

SONGS AND SPEECHES OF THE PLAINS

BY DR. GEORGE H. DAUGHERTY, JR.

THE great plains area comprises a vast extent of rolling prairie stretching from north of the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the line of the Missouri river to the Rockies. This domain was formerly inhabited by the great buffalo herds and widely scattered bands of more or less nomadic hunters. It is estimated that the plains area was the home of at least thirty-one tribal groups. Of these, eleven were most typical: the Assinboine, Arapaho, Blackfoot, Crow, Cheyenne, Comanche, Gros Ventre, Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Sarsi and Teton-Dakota. These people ranged from north to south in the heart of the area, depending for subsistence almost entirely on the buffalo, and to a very limited extent on roots, berries, and wild fruits and grains. Wissler briefly characterizes other features of their culture: "absence of fishing; lack of agriculture [as a rule]; the tipi as a movable dwelling; transportation by land only, with the dog and travois (in historic times with the horse); want of basketry and pottery; no true weaving; clothing of buffalo and deer skins; . . ."¹

On the eastern border of the area were other tribes not quite so nomadic, and hence more advanced in the scale of culture. Among these were Arikara, Hidatsa, Iowa, Kansa, Mandan, Missouri, Omaha, Osage, Ota, Pawnee, Ponca, Santee-Dakota, Yankton-Dakota, and Wichita. These latter had achieved a limited use of pottery, some spinning and weaving of bags, and alternation of the tipi with larger and more permanent houses covered with grass, bark, or earth.²

Compositions have been selected representing the Teton-Sioux of the Black Hills region in South Dakota, and the Omaha, another

¹Wissler, "Material Cultures of the North American Indians", pp. 78-79.

²Wissler, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

Siouan tribe previously mentioned as indigenous to north-eastern Nebraska, (See Wissler's Map).³ (1) The Siouan Indians have long been celebrated in American history as being among the most fierce and troublesome of all Indian peoples. Before the invasion of the white man, they were characterized by the same nomadic, hunting, and warlike spirit. At the time of the discovery it is estimated that 100,000 Sioux inhabited the territory between the Mississippi and the Rockies, and from the Red River divide in Arkansas on the south nearly to the Saskatchewan in the north. One branch of the stock extended across the Mississippi to Lake Michigan. Their tenure of the plains area was not ancient. There is some reason to believe that in post-glacial times they had migrated from the east in pursuit of the buffalo herds, dispossessing earlier resident tribes as they went.⁴ Once possessed of the plains area their shifting life brought them into continual conflict with each other, and with neighboring peoples. Their culture was therefore that of bellicose gypsies, in everlasting pursuit of the bison. "The men and animals lived in constant interaction, and many of the hunters acted and thought only as they were moved by their easy prey the buffalo."

The beliefs and ceremonies of the Sioux, not greatly different from other plains tribes, reflected their environment. All their beliefs were especially disposed to bloodshed, being genetically if not immediately related to war and hunting. Among these people hecastotheism was evident in their worship of objects and places: zootheism in the deification of mystic thunderbirds and various animals such as the wolf and buffalo. They also held some physitheistic beliefs in the mysterious powers of sun and winds. "On the whole it seems just to assign the Siouan mythology to the upper strata of zootheism, just verging on physitheism, with vestigial traces of hecastatheism."⁵

The songs of the Teton Sioux reflect quite adequately their prairies environment and nomadic life.⁶ Those celebrating the horse

³Note the name "Sioux" refers to all the tribes of this linguistic family. It has also been applied to one or more Siouan confederacies. A synonymous term is "Dakota".—McGee, "The Siouan Indians," p. 157 ff.

⁴McGee, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

⁵McGee, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-5.

⁶The Teton division of the Sioux formerly constituted more than one half of the entire tribe, and (during their residence in the west) seem always to have lived west of the Missouri river. They exceeded other Siouans in physical development and in wealth. Their distinctively tribal life came to an end with the last buffalo hunt in 1882. They are at present on the Standing Rock Reservation in North and South Dakota. Other bands are on the reservation at Sisseton, South Dakota.—Densmore, "Teton Sioux Music", pp. 1 ff.

are by far the most numerous, being 31.5 per cent of all songs making any mention of nature, and 56.6 per cent of all songs mentioning animals. This unusual proportion is eloquent testimony of the importance of the horse in the wandering life of the Sioux. Previous to the introduction of the horse in the late 18th century, they had to hunt on foot. Tramping up and down the prairies after buffalo herds must indeed have constituted a hazardous and meagerly rewarded existence. The horse afforded them a new means of conquest which enabled them to enter "on a career so facile that they increased and multiplied despite strife and imported disease."⁷ Horses eventually became the chief object of prairie warfare: and the number a man had was the standard of his wealth and position.

