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CONTENTS OF PART I.

•The Arawâks formerly inhabited the whole of the West Indian Islands. Those in the Lesser Antilies were exterminated by the Caribs, before the discovery of America by Columbus. The inhabitants of the larger island perished soon after that event, under the oppression of the Spaniards.

•The few Arawâks who dwell near the coast of Guiana and whose legends are here given are now the only known representatives of a gentle and once numerous race.

Next

---

p. 3

Legends of the Arawâks.

—

INTRODUCTION.

'Twas long ago! yet still I view
The scene to me then fresh and new,
•Where two fair rivers flow;
Where stately moras tower above,
And palms wave gently in the grove,
•As pleasant breezes blow.

p. 4

I see, as natives pass me there,
Bright copper skins and jet black hair;
While one whose face is kind and fair
•The forest trees lays low.

Alone that Indian came to me,
A young white stranger's friend to be;
And hoping that the white man's "word"
Might to the red men light afford.
So when, oppressed by noontide glow,
He sought my hut—too close and low;
We to the river would repair,
And talk of Christ's religion there.

There painted Caribs in our view
Would pass us in their light canoe,
•And slowly glide away.
We saw grim alligators sleep,
And languid lizards near them creep,
•In the meridian ray.
And there—while no sweet breeze above
Would stir the leaves and cheer the grove,
And water-lilies scarce could move—
•Would wait the cool of day.

There he of God and of the soul
Would question in the "Dutch Creole;"
A "*patois*" I could daily hear
From an old negress living near,
p. 5
And could reply to, *right or wrong*.
But when he spoke his own sweet tongue,
Too hard it was to understand,
Though helped by signs with head or hand!

Time passed: he heard in his own tongue
Truths which to Christian faith belong.
•*Then*, first, to God he prayed.
And I from him their legends heard,
With that old superstitious "word"
•Which he before obeyed.
Of spirits good and bad he told;
Of sorcerers and warriors bold;
But chief, *this* legend, grave and old,
•Of *HIM* who all things made.

p. 6

I.
OF THE SUPREME BEING.

THERE is a mighty One above: and like Him there is none!
He sits on high, above the sky, where none can see His throne.
He was there ere He made the world, with stars, and moon, and sun;
And evermore He will be there; when each its course has run.

Our tongue gives Him no proper name, but titles more than one;
We call Him "Dweller in the Height,"[1] since there He sits alone.
The "Great Our Father,"[2] though to Him for comfort none have gone,
And of "Our Maker"[3] oft we speak, but *never call upon*.

That Mighty Maker all things formed; 'tis He that made them move;
And food for all things He bestows, which seems a proof of love.
••But calm He sits above the sky,
••To Him for succour none can fly,
•••He is so *high above*!

p. 7

ORIGIN OF LIVING CREATURES.
(*Legend of the Ceiba Tree*.)

Here, beneath this sacred tree,
•Old men told how moon and sun,
Earth and sky, and wide-spread sea,
•Lay before the Mighty One.
High He stood, where rivers run,
Pausing, ere His work was done!

Waves, soft murm'ring, beat the strand,
•Gentle breezes sighed above.
Still no life was in the land,
•No sweet birds sang songs of love.
O'er the plain and through the grove,
Nothing then was seen to move.

Then his seat, "Komaka,"[1] there—
•Wondrous tree!—He caused to grow.
'Midst the clouds its branches were,
•Earth and sea lay far below.
Sacred trees we this day know;
None such vast dimensions show.

From that bright-green throne, His hand
•Scattered twigs and bark around.
Some in air, and some on land;
•Some the sparkling waters found.
Soon He saw with life abound
Water, air, and solid ground!

p. 8

Those which fell upon the stream
•Found a pleasant shelter there:
Shining fishes dart and gleam
•Where those woody fragments were;
Others sported through the air,
Bright with wings and feathers fair.

Moving, too, on solid ground,
•Or the river's marshy strand,
Beasts and reptiles then were found,
•Spreading thence to fill the land.
Men and women upright stand,
Raised by their great Maker's hand.

—

Wild fruits first were human food;
•Water man's sole drink, they say.
No bold hunters roamed the wood;
•None would then take life away;
Beasts and birds would sport and play
With young children day by day.

