplating the religious system of the Aztecs, one is struck with its apparent incongruity, as if some portion of it had emanated from a comparatively refined people, open to gentle influences, while the rest breathes a spirit of unmitigated ferocity. It naturally suggests the idea of two distinct sources, and authorities the belief that the Aztecs had inherited from their predecessors a milder faith, on which was afterwards engrafted their own mythology. The latter soon became dominant, and gave its dark coloring to the creeds of the conquered nations—which the Mexicans, like the ancient Romans, seem willingly to have incorporated into their own, until the same funeral superstitions settled over the farthest borders of Anahuacⁱ

ⁱConquest of Mexico, Vol. I., Prescott, p. 62.

If the noted German and American authors respectively had been writing with full knowledge of what the Book of Mormon reveals on this subject, they could not more exactly have stated the case than they have here done, though enlightened only by the facts they discovered in the religion of the natives; for surely the Book of Mormon gives us the information that both the Jaredite and the Nephite people had knowledge of the true God and the latter, especially, a full knowledge of the mild and gentle religion taught by Jesus Christ; which religion, however, was subverted in the western world, and overlaid by the revolting superstition and horribly ferocious idolatry, attended by human sacrifice and cannibalism of the Lamanites or Aztecs.

Another point of the coincidence [between native American traditions and the Bible] is found in the goddess Cioacoatl, "our lady and mother;" "the first goddess who brought forth;" "who bequeathed the sufferings of childbirth to women, as the tribute of death;" "by whom sin came into the world." Such was the remarkable language applied by the Aztecs to this venerated deity. She was usually represented with a serpent near her; and her name signified the "serpent-woman." In all this we see much to remind us of the mother of the human family, the Eve of the Hebrew and Syrian nations.^j

On this passage Prescott also has the following note:

Torquemada, not content with the honest record of his predecessor, whose manuscripts lay before him, tells us, that the Mexican Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel.^k The ancient interpreters of the Vatican and Tellerian Codices add the further tradition, of her bringing sin and sorrow into the world by plucking the forbidden rose; (Antiquities of Mexico, Vol. VI., explan. of Plate. 7, 20); and Veytia remembers to have seen a Toltec or Aztec map, representing a garden with a single

^jConquest of Mexico, Prescott, Vol. II., p. 387.

^kMorarch Ind., lib. 6, cap. 31.

tree in it, round which was coiled the serpent with a human face! (Hist. Antig., lib. 1., Ch. 1).^l

“After this,” continues Prescott, sarcastically, “we may be prepared for Lord Kingsborough’s deliberate confession that the Aztecs had a clear knowledge of the Old Testament and most probably of the New, though somewhat corrupted by time and hieroglyphics!” I see no occasion for the sarcasm on the part of the admirable author of the Conquest of Mexico, since he himself furnishes much of the material that would warrant a conclusion similar to that of Kingsborough.^m Kingsborough’s conclusion comes in his note two,ⁿ in which he deals with “American traditions which appear to be derived from a Hebrew source;” and as the passage referred to by Prescott is of great value as material in proof not only of his lordship’s position that the ancient Americans were acquainted with portions, at least, of the Old Testament, but also sustains the truth of the Book of Mormon at a number of points which will be noted later—I give it *in extenso*:

It is unnecessary to attempt in this place to trace out any further scriptural analogies in the traditions and mythology of the New World, since the coincidences which have been already mentioned are sufficiently strong to warrant the conclusion that the Indians, at a period long antecedent to the arrival of the Spaniards in America, were acquainted with a portion at least of the Old Testament, although time, superstition, and above all, such an imperfect mode of transmitting to posterity the memory of the past events as that of painting, had greatly corrupted their ancient traditions. We shall close these observations with the following curious extracts from Torquemada, from which it might appear that even the New Testament had been known to the Indians: “Another ecclesiastic, named Broth-

^lPrescott, Conquest of Mexico, Vol. II., pp. 387, 388, note.

^mSee Appendix No. 1, Vol. II., of Prescott’s Conquest of Mexico.