"The Crow-enemy,
if I see him
it is my intention to take his horses.
If I do this
it will be widely known."⁸

* * *

"Older sister, come out,
Horses I bring.
Come out,
One (of them) you may have."⁹

* * *

"Before the gathering of the clouds
the erratic (flight) I have caused.
My horse (as) a swallow
it was flying, running."¹⁰

* * *

"Daybreak appears
when a horse neighs."¹¹

* * *

"See them,
prancing they come:
Neighing they come,
a Horse nation.

⁷ McGee, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁸ Densmore, "Teton Sioux Music", p. 402.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

See them
prancing they come ;
neighing they come."¹²

Quotation of songs on all phases of prairie environment would be but a repetition of many of the themes already illustrated in preceding chapters. The following table, made on the basis of Teton Sioux songs collected by Miss Densmore, demonstrates influence of plains life.¹³ Of 195 songs with words, 102 contain mention of some manifestation of nature. The tables indicate relative percentages of themes in this nature group.

	Number	Pct.
Songs referring to animals	60	55.5
Songs referring to birds	12	11.1
Songs referring to the wind	14	12.9
Songs referring to sacred stones	13	12.
Songs referring to directions of the compass	12	11.1
Songs referring to water	1	.9
Songs referring to the earth, hills or prairie	19	17.6

It will be observed that some of the songs have been listed under two or more headings in cases where they contained two or more different references. Among animals (besides the horse) the buffalo, wolf, and bear figure prominently. The deer, elk and fox are also mentioned. Only one song has any reference to fish. The birds mentioned include owl, eagle, crane, hawk, crow, swallow, "thunder-bird", blackbird. Among songs referring to inanimate nature I have included all those in which reference to the earth is made, even though it be in such a fashion as the following:

"The old men say
The earth only endures.
You spoke truly
you are right,"¹⁴

which bespeaks the vivid impression made by the broad and everlasting prairies. Others of this group reflect the thoughts of the wanderer:

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 302.

¹³Densmore, "Teton Sioux Music", *Bulletin* 61, *Bureau American Ethnology*.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 357.

“In all lands
 adventures I seek.
 Hence
 amid hardships I have walked.”¹⁵

Other objects of inanimate nature receiving notice are the sun (6 songs), the moon (3 songs), medicine root (5 songs), dawn and sunset (5 songs). There is only one song referring to water or streams, and one referring to trees. Clouds and the rainbow are each mentioned once.

Among the speeches and rituals of Siouan tribes the following contains in large measure the wild fierce spirit of the open prairie. It is an Omaha ritual invocation to the crow and wolf, recited on the occasion of conferring “the crow” war honor for distinguished bravery in battle.

“

He! Great male wolf in ages past you were ‘moving’, *ecka!*

Of soldiers you were a war leader, it has been said, *ecka!*

Male crow, in ages long ago you were ‘moving’, *ecka!*

Of soldiers you were a war leader, it has been said, *ecka!*

Where were congregated our desire (herds of buffalo) you went, *ecka!*

They (herds) were gathered leeward, where the wind blows you walked, it is said, *ecka!*

Great grey wolf, thou wert then ‘moving’, *ecka!*

Your pale face, it is said, peered over hill again and again as you walked, *ecka!*

Your long tail blown by the wind as you passed on, it is said, *ecka!*

He! Male crow, you long ago were ‘moving’, *ecka!*

The frayed feathers ruffled at your neck as you walked, it is said, *ecka!*

The people cry ‘Ho!’ in admiration as you walk, so it was said, *ecka!*

You shouted again and again back to them from the distance, it is said, *ecka!*

Turning yourself again and again as joyfully you walked to leeward on the broad land, it is said, *ecka!*

The herds of the animals, *ecka!*

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 340.

Verily you cause them to come near, *ecka!*

.....