On this earth our sire then came
•(Young and brave "Wadili" he),
Saw their maidens, felt love's flame,
•Took them, fair, his wives to be;
Taught the native arts you see:
Hunting, fishing, husbandry.

—

ORIGIN OF THE WHITE RACE.

Some addition has been made
•To that legend, grave and old;
Since our fathers here surveyed
p. 9
•Steel-clad white men, strong and bold.
They, with blood-hounds, we are told,
Hunted men—and all for gold!

"Not from the Komaka tree
•Sprang the whites," our sages say;
"They from wood cast on the sea
•Rose, amidst wild ocean's spray,
Finding land on which to stay
O'er the waters—far away."

"If from wood our race has sprung,
•Did it in these forests grow?
Did it to 'green-heart' belong?
•'Locust,' or 'balata?' No?
Did its foliage ruddy glow
With a mora's strength below?

"Ask no more, friend, you are wrong.
•Those trees give us, day by day,
Bark, or gums, and timber strong:
•Useful gifts they all convey.
But the white man's stock, they say,
Good for nought, was cast away!"

Smiles on every face appear,
•Red men, seated on the ground,
Laugh—that satire old to hear:
•Mild revenge! which poor men found,
Who escaped, in swamps around,
Spanish "arcabuz" and hound!

p. 10

THE FIRE AND THE FLOOD.

Traditions of a deluge, we are told,
In the New World prevailed, as in the Old.
Those of our Arawâks may seem absurd,
Yet stranger tales from inland tribes are heard.
And far more wild were those which (Spaniards show)
Were told by that same race in Bohio
(Or Hayti)—for their race at first possessed
Those lovely islands all, whose charms adorn the west.

'Twas said in Hayti, that from magic gourd,
By accident o'erturned, the deluge poured;
Till then that wondrous gourd enclosed could keep
The num'rous finny tribes that swim the deep.
No trace of that wild legend I have found,
Though strange were the traditions all around.
The Arawâks, peculiar, understood
That *fire* had swept the earth *before* the water-flood.

THE LEGENDS.

I.

Fire is mighty—all-subduing!
••Once its fury came,
When the Maker, roused, was viewing
••Deeds of blood and shame—
Evil raging, goodness failing—
Then on earth, his wrath prevailing,
••Came the burning flame.

p. 11

Timely warning came from heaven:
••"Fire shall sweep the land!"
One who heard that warning given
••Sought a reef of sand.
By that chieftain's wisdom guided,
Some a refuge there provided
••For their little band.

"Here," said he, "a pit preparing,
••Wives and children hide.
Timber strong, the sand-roof bearing.
••We must first provide.
Piles will keep that shelter o'er us;
Comrades, work!—the vault before us
••Must be deep and wide.

"Felling next the trees, and burning.
••All around make clear;
Shrubs and grass to ashes turning,
••Leave we nothing here—
Nothing on which flames can fasten.
Clear and burn! O brothers! hasten,
••Ere the flames appear!

••••*••*••*

Clouds of smoke, the sun concealing,
••Come, still rolling nigher;
Then fierce flames, their might revealing.
••Wrap the woods in fire.
Onward comes the blazing torrent;
That burnt "clearing" stays its current;
••*There*—the flames expire.

p. 12

Thither, from that danger flying,
•Birds and beasts repair.
In their vault those men are lying;
•Smoke and heat they bear.
While the flames around are roaring,
And the fiery hail is pouring,
•Finding safety there.

••••*••*••*

Coming forth, they see the ruin
Through the lurid flame;
Ashes, which those flames were strewing,
•Spread funereal gloom.
Blackened skeletons there lying
Show where men and beasts, when flying,
•Met their awful doom!

II.

Time flowed on. That fearful danger
•Long had passed away;
Punishment became a stranger;
•All had gone astray.
Violence and wrong abounded;
Men with evil good confounded,
•Growing worse each day.

Evil ways have evil ending.
•When a warning—new
Told them of a *flood* impending,
•None believed it true.
Till Mar•rew•na, hearing,
For his wife and children fearing,
•Made a great canoe.

p. 13

Some among his nearest neighbours
•Said he was to blame;
Others, mocking at his labours,
•Strove to give him shame.
Still they found him at it working,
Morn and eve, no labour shirking,
•Ere "great waters" came.