ⁿVol. VI., Kingsborough’s Antiquities of Mexico, pp. 401-409.

er Diege de Mercado, a grave father, who has been definator of this province of the Holy Gospel, and one of the most exemplary men and greatest doers of penance of his time; relates, and authenticates this relation with his signature, that some years ago conversing with an aged Indian of the Otomies, above seventy years old, respecting matters concerning our faith, the Indian told him that they in ancient times had been in possession of a book which was handed down successively from father to son, in the person of the eldest, who was dedicated to the safe custody of it and to instruct others in its doctrines. These doctrines were written in two columns, and between column and column Christ was painted crucified, with a countenance as of anger. They accordingly said that God was offended; and out of reverence did not turn over the leaves with their hands, but with a small bar which they had made for that purpose, which they kept along with the book. On this ecclesiastic's questioning the Indian as to the contents of that book and its doctrines, he was unable to give him further information, but simply replied that if the book had not been lost, he would have seen that the doctrine which he taught and preached to them, and those which the book contained, were the same; that the book had rotted in the earth, where the persons who kept it had buried it on the arrival of the Spaniards. He likewise informed him that they knew the world had been destroyed by the deluge, and that only seven persons had escaped in the ark, and that all the rest had perished, together with the animals and birds, excepting those which had been saved therein. They were also acquainted with the embassy of the angel of Our Lady, under a figure, relating that something very white, like the feather of a bird, fell from heaven, and that a virgin stooped down and took it up and put it in her bosom and became pregnant; but what she brought forth they could not tell. What they said of the deluge, is attested likewise in Guatemala by the Indians named Achies, who assert that they possessed paintings recording the event with other matters of antiquity, all of which the Brothers, [Spanish Catholic priests] with the spirit and zeal with which they were animated for the destruction of idolatry, took from them and burnt, holding them to be suspicious.^o

^oAntiquities of Mexico, Kingsborough, Vol. XI., p. 409.

II.

The Flood.

I next call attention to the native American traditions concerning the flood, consulting those passages, however, let me say, which most nearly resemble the account of our Hebrew scriptures; and without pretending to enter into an exhaustive consideration of native flood myths. My purpose is accomplished in this, as in the matter of the traditions concerning the creation, if I produce those proofs which, in my judgment, establish the fact that the native Americans have been made acquainted with the facts of the creation and the flood found in our Jewish scriptures; and I am not at all concerned here with the variations that native traditions have given to the main truths.

The following is from Prescott :

No tradition has been more widely spread among nations than that of a Deluge. Independently of tradition, indeed, it would seem to be naturally suggested by the interior structure of the earth, and by the elevated places on which marine substances are found to be deposited. It was the received notion under some form or other, of the most civilized people in the Old World, and of the barbarians of the new. The Aztecs combine with this some particular circumstances of a more arbitrary character resembling the accounts of the east. They believed that two persons survived the deluge, a man, named Coxcox and his wife. Their heads are represented in ancient paintings, together with a boat floating on the waters, at the foot of a mountain. A dove is also depicted, with the hieroglyphical emblem of languages in his mouth, which he is distributing to the children of Coxcox, who were born dumb. The neighboring people of Michuacan, inhabiting the same high plains of the Andes, had a still further tradition, that the boat, in which Tezpi, their Noah, escaped, was filled with various kinds of animals and birds. After some time, a vulture was sent out from it, but remained feeding on

the dead bodies of the giants, which had been left on the earth, as the waters subsided. The little humming-bird, *huititzilin*, was then sent forth, and returned with a twig in its mouth. The coincidence of both these accounts with the Hebrew and Chaldean narratives is obvious.^p

This is from Bancroft:

In Nicaragua, a country where the principal language was a Mexican dialect, it was believed that ages ago the world was destroyed by a flood in which the most part of mankind perished. Afterwards the *teotes*, or gods, restocked the earth as at the beginning.^q

Conneted with the great flood of water, there is a Mexican tradition presenting some analogies to the story of Noah and his ark. In most of the painted manuscripts supposed to relate to this event, a kind of boat is represented floating over the waste of water and containing a man and a woman. Even the *Tlascaltecs*, and *Zapotecs*, the *Miztecs*, and the people of *Michoacan* are said to have had such pictures. The man is variously called *Coxcox*, *Teocipactli*, *Tezpi*, and *Nata*; the woman *Xochiquetzal* and *Nena*. The following has been usually accepted as the ordinary Mexican version of this myth: In *Atonatiuh*, the Age of water, a great flood covered all the face of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were turned into fishes. Only one man and one woman escaped, saving themselves in the hollow trunk of an *ahahuete* or bald cypress; the name of the man being *Coxcox*, and that of his wife *Zochiquetzal*. On the waters abating a little they grounded their ark on the Peak of *Colhuacan*, the *Ararat* of Mexico. Here they increased and multiplied, and children began to gather about them, children who were all born dumb. And a dove came and gave them tongues, innumerable languages. Only fifteen of the descendants of *Coxcox*, who afterward became heads of families, spake the same language or could at all understand each other; and from these fifteen are descended the *Toltecs*, the *Aztecs*, and the *Acolhuas*. * * * * In *Michoacan* a tradition was preserved, following

^pConquest of Mexico, Prescott, Vol. II., appendix pp. 385, 386.