Not even one may escape, *ecka!*

Verily close together do they stand, *ecka!*

Slaughtered were they, *ecka!*

He! many were carried home, *ecka!*

The field lay vast, it is said, *ecka!*

Ever toward leeward, Oh wolf, *ecka!*

For that purpose you walk, *ecka!*

A deserted place immediately becomes the scene of your
activity, *ecka!*

The buffalo lying dead, *ecka!*

In great flocks here and there crows gather together, *ecka!*

Verily, what is yours you eat and the food gives you new
life, *ecka!*

.....

Verily like to this do I desire for my children, *ecka!*

Verily I would make them to rejoice, that do I strive to bring
to pass, *ecka!*

Although I have first touched food with my mouth, *ecka!*

Nevertheless, the little ones, the children, *ecka!*

Their hearts would I make glad with my power, so you said,
it is said, *ecka!*"¹⁷

In this ritual is plainly expressed the Indian's wonder and admiration for these creatures, all-powerful in the prairie environment. After the battle, no matter which side was the victor, the wolf and crow remained in possession of the field. Without sharing in the labor of the hunt they always feasted royally afterward. In some cases they may have been of assistance to the hunters by indicating the presence of herds of buffalo. Certainly the startled flight of a flock of crows was a sure indication of a stealthily approaching enemy. It was most natural for the warriors to call upon these creatures for aid. "The refrain '*ecka!*' is equivalent to 'I desire', 'I ask', or 'I pray for'. It is ritualistic and responsive to that which precedes. Each line is not complete in itself, yet it conveys the picture, or a part of the picture of the help offered once for all time by the wolf and the crow, and tends to impress on the warrior his dependence on these supernatural helpers. In line [1], again in line

¹⁷Alice B. Fletcher, "The Omaha Tribe", *27th Ann. Rep. B. A. E.*, Part 1 pp. 443 ff.

[3], the wolf and the crow are said to be moving in times long past. This use of the word 'moving' brings the crow and wolf into mythical relationship with . . . the power that moves' that gives life to all things: the time when these creatures were 'moving' was in the distant past and their action had in it something of the creative character. The ritual also perpetuates the story of the time when the office of 'soldier' (those who were to guard the people and regulate the hunting) was created, as well as the mythical promise of the crow and the wolf to help men in battle and the hunt. . . .¹⁸

On the basis of the rather prosaic translation quoted above, I have attempted a rhymed version, in the hope of emphasizing some of the poetic force hidden in the original.

"Hark to the howl, over valley and hill,
Of the great gray Wolf with lust for the kill.
Wolf-god grim of the days gone by,
Answer to the screech of our fierce war-cry.
Prowl once more through the blood-soaked land!
Lead to the slaughter of the enemy band.

Great gray wolf, we have watched you still
Where the buffalo shivered in the lee of the hill.
We have hearkened to your voice in the shriek of the gale.

You passed like a demon with your wind blown tail;
And your pale face peered o'er the hill once again
As you gorged your fill of the buffalo slain.

Hark to the caw of the Great Male Crow,
As he ruffles his feathers, and the people cry, "Ho!"
He struts through the land with a haughty air
And turns his head to the tribesman's stare.
In an echoing call his voice comes back
While the warriors follow on his hunting track.

The buffalo tremble with a deadly fear.
None can escape when the Crow draws near!
They huddle together as they stand at bay,
And the slaughter goes on through the blood-red day.
The herd lies butchered, on the vast field spread;
And the crow flocks gather to feast on the dead.

¹⁸Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 445 ff.

The Wolf-god prowls in the lonely place,
 Grinning through the dark with his lean gray face.
 The fat crows scatter and settle once again,
 To the carrion feast on the silent plain.
 And the waste lands tremble as the echoes fly
 Of the Wolf's long howl and the Crow-god's cry.

The tribesmen listen and exult to hear
 The call of the beasts, for it means good cheer.
 "Redskin children, we have heard your plea!
 The strength that is ours even yours shall be.
 With the fangs of the Wolf shall ye rend the foe.
 Ye shall gorge at the feast like the flocks of the Crow!"

The Sioux are now tame upon a reservation, their bloody career of foray and massacre ended for all time. The great prairies echo to the squawk of the klaxon instead of the dread war whoop; the modern adventurer may fare across the plains without fear of being pursued and scalped by any but the motorcycle police.

POETRY OF THE SOUTHWEST.