"Make it large, Mar•rew•na!
•Strong and fair to view:
Over forest and savannah
•Float—the deluge through!"
Thus they mocked their anxious neighbour,
Mocked him at his heavy labour,
•Laughed at his canoe!

Archéd roof he thatched above it,
•Palm leaves strong and warm;
Firm, that no fierce wind might move it,
•Ready for the storm.
"Here," said he, "my loved ones, hiding,
Through the tempest safe abiding,
•May be kept from harm."

Still he feared; and said with sorrow,
•"When this flood shall come,
We may drift (perhaps to-morrow),
•Through the salt-sea foam!"
Said a voice, "That great tree near thee,
Moor to *that*—thy craft shall bear thee
•Safely near thy home!"

••••*••*••*

p. 14

Then, with lengthened bush-ropes mooring,
•(So our legends tell),
He and his, the flood enduring,
•Weathered surge and swell
When the waters left them, stranded,
Near their former home they landed,
•Known—and loved—so well!

—

IDEAS OF A FUTURE STATE.

Columbus told how, on fair Cuba's isle,
Where, spent with toil, he sought repose awhile,
And gentle natives welcomed him to land,
A venerable elder took his hand.
Full fourscore years had bowed that old man's head,
And to the Admiral thus solemnly he said—

"Great is thy power, O chief! But be not vain;
And from all violence and wrong abstain.
For, *after death*, there are before the soul
Two ways; each ending in a final goal.
To light and life all the kind-hearted go,
The cruel and unkind to dark and dismal woe!"

Belief like that—almost as clear—I found
Among the heathen Arawâks around.
Like origin with that old man they claim,
Although their tribe may bear another name.
And scarcely different from his we deem
Their knowledge of one Lord, Eternal and Supreme.

p. 15

Why did not they then on their "Father" call,
Until the Christian teachers summoned all
To join in prayer unto the common Lord?
The reason our next legend will afford.
Here, as elsewhere, we *superstition* find,
Excluding true religion from the darkened mind.

—

II.
THE ARAWAK SORCERER'S LEGEND.
(1841.)

ARAWANILI AND THE OREHU.

THE shadows now lengthen, and evening steals o'er us,
•Tall forests will soon hide the sun;
Our work being done, to the river before us
•My little red Indians run.
With gay, merry shouts, and long hair wildly streaming,
•They plunge from a stump, one by one;
And little of danger from water-snakes deeming,
•Some swim the wide river alone.
'Tis a dream of the past; but how oft in such dreaming
•I view their glad sports going on!

Their gay, happy shouts, from the river ascending,
•Seem echoed from yonder clear sky;
With hundreds of voices from parrots there blending,
•As homeward green parrots now fly.
p. 16
The bright macaw's scream may be heard in the chorus,
•The toucan may add his harsh cry;
But mutely, on yonder tree, leafless before us,
•The sloth gazes round from on high.
Ah! let him beware; for now, hovering o'er us,
•His foe, the bush-eagle, is nigh!

While through the dense forest the echoes are ringing
•Of those merry boys at their play,
Sweet, silvery laughter the breezes are bringing—
•The girls are in their little bay;
••Where the water seems flashing,
••With mermaidens dashing,
•And diving, and swimming away!

And now, though from distance we hear not the dash,
We can see, far away, where the calm waters flash,
•As they catch the sun's evening rays.
'Tis the stroke of some paddles disturbing their calm,
And we see a canoe, where yon manicole palm
•Its fair, slender beauty displays,
Lowly bending, as if 'twould its Maker adore,
••While myriads more
••Wave along the green shore,
As the breeze seems to whisper His praise.

Soon we see that canoe to our landing draw near,
With two Arawâk men, their wives, children, and gear;
They are soon on the bank, and assisting to land
Their two aged parents, with kind, loving hand.

p. 17

And tall is that patriarch, chief of his clan,
Though he leans on his staff as a feeble old man;
What he bears, wrapped in palm-leaves, I cannot well see,
But all shrink from its sound, as he hands it to me.