^qNative Races, Bancroft, Vol. III., p. 75.

which the name of the Mexican Noah was Tezpi. With better fortune than that ascribed to Coxcox, he was able to save, in a spacious vessel, not only himself and his wife, but also his children, several animals, and a quantity of grain for the common use. When the waters began to subside, he sent out a vulture that it might go to and fro on the earth and bring him word again when dry land began to appear. But the vulture fed upon the carcasses that were strewn in every part, and never returned. Then Tezpi sent out other birds, and among these was a humming-bird. And when the sun began to cover the earth with a new verdure, the humming-bird returned to its old refuge bearing green leaves. And Tezpi saw that his vessel was aground near the mountain of Colhuacan and he landed there.^r

The Peruvians had several flood-myths. One of them relates that the whole face of the earth was changed by a great deluge, attended by an extraordinary eclipse of the sun which lasted five days. All living things were destroyed except one man, a shepherd, with his family and flocks. * * * According to another Peruvian legend, two brothers escaped from a great deluge which overwhelmed the world in much the same manner, by ascending a mountain which floated upon the flood. When the waters had retired, they found themselves alone in the world; and having consumed all their provisions, they went down into the valleys to seek for more food.^s

The following is from Lord Kingsborough's works :

The Peruvians were acquainted with the deluge, and believed that the rainbow was the sign that the earth would not again be destroyed by water. This is plain from the speech which Mango Capac, the reported founder of the Peruvian empire, addressed to his companions on beholding the rainbow rising from a hill; which is thus recorded by Balboa in the ninth chapter of the third part of his miscellanea Antarctica: "They traveled on until a mountain, at present named Guanacauri, presented itself to their view, when, on a certain morning, they beheld the rainbow rising above the mountain, with one ex-

^rNative Races, Vol. III., pp. 65-67.

^sNative Races, Vol. V., pp. 14, 16.

tremity resting upon it, when Mango Capac exclaimed to his companions, This is a propitious sign that the world will not be again destroyed by water; follow me, let us climb to the summit of this mountain, that we may thence have a view of the place which is destined for our future habitation. Having cast lots and performed various superstitious ceremonies after this manner, they directed their course towards the mountain. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that to draw omens or to determine chances by throwing lots, was an ancient Hebrew custom, resorted to on the most solemn, as well as the most trivial occasions. Proof having been afforded in the passage quoted from the history of Balboa, that Peruvians were acquainted with the history of the rainbow, as given in the ninth chapter of Genesis, it may be interesting to add, that according to the account of an anonymous writer, they believed that the rainbow was not only a passive sign that the earth would not be destroyed by a second deluge, but an active instrument to prevent the recurrence of such a catastrophe: the latter curious notions proceeded upon the assumption that as the water of the sea (which, like the Jews, they believe to encircle the whole earth) would have a tendency to rise after excessive falls of rain, so the pressure of the extremities of the rainbow upon its surface would prevent its exceeding its proper level.[†]

Nadaillac calls attention to the fact of a general belief in a deluge or a flood among the American races and comments upon the fact that we are dependent upon writers for our account of the traditions who are not always free from mental bias and who have derived their information from individuals who had been subjected to missionary teachings and who were more or less familiar with what he calls the myths and legends of the Christians. "Notwithstanding these disadvantages," he remarks, however, "it will be seen that a general belief, for instance, of a deluge or flood is widely spread among American races, and can hardly be attributed to Christian teachings."[‡]

[†]Kingsborough's Mexican Antiquities, Vol. VIII., p. 25, note.

[‡]Pre-Historic America, p. 525.

One might continue quoting passages of the foregoing character indefinitely, but I consider what has been set down on these matters sufficient."

"Whoever desires to pursue the subject further may do so by consulting Bancroft's Native Races, Vol. V., chapter one, and Vol. III., chapter two; as also the works of Prescott, the monumental volumes of Kingsborough, (the latter can be accessible to but few, however, and chapter v of Ignatius Donnelly's Atlantis. Also Pre-Historic America (Nadaillac), chapter x, and "The History of America Before Columbus, (De Roo) Vol. I., chapter sixteen.