The Southwest Culture Area (Holmes, No. VI; Wissler, No. 8), covers the states of Arizona and New Mexico and some adjacent territory. It offers so wide a variety of problems that no attempt will be made in these pages to represent all phases of culture in the area. Instead, a brief sketch of the prevailing type of culture and environment will be given together with songs and speeches of one southwestern tribe, the Pima. These examples will, it is believed, serve to demonstrate the effect on the Indian mind of the arid environment and of the sedentary, agricultural life, as contrasted with the effect of the northern plains and forests, and the hunting existence.

The area "is in the main a region of plateaus, canyons, and cliffs; of limited fertile areas bordering stream courses, and broad stretches of arid, semi-desert."¹⁹ "The soil is largely fertile, that is, where there is any soil at all; it produces as soon as it can be moistened. Vegetation, therefore, bears the character that might be expected: it appears scant along the mountain bases, and often on the lower mountains themselves; and . . . affords singular associations of vegetal types, and great contrasts in what lives and blos-

¹⁹Holmes, "Areas of American Culture Characterization", p. 61.

soms in the same neighborhood." There are a few pine forests on the mountains, and much mezquite on the plains and in the canyons. Corn is raised in the river valleys. Animals include the panther, coyote, wolf, deer, bear, wild cat. Snakes were abundant. "Still, animal life is far from being prominent on the whole. Nature in the southwest is rather solemn than lively. Days may elapse ere the wanderer meets with anything else than a solitary crow, or a coyote, On smaller plains, droves of antelopes are occasionally encountered; the other large mammals, even deer, although plentiful in certain localities shun even the distant approach of man. There is a stillness prevailing which produces a feeling of quiet and solemnity well adapted to the frame of pine clad mountains, with their naked clefts and rents, or huge picturesque crags, from which one looks down on mesas and basins, beyond which the eye occasionally escapes towards an unbounded horizon, over arid valleys and barren plains, with the jagged outline of other ranges far away, where the dark blue sky seems to rise or to rest."²⁰ Two leading types of culture have evolved within this area, the Pueblo type and the Non-pueblo type.²¹ The former people all live in communities of stone or adobe houses; those of the latter class are either village Indians with less substantial dwellings, or else nomads. The cliffs in the south, abounding "in caves and deep recesses well adapted for habitation", undoubtedly led to the intelligent use of stone in building, "with the result that the building arts were more highly developed than in any section north of Middle Mexico."²² The pueblo tribes are confined to a strip of territory, the east end of which is in south eastern Arizona, thence south by east to the Rio Pecos in New Mexico, and south from Taos on the Rio Grande to about El Paso, in Texas. Originally the Pueblos continued far south, mingling with the Aztecs in Mexico.²³ The famous pueblos, or villages, consist of "buildings several stories in height, either of stone or adobe, communal in character, that is, intended to accomodate a whole gens or clan. . . ." The dwellings are compact, several stories high, with small rooms arranged in no fixed plan. The houses or groups of houses are placed in circular or rectangular form about open courts. Early pueblos were built on the terrace plan, the roof of one story being

²⁰A. F. Bandelier, *Final Report of Investigations among the Indians of the Southwestern United States*, Part I, Cambridge, 1890, pp. 24-5.

²¹Wissler, "Material Cultures of the North American Indians", p. 92.

²²Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

²³Miner, *The American Indians North of Mexico*, Cambridge, 1917, pp. 99 ff.

the promenade of the next. Entrance to the second story is usually effected by ladder, or by a hole in the roof.²⁴ In proximity to the pueblos are the "cliff houses", structures of stones carefully squared and laid in mortar. They are found in great numbers and over an area of wide extent in the deep canyons of the Colorado, Gila, and Upper Rio Grande and their numerous affluents. These singular structures are perched on ledges of precipices, which often descend thousands of feet almost perpendicularly. Access to many could only have been by rope or ladder. Prominent points in the surrounding terrain were often surmounted by watch towers. The disposition of these and the cliff houses proves that they were built as safe retreats from marauding enemies.²⁵

That the region has long been occupied is attested by the great numbers of substantial ruins. All tradition, material culture, and skeletal remains indicate that the modern town-building tribes are descendants of the ancient peoples. "There is nothing in any of the remains of the pueblos, or the cliff houses, or any other antiquities in that portion of our continent, which compels us to seek out other constructors for these than the ancestors of the various tribes which were found on the spot by the Spaniards of the sixteenth century, and by the armies of the United States in the middle of the nineteenth."²⁶

The distinctive type of culture is in itself a natural product of the environment. "It is a significant fact that these people do not all belong to the same linguistic stock. On the contrary, the 'Pueblo Indians' are members of a number of wholly disconnected stems, among them the Soshonean, Zunian, Tanoan, Piman, Yaman, and Keresan families. This proves that the Pueblo civilization is not due to any one unusually gifted lineage, but was a local product developed in independent tribes by the natural facilities offered by the locality. It is a spontaneous production of the soil, climate, and conditions which were unusually favorable to agricultural and sedentary occupations, and prompted various tribes to adopt them."²⁷

It is also important to note that there was not a vast difference

²⁴Brinton, *The American Race*, pp. 114 ff. and Miner, *The American Indian*, p. 102.