"O Maraka-kore!" for so did they call,
In their own native language, that sorcerer tall,
(Which name means "Red-rattle," denoting his trade,
Or that instrument rather, which dupes of them made);
"Say, why do you bring your 'maraka' to-day,
With its handle adorned with birds' feathers so gay,
And the stones rattling in it, the demons to scare,
Or attract to the sick, as your people declare?

"In token that I from these things turn away,
And renounce evil spirits; I bring this to-day,
From your neighbour Cornelius we hear the 'good word;'
We believe, and are thankful for what we have heard.
On myself and my wife feeble age has come on,
And we wish to be christened ere life shall be gone."

Such, in substance, he said; and I need not here tell
Of those of his brethren who gave theirs as well.

••••*••*••*••*••*

"Pray tell me, old man," I one day to him said,
"What were your traditions respecting your trade?
Who was the first sorcerer? How came you to use
This rattle, when demons you charm or abuse?"

Being urged by his sons and some friends who were near,
He told a tradition they all longed to hear."

p. 18

THE LEGEND.

A chieftain grave, both wise and brave—
•Good Arawânili—
Stood mournful by the silver wave
•Of the wide-spread ocean sea.

His heart was sore; the plume he wore,
•As chief of Kaieri,[1]
Drooped—while he listened on the shore
•To the sigh of that ocean sea.

Then, in his view, bright Orehu
•(The Water-Mother she)
Rose, glistening as with drops of dew,
•Or pearls—from the ocean sea.

Her beauty rare, which glossy hair
•Enveloped, flowing free,
More lovely made those waters fair,
•And shores of the ocean sea.

"Tell me thy grief," she said, "O chief!
•The grief of Kaieri;
And I, perchance, may bring relief
•From the depths of the ocean sea!"

p. 19

'"Tis for the dead," the chieftain said,
•"For whom I nought could do,
To help them, ere their spirits fled,
•From torturing Yauhahu."

"Throughout this isle, man, wife, or child,
•By fever crushed, I view;
By demons' arrows[1] driven wild,
•Dire shafts of Yauhahu!

"Were mortal foe to work us woe,
•Their deeds they soon should rue!
But none, *without a charm*, I trow,
•Can face the Yauhahu.

"Thy helping hand may save this land:
•Lady! for that I sue.
Grant me some charm, which may withstand,
•And quell the Yauhahu!"

"I hear, O chief! thy tale of grief,
•Thy people's grief," said she,
"And thou shalt thank, for their relief,
•The lady of the sea.

"Go, plant with care this branch I bear
•And rear the 'ida' tree,
Where, on yon hill, thy cottage there
•O'erlooks this pleasant sea.

p. 20

"When fruit is found, full large and round
•And heavy it will be;
Take that which first falls on the ground,
•And meet me by the sea!"

••••*••*••*

Slow from his gaze withdrew her face,
•As in the wave sank she.
The tree he reared then at his place,
•And watched—the deep blue sea!

••••*••*••*

His watch was o'er, when to the shore
•The *calabash* bore he.
The Water-Mother there, once more
•Met Arawânili.

Its rind with care he emptied there,
•Through holes like these you see.
She brought its handle, feathered fair,
•For Arawânili.

And while he wrought, she dived and sought
•The gems of ocean sea;
And stones of shining white she brought
•To Arawânili.

Tobacco, too, which none then knew,
•(Though common now) brought she:
With charms, which made all Yauhahu
•Dread Arawânili.

p. 21

To her he owed the power he showed,
•None since like him could be—
So rich the gifts her love bestowed
•On Arawânili!

••••*••*••*

Still, to this day, in stream or bay,
•The Orehu men see.
But "high above," grown old, they say,
•Rests Arawânili.

When Numa, as was thought,
•A kind Egeria found,
The sacred, mystic rites she taught
•The Roman people bound.
Here red men hold what (they were told)
•The Spirit of the sea,
By love constrained, in days of old,
•Taught Arawânili.

The old man said, "That word
•We sorcerers received,
Till of 'our Father's' love we heard,
•And some of us believed.
"We knew *before* that all we see
•*He* made, both great and small;
But ne'er were taught to Him to flee,
•Whatever might befall."

p. 22

'Twas so. The heathen all
•Said, "God, above the sky,
Can never listen to our call,
•He is so great and high.
"But demons who, by day or night,
•Cause pain and sickness sore,
We must propitiate, or 'fight,'
For man can do no more!"

