

## DELUGE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN INDIANS.

BY THE EDITOR.

RICHARD ANDRÉ, the well-known anthropologist and editor of the *Globus*, has collected under the title *Die Flutsagen* a great number of Deluge legends and has endeavored in his concluding chapters to point out the natural causes of their origin. Among them he mentions a tradition of the Algonquins, a tribe of North American Indians, recorded in pictures on bark and preserved by A. G. Squier.<sup>1</sup> The pictures are merely a mnemotechnical method of remembering the story, but Mr. Squier publishes the explanation as given by the Indians in their own language, together with an English translation, and the meaning of it is in brief as follows:

“Long ago, there originated a powerful snake when people had turned bad. (First picture.) The strong snake was hostile to all creatures, and troublesome. (Second picture.) So they fought, and there was no peace. (Third picture.) Then the weak race of human beings suffered much from the keeper of the dead. (Fourth picture, where the cross between the small man and the larger figure indicates hostility.) Then the strong snake decided to destroy the whole human race and all creatures. (Fifth picture.) So he brought up the black snake, monsters, and rushing waters. (Sixth picture.) The rushing waters spread and covered all the mountains, destroying everything. (Seventh picture.) Upon the island of the tortoises (Tula) there was Nanaboush (Manabozho), the ancestor of human beings and all creatures. (Eighth picture.) He dwelt on turtle land (Tula) and made himself ready to move. (Ninth picture.) Human beings and creatures floating all about were searching for the back of the turtle. (Tenth picture.) There were many monsters of the sea who swallowed some of the people. (Eleventh picture.) The daughter of the great spirit (Manito-dasin) assisted them to reach a boat, and they shouted for help. (Twelfth picture.) Thereupon Nanaboush (Manabozho), the ancestor of human beings, the ancestor of all creatures, the ancestor of turtles, came. (Thirteenth picture.) He placed the men on the back of the turtle (fourteenth picture) and commanded the turtle with threats to save the lives of the people. (Fifteenth picture.) Then the waters subsided, the plain and the mountains

<sup>1</sup> *Historical and Mythological Traditions of the Algonquins*. With a translation of the *valum olum*, or bark record of the Linni Lenape, a paper read before the New York Historical Society.

became dry again, and the bad being walked his way to another place." (Sixteenth picture.)

André believes that this story is genuinely Indian and cannot be considered as a mutilated account of the Biblical deluge story.



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BARK MANUSCRIPT OF THE ALGONQUINS.

The same seems to be true of an old Quiché legend, of the natives of Guatemala, which is preserved in the *Popol Vuh*.

The *Popol Vuh* means the "Book of the People," and was written in the original Quiché language at about the time when the first white people reached the New World. It was translated into Spanish in the eighteenth century by Ximenes, a Dominican monk, and published in that language by Karl Scherzer at Vienna, 1857, under the title *Las historias del origen de los Indios de esta provincia de Guatemala, etc.* The original Quiché text was published, together with a French translation, in 1861 at Paris, by Brasseur de Bourbourg, under the title *Popol Vuh, Le Livre sacré et les mythes . . . des Quichés*. A critical report of it is given in D. Stoll's book, *Zur Ethnographie der Republik Guatemala*, published in Zurich, 1884.

According to the *Popol Vuh* the gods were dissatisfied with the animals whom they had created first, because they were mute and could not worship. So they made men of clay, but they too were imperfect, for though they could speak they were dull and could not move their neck; therefore the gods destroyed them in a flood. Then the gods created a new race, making the man of wood and the woman of resin. They were superior to the clay people but not as yet satisfactory, for their speech was crude and they showed no gratitude. Therefore Hurakan (the heart of the heavens) rained burning resin and caused an earthquake to come which destroyed all but a few who were changed into monkeys. Finally, the gods made men of white and yellow maize, and they were so perfect that the gods became afraid, and they took away some of their powers, reducing them to human beings such as they are now, and the Quichés are their direct descendants.

Among the Deluge legends of South America the idea is prominent that the people who saved their lives fled unto a big mountain, and that when the floods rose the mountain floated on the waters. In this way, the Incas of Peru declare that a shepherd was saved with his family, and the Araukens add that the people on the floating mountain covered their heads with wooden dishes in order to protect themselves against the heat of the sun, in case the mountain should be raised to the heavens.