²⁵Brinton, *The American Race*, p. 114 ff. The situation here is, in a rude way, analogous to that on the north English border in medieval times. The cliff houses were the primitive prototypes of English castles which were erected to keep out the Scotch savages.

²⁶Brinton, *op. cit.*, p. 115. See also Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

²⁷Brinton, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

between the culture of the Pueblo tribes and that of other Indians within the area, or in truth in any other area. "Apart from the development of the art of architecture there was little in the culture of the Pueblo tribes to lift them above the level of the Algonkians."²⁸ Among the non-Pueblo tribes in the area are included the Ute, Paiute, Navaho, and Apache. Some of these may be new comers in the area.²⁹ Tribes such as the Pima, Papago, Yuma, Mariposa, lived in *North America*, p. 29 ff. in villages, though not of the Pueblo type.³⁰ "Thus in the widely diffused traits of agriculture, metate, pottery, and to a less degree the weaving of cloth with loom and spindle, former use of sandals, we have common cultural bonds between all the tribes in the Southwest, uniting them in one culture area."³¹

The Pima tribe, mentioned above, possesses a literature as interesting as any in the Southwest. The Pimans have from ancient times been residents of the Gilla river valley south of Phoenix, Arizona. A part of the tribe is also located on the Salt River Reservation north of Gila. Brinton thinks that they are the descendants of the builders of the famous "Casa Grande" pueblo ruins, and of other abandoned pueblo and cliff dwellings in the vicinity, from which they were driven by the Apache.³² Other authorities regard their culture as of a type transitional to that of the Pueblo builders.³³ In any event the tribe were noted for their intensive agriculture by irrigation and their industrious habits. In the face of alternate floods and droughts and the constant attacks by the marauding Apaches they were able to maintain themselves in fair prosperity. In the year 1858 they sold to the Overland Mail line a surplus of 100,000 pounds of wheat and vast quantities of beans, squashes, pumpkins, and melons. In 1862 their surplus wheat, sold to the government, was over a million pounds. At the present time they raise several varieties of maize (Indian corn) and numerous vegetables; and they produce several million pounds of wheat annually.³⁴

It is especially noteworthy that this tribe has always been friendly to the Americans. In the days before railroads they furnished aid to

²⁸Brinton, *op. cit.*, p. 117. See also Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 62 and Wissler, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

²⁹Swanton and Dixon, "Primitive American History", in *Anthropology*

³⁰Wissler, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

³¹Wissler, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

³²Brinton, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-4.

³³Russel, "The Pima Indians", *26th Ann. Rcp. B. A. E.*, pp. 19-26. Wissler, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

³⁴Russel, *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 89-91.

the California pioneers. They also rendered brave assistance to government troops fighting the Apaches.³⁵ Their services to the government did not, however, prevent their water supply being cut off in 1861 by an irrigation project (the Florence Canal), which left the tribe for some time in very hard, even desperate circumstances.³⁶

Among the most interesting pieces of Pima literature are their calendars, or chronological records. These annals are kept on notched sticks, and cover a period of over ninety years, dating from the season preceding the meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. There are traditions in the tribe of still older sticks which have been lost. The sticks are marked with notches, and a few crude figures for mnemonic devices; years are counted between harvests (in June). Russel has transcribed the record from two sticks which were "told" to him by their owners. The following extracts from his account will give some idea of the life of this tribe. The style and (from the modern point of view) some of the relatively trivial events noted are not unlike the monkish annals of medieval Europe. The constant forays are also reminiscent of medieval barbarism.

1834-35.