Teach them the Saviour's word:
•That God doth condescend
To be to us a gracious Lord,
•A Father, and a Friend.
When they believe He *heareth men*,
•Though suffering, weak, and poor,
They (like Maraka-kore) then
•To demons seek no more.

APPENDIX TO THE LEGEND.

••Allusion was made
••To the tricks in their trade.
Which those Indian sorcerers have commonly played.
••Now their *method* we show
••In a story we know
Of what really happened a few years ago.

p. 23

Two white men through our backwoods went, the Indian life to see,
And much they wished of "piai-men" to learn the mystery.
But 'twas in vain, till one declared that he was "taken sick;"
And begged his friend to "lend a hand, to carry out the trick."

They knew a famous piai-man lived at a place near by;
"Oh come and cure this sick white man!" He answered, "I will try."
And so he brought his implements—no matter who might mock,
He'd win the battle with the rattle Creoles call "shok-shok."

He first the females sternly bade to "take themselves away."
They all forthwith fled like the wind, too much afraid to stay.
He then made up his sacred fire, to burn the sacred weed,
His patient thought, "I like a *smoke*, but this is waste indeed!"

His incantations then commenced, most terrible to hear,
Both to the patient and the men who might be ling'ring near.
He roared, he shouted at the fiends; perhaps he dared to curse;
'Twas all in vain; the patient groaned, and said, "I'm getting worse!"

p. 24

He next inhaled tobacco smoke, much as his mouth could hold:
And blew it on the sick white man, who thought, "He's getting bold.
It may be only want of sense—to fumigate my clothes;
But must be downright impudence to blow it up my nose!"

He next on the affected part his hands began to rub;
The patient grew convulsed at that, 'twas such a ticklish job.
With strong, but stifled, laughter, soon his body shook all o'er;
That *tickling* was too much for him—he could hold out no more!

He laughed outright, then feebly tried to make that laugh a groan;
It would not do! the doctor knew the difference of tone.
He saw that he was being tricked, yet went on with his work;
Not altering a muscle, but as grave as any Turk.

According to their ancient rules, his mouth he next applied,
To suck out what was Causing pain in that white man's inside.
Then from his mouth he would have spit nail, thorn, a claw, or pin,
And said, "From this sick man I've drawn what Yauhahu put in!"

p. 25

Now when our white friend's flesh was sucked, he strove to turn away,
But "red-skin" meant to earn his fee, and would not be said "nay."
He seized him boldly *with his teeth*—it was a grip full sore—
And, with a yell, the patient fell, out on the earthen floor!

Most cool the doctor was. By signs he made his meaning plain:
"Get back into that hammock. I must operate again!"
But the other shook his head, and said that *that* would "never do!"
Then showed his friend his injured side, and said 'twas "bitten through."

But he replied, "This savage doctor knows a thing or two,
So do not quarrel with him, it would be much worse for you;
I'll tell him he has made a cure, and give a handsome fee."
So he, with cash and fame secure, walked off triumphantly.

From this, gentle reader, you get a small view
Of what those men make a sick person go through:
The clash of the rattle, and shouts, causing fear,
Must be most distressing and painful to hear.
Then the fumes of tobacco, and smoke of the fire,
Will scarcely allow the poor wretch to respire.

They spare not themselves! When a man's on probation,
And learning the mysteries of his vocation,
He's shut up, and half-starved; then, to take his degree,
Drinks tobacco decoction, as strong as can be,
Till he sinks in a trance: and revives—an M.D.!

p. 26

THE MORAL.

If you near red-skinned sorcerers go,
•Though all things may seem handy,
Don't let them on *your* person show
•Their "modus operandi."
Speak always truth, and *without fail*
•*To doctors*—wild or tame—
Such are the lessons of our tale,
•Which "Biter bit" we name.

—

ARAWIDI.
(*A Fragment*.)

Our women have strong drink prepared,
•And view the gallant show—
Where, gaily crowned, our men advance;
Bright feathers waving in the dance,[1]
•As round the house they go.

There learnèd sorc'rers sit or stand,
•Who chant our ancient lore:
And, as they chant, responsive song
Is heard in chorus, loud and long,
•Re-echoed o'er and o'er.