"Gila Crossing Salt River. One cold night in the spring a Pima . . . was irrigating his wheat field by moonlight. Without thought of enemies he built a fire to warm himself. This the Apaches saw and came about him in the thicket. Hearing the twigs cracking under their feet, he ran to the village and gave the alarm. The Pimas gathered in sufficient numbers to surround the Apaches, who attempted to reach the hills on their horses. Two horses stumbled into a gully, and their riders were killed before they could extricate themselves. The others were followed and all killed. In the words of the old tribesman, 'This was the only event of the year, and our people were undisturbed further in the practice of their customs.'"

1842-43.

Salt River. In the autumn the Yumas again came to attack the Maricopa village, but did not attempt to surprise it. They formed in line of battle opposite the Maricopas who were equally courageous. The war chiefs stood between the lines. Each man was armed with a club only. The Yuma chief said to his opponent: 'I am ready to have you strike me first if you can.' The Maricopa

³⁵Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

³⁶Russel, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

chief answered: 'It is for me to let you try your club on me, because you want to kill me, and you have traveled far to satisfy your heart.' In the personal combat which ensued the Yuma was killed, the sharp end of his opponent's club piercing his side. Then the fight became general, each attacking the man opposite him in the line. There were some Mohave Apaches with the Yumas who fought with bows and arrows. When they saw the line of Yumas wavering they deserted them. The Yumas retreated some distance and again made a stand, and the fight ended in an indecisive manner. . . . After the fight the Mohaves wanted to scalp the dead enemy, but the Yuma chief said no, they might scalp some Yumas by mistake, and they must wait until these had been gathered from the field."

1860-61

Gila Crossing. A plague which killed its victims in a single day prevailed throughout the villages. Three medicine men—who were suspected of causing the disease by their magic—were killed, 'and nobody was sick any more'.

1893-4.

Gila Crossing. The village of Hi atam and the Gila Maricopas held a dance together; but no one was killed. Tizwin [a native liquor] was made secretly at Gila Crossing, but no fatalities occurred.

The "prettiest woman in the village" died at Gila Crossing, and her husband was suspected of having caused her death.

A man was shot by another, who was drunk with whiskey."³⁷

Traditional set speeches constitute another important element of Pima literature. The following was and is recited by an appointed orator at the beginning of ceremonies intended to bring rain. It shows the profound importance attached to rain in the arid district; and also possesses a striking similarity of symbolism and concept to the Cherokee formula quoted on p. 15.

" When the earth was new, it was shaking and rough.³⁸ As you know, Black Mocking Bird lives in the west. I had considered my relationship to him and guessed what would be the right manner in which to address him. Because of my entreaty he was disposed to be friendly toward me.

Yes, Black Mocking Bird, if your plans for controlling the earth

³⁷Russel, *op. cit.*, pp. 34 ff.

³⁸A reference to occasional earthquakes in this district. D.

have failed, go far hence and leave the black wind and the black clouds behind you. Your people will henceforth entreat your assistance from a distance.

When the land was new I knew of a Blue Mocking Bird in the south, and I called on him also for help, and he came. He gave commands to control the mountains, trees, everything. But still the earth continued shaking."

Further entreaties to the "White Mocking Bird in the East" were also unavailing. The powers of the magician above "enveloped in darkness", "a Gray Spider in the West", and "a Black Measuring Worm that was friendly" served to quiet the earth somewhat. The arts of a certain "Blue Gopher" in the West were finally successful.

"He [Blue Gopher] placed a brand of fire down before me and a cigarette also. Lighting the cigarette he puffed smoke toward the east in a great white arch. The shadow of the arch crept across the earth beneath. A grassy carpet covers the earth. Scattering seed, he caused the corn with the large stalk, large leaf, full tassel to grow and ripen. Then he took it and stored it away. As the sun's rays extend to the plants, so our thoughts reached out to the time when we would enjoy the life-giving corn. With gladness we cooked and ate the corn, and, free from hunger and want, were happy. Your worthy sons and daughters, knowing nothing of the starvation periods, have been happy. The old men and the old women will have their lives prolonged yet day after day by the possession of corn.

People must unite in desiring rain. If it rains their land shall be as a garden, and they will not be as poor as they have been."³⁹

There are also conventional speeches recited by a war chief in making an appeal for followers. These speeches are presumably of a magic character, based on the supposed speeches of the gods at the time of the creation. A series of them was also recited at halts along the way toward the enemy camp. Each speech contains references to the supernatural powers invoked to aid the Pimas, and always ends with the destruction of the Apache, and the curious phrase, worthy of a peaceful and conservative people, "You may think this over, my relatives. The taking of life brings serious thoughts of the waste; the celebration of victory may become unpleasantly riotous."

The following is another typical selection which contains at least

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 347 ff.

one strikingly poetic figure.

“. . . my young men were preparing to fight. They rushed upon them [the enemy] like flying birds and swept them from the earth. Starting out upon my trail I reached the first water, whence I sent my swiftest young men to carry the message of victory to the old people at home. Before the Magician's door the earth was swept, and there my young men and women danced with headdresses and flowers on their heads. The wind arose and cutting off these ornaments, carried them to the sky and hung them there. The rain fell upon the high places, the clouds enveloped the mountains, the torrents descended upon the springs and fell upon the trees.”⁴⁰

All the tricks of desert warfare are revealed in these ancient orations. The following vivid description might well be envied by our best “wild west” writers.

“From the east a scout came to tell me that in the *brulés* the tracks of the Apaches show plainly. Yes, like foolish children, they wish to die with their daughters, sons, and valuable possessions.

Now a man with the strength and agility of the wild cat crept upon them from that side. And one with the sinuous silence of the gray snake glided upon them from the other side. Another crept up behind the shelter of trees. Render yourselves invisible upon the gray earth! Crawl through the arroyos, advance slowly. . . . The medicine man threw his spell upon the enemy and they slept. The Apache dreamed, and when he awakened he thought it was true that his younger brother and his uncles had been killed. . . . When he thought of these things he was frightened and tried to hide himself.

I sent the men with shield and club in two parties in the east and west direction to meet at the camp of the Apaches. Some went straight with me. There, gathered about a stump, are the Apaches. When our men heard of this from a messenger they sprang upon the enemy. We killed one who slipped upon the grass and fell down hill and another who stumbled upon a branch. We cleaned up every thing about the Apache camp. Animals and birds alone remained to prey upon the dead.

I turned back and my trail was downward. I reached home after slackening speed four times. . . . Then I came bringing the evidences of my victory. My land rejoiced and the mountain donned its headdress, the trees took on gladness.”⁴¹

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 362.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 371-74.

The songs of the Pima are usually longer than others we have analyzed. Some of them are really quite poetic. Others remind one somewhat of Vachel Lindsay. The descriptions are sufficiently sustained so that the effect of the semi-desert environment is at once noticeable. Since a much smaller number of Pima songs have been transcribed, than of other tribes, they can not be classified according to themes, as were the songs of the Ojibway and Sioux. The following quotations will demonstrate the differences between the Southwest and other areas.

CIRCLING SONGS

"Accompanied by dancing and the beating of baskets. The dancers move in a circle made up of men and women alternately."

"I am circling like the Vulture
Staying, flying near the blue.

I am circling like the Vulture
Breathing, flying near the blue.

"Now the reddish bat rejoices
In the songs which we are singing.
He rejoices in the eagle down
With which we ornament our headdress."

* * *

"In the distant land of Eagle,
In the distant land of Eagle
Sounds the harmonious rolling
Of reverberating thunder."

* * *

"I ran into the swamp confused;
There I heard the tadpoles singing.
I ran into the swamp confused
Where the bark-clothed tadpoles sang

"In the West the dragonfly wanders,
Skimming the surfaces of the pools,
Touching only with his tail. He skims
With flapping and rustling wings.

"Thence I run as darkness gathers,
Wearing cactus flowers in my hair.
Thence I run as the darkness gathers,
In fluttering darkness to the singing place."⁴²

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 259, 292, 294, 295.

MEDICINE SONGS

"Darkness settles on the summit
 Of the great Stony mountain
 There circling round it settles
 On the great Stony mountain.

The ruddy beams like spider threads
 Across the sky came streaming.
 The reddish snakes like spider's web
 To the opposite side came flaming."

* * *

SONG OF THE BEAVER

"You talk about and fear me;
 You talk about and fear me.
 As like the sinuous snake
 I go upon the water.

I see that you go slowly;
 I see that you go slowly.
 Strong as the Sun among the trees
 You leave your mark upon them.

Younger brother, I am Beaver,
 I am the quick-eared Beaver
 That gnaws the trees of the forest,
 'Tis I who overthrow them."⁴³

* * *

LIGHTNING SONG

"See the destructive lightning
 Going to kill the distant tree.
 It is going, my younger brother,
 To split the distant tree.

.
 The lightning like reddish snakes
 Tries to lash and shiver the trees.
 The lightning tries to strike them,
 Yet it fails and they yet stand."