••••*••*••*

p. 27

THE LEGENDS.

"Adaili is the glorious sun"
•(Thus their first legend ran),
"But when of old on earth he came,
Then 'Arawidi' was his name:
•His fashion—that of man.

"Once, fishing on a fav'rite stream,
•He made a dam, or weir,
And said, 'This stream must not run dry,
Lest, in my visits from the sky,
•I find no fishes here.'

"The otters heard. They broke his dam,
•And let the waters flow.
Then he, compelled to seek for aid,
Its guardian the woodpecker made—
•His watchman—here below.

"One day, while passing through the sky,
•Loud tapping cought his ear.
Swift darting to that spot below,
He found a fierce and mailèd foe—
•The alligator—near.

"He seized him with a mighty hand,
•Whose grip could never fail;
Then smote, to make the reptile yield,
With that hard club he well could wield,
•Upon his head and tail.

p. 28

"'Oh, Arawidi, slay me not!'
•The alligator cried:
'Cease, cease to wound! Thy suppliant spare,
And I will give a maiden fair
•To be thy beauteous bride.'

"He called his friends, the water-sprites,
•The maiden to provide;
And soon a girl, of wondrous charms,
Was placed in Arawidi's arms,
•To be his lovely bride.

••••*••*••*

"The reptile's wounds were healed. Those blows
•No more his hide assail;
But still their marks are seen, 'tis said,
Indented on his *battered head*
•And *notched along his tail!*"

••••*••*••*

Then tales were told of others' fate
•(Wild children of the sun),
With song and dance, till evening late
•Their tuneful course would run.
And when the third day closed the feast,
When drink had failed and dancing ceased,
•Those legends scarce were done!

—

NOTE TO ARAWIDI.

•One apparent object of the great chain of legends, to which this belongs, was to give a mythical origin to the peculiarities of the various animals of Guiana, in connection with the deeds of the heroic personages of their national folk-lore.

•In the foregoing tale of Arawidi, those of the *alligator's* personal p. 29 appearance are accounted for. In other legends, those of monkeys, jaguars, &c., were treated of. The fragmentary tale of the "Royal Vultures," of which the following outline was told to the writer by the Arawâks of Tapacuma, will show how they dealt with *birds*—real or fictitious.

•"A bold young Arawâk hunter captures a beautiful royal vulture. She is the daughter of Anuanima, sovereign of a race which has its country above the sky. When at home there, they cease to be birds, and assume the form and habits of *human beings*. The captive, smitten with love for her handsome captor, lays aside her feathers, and appears before him as a beautiful girl. She becomes his wife, bears him above the clouds, and, after much trouble, persuades her father and family to receive him. All then goes well, until he expresses a wish to visit his aged mother, when they discard him, and set him on the top of a very high tree, the trunk of which is covered with formidable prickles. He appeals pathetically to all the living creatures around. Then spiders spin cords to help him, and fluttering birds ease his descent, so that at last he reaches the ground in safety."

•Then follow his efforts, extending over several years, to regain his wife, whom he tenderly loves. "Her family seek to destroy him, but by his strength and sagacity he is victorious in every encounter. The birds at length espouse his cause, assemble their forces, and bear him as their commander above the sky. He is at last slain by a valiant young warrior, resembling himself in person and features. It is *his own son*, born after his expulsion from the upper regions, and brought up there in ignorance of his father."

•The legend ends with the conflagration of the house of the royal vultures, who, "hemmed in by crowds of hostile birds, are unable to use their wings, and forced to fight and die in their human forms."

•The peculiarities of various birds common to the country are, in the episodes of this wild legend, whimsically accounted for. The following are instances:—

•The "kiskedee," though a valiant little bird, disliked the war, and bandaged his head with white cotton, pretending to be sick. p. 30 Being detected by more resolute warriors, as the hawk, &c., he was sentenced to wear the bandage continually. In time it marked his plumage; and the white band is still conspicuous on the heads of his descendants, They are also noted for their hostility to hawks and other large birds, whom they attack incessantly when on the wing.

•The "warracobba" (trumpeter bird) and another quarrelled over the spoil, and knocked each other over into the ashes of the burnt house. The trumpeter arose with *patches of grey*, which are still seen on the plumage of his children. The other bird, which had been *rolled* in the ashes, became *grey all over*.