⁴³*Ibid.*, pp. 309 and 320.

BADGER SONG

“

The land is parched and burning
 The land is parched and burning
 Going and looking about me
 I see a narrow strip of green.

.

The light glow of evening
 The light glow of evening
 Comes as the quail fly slowly
 And it settles on the young.”⁴⁴

The preceding are merely samples of the poetry of the Southwest, picked not so much for merit as for incidental mention of animals, lightning, drought, and other accidents of the southwestern Indian's life. This particular field of aboriginal art has attracted much notice in late years. It is to be hoped that some one with talents sufficient will make a really representative and complete anthology of this poetry.

CONCLUSION

The objection may be raised to many of the selections quoted in this series of articles that they are not 'literary'; they do not always show the Indian as an artistic genius. True, he was seldom an artist, by civilized standards. He was a savage; and the whole purpose of the present work will have been served by the demonstration that he sang, talked, and shouted in truly savage fashion. The discerning eye will also see in these crude refrains and wild speeches and chants the same underlying interests that concern us all, the same motives and passions that sway the civilized man. Food and rest, hunting, war, the accumulation of valued property, friends, the enemy; these are what the Indian thought about. He felt the passions of love, hate, revenge; he feared death and the unknown forces of life. He imagined gods and worshipped them, and believed in the continued existence of his soul. These are likewise the really important affairs of the white man, proclaimed alike in *Beowulf*, in the *Cid*, and in the latest newspaper. That the rewards of our hunting are counted in dollars and that our temples are lofty does not alter the essence of their character. We still band

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 322, 323.

together for protection and for raids against the enemy, and we sing songs on the war path.

It is unfortunate that space does not permit treatment of tribes in other areas. The whaling chanties of the north Pacific Coast, the frigid songs of the Eskimo are all of intense interest. Still more important are the fragments of a great and truly artistic Mexican literature, stray survivors of the ferocious bigotry of the Spaniard. All these and the relics of many another tribe have been placed in readily accessible form by expert scientists. They only await the attention of the literary man.

The immediate problem was to discover whether any relation existed between the compositions of tribes inspired by similar, and by wholly different life conditions. The present analysis has been carried far enough to indicate the fundamental similarity of thought processes throughout the red race. All tribes, the most primitive and the most advanced, went through the same stages of mental development. Where the surroundings furnished the same subjects, the compositions reflecting them are similar. Wherever two tribes even in different environments underwent analogous experience their songs reflecting the experience bear strong resemblance. Perhaps most noteworthy in this respect are the songs of love, war, and hunting. The traditional speeches of the astute Iroquois and of the culturally advanced Pima, though differing somewhat as to subject, are similar in purpose and in tone. Both are historical, are used for the purpose of encouraging and heartening the people in public assemblies. The Pimas sage advice, "You may think this over, my relatives. The taking of life brings serious thoughts of the waste; the celebration of victory may become unpleasantly riotous," might well have been uttered by an Iroquois councillor. The songs of the Iroquois (not analyzed in this volume) include many which celebrate corn, beans, and other plants, much as do the songs of the Pima.⁴⁵

Where the environment was totally different, a different set of subjects appear, but treated in a fashion analogous to that characteristic of all other tribes in about the same stage of culture. The

⁴⁵Alex. T. Cringan, "Pagan Dance Songs of the Iroquois", *Archaeological Report*, 1899, *Being Part of Appendix to the Report of the Minister of Education, Ontario*, Toronto, 1900, pp. 168-189.

Mr. Cringan gives the music and the titles or subjects of a number of songs but unfortunately did not think it necessary to translate the whole text. Being unable to discover any extensive translations of Iroquois songs, the present writer was forced to omit these from detailed comparison.

songs of the Teton Sioux and those of the Ojibway are markedly similar, though each sang of some things almost unknown to the other. There is practically no mention of buffalo by the Ojibway, or of trees or lakes by the Sioux. The songs of both these tribes are quite different in length, style, and subject matter from those of the Pima, a tribe in a different environment, and on a somewhat higher level of culture.

Having gone thus far the present studies have fulfilled their mission. They may serve to point the direction for further and more detailed analyses of primitive literature. It is by such studies that the reasons for our own peculiar thoughts, passions, and beliefs may ultimately be explained: and the way will be made clear for the intelligent control of these, and the more rapid evolution of the race.