•The *owl* round among the spoil a package, done up with great care, which he thought would enrich him for life. It was a magical package, prepared by the foe for some emergency, and containing *darkness*. The darkness enveloped him as he opened it, and he has never since been able to endure the light of day!

•Thus—often whimsical and puerile, but displaying much fertility and boldness of invention, with here and there touches of romantic beauty—were the mythical tales of the Arawâk race in the days of yore. When the piai system began slowly to fade before Christianity, those legends, in their pure and connected shape, were no longer preserved. Their few remaining fragments are now distorted, intermixed, and in no two districts told alike.

—

III.
HISTORICAL AND WARLIKE LEGENDS OF THE ARAWÂKS. (1865-66.)

THE CANNIBAL MOUNDS.

THERE are boats and canoes, with their gay colours flying,
Whose strange motley crews oars and paddles are plying;
They come from the sea, where a vessel is lying,
p. 31
•Which has from our city run down.
••Their course they are steering
••To this mission "clearing,"
Where on our thatched chapel the cross is appearing,
•Above a small Indian town.

There is firing of guns, where our people are standing,
And multitudes welcome the Governor landing,
•Whose uniform glitters with gold.
••His "aides" there attendant
••In helmets resplendent;
Their smart handsome bets, and bright scabbards dependent,
•The red men, delighted, behold.
Then come other gentlemen, welcomed with cheering;
But most the good Bishop—all hail his appearing
•Once more—at that Indian fold.

Men of every tribe come, our summons obeying,
•And nearly two thousand there stand.
Helped by the Archdeacon, who with us is staying,
•We keep the wild throng well in hand.
They who stand in the front decent garments are wearing;
While those sent behind have none such to appear in,
•And—gladly obey the command.

Sun-pictures are taken, our ruler commanding
•Fair views of each scene to provide—
In one, squalid heathen are sitting or standing,
•With Christians well dressed at their side.
In another, a *mound* its tall head is uprearing,
A cutting runs through it, which some men are clearing,
•Whilst others are gazing inside.

p. 32

••••*••*••*••*

That great "barrow" was seen when we first cleared the land;
•And it differs from all things around.
For elsewhere the land is a "reef" of white sand;
•That was made up of *fish-shells*, we round.
Bones of birds and land animals also were there,
So at length I cut through it, to lay the whole bare,
•Which such mystery seemed to surround.

There, among shells and rubbish, were curious stones,
•Broken axe-heads, and implements rare.
But few cared for stones; seeing layers of *bones*—
•*Human* bones—of all sizes laid bare!
Skulls, in fragments long buried, were cast up to view,
And *all* the long bones had been split open too,
•For the *marrow*, by savages there.

Soon the news spread abroad; and our company came
•To that great Waramuri shell mound.
But, meanwhile, other mounds, whose contents were the same,
•By the aid of our Indians, were found.
None their history know—it was long, long ago—
But cannibal habits the human bones show,
•Which in those "kitchen middens" abound.

—

Our white friends have left us: their task being done,
•We see but our Indians there.
And, for our evensong, with the next setting sun,
•To the wide-gaping shell-mound repair.
We go in procession; where, taking the lead,
School-children with banners their teachers precede,
•And the old people bring up the rear.

•••••Soon, the beautiful strain
•••••Of "Jesus shall reign"
••••From that grisly chasm ascends.
••••From its edges above
••••Wave the Lamb and the Dove,
•••As o'er it each school-banner bends.
••••This—the emblem of *peace*;
••••May it spread and increase!
••••That—of suffering *love*,
••••Shown by One now above,
•••Who to man's supplication attends.

••••And when praise and prayer
••••We had thus offered there,
•••The "cutting" was filled in next day;
••••But the human bones found
••••Were not placed in the mound,
••••For all had been taken away,
Then, to seek an old man, through the village I strayed,
Who a bright feathered crown, of the toucans' breasts made,
•Gold and scarlet, was wont to display.

Some had thought that photography was "not quite right;"
And the artist's strange movements seemed magical quite
So that old man had shifted his place on the sand,
•And caused a great deal of delay;
For the camera's use he could not understand,
•Though he saw it was not meant for play.
••Some had said 'twas "a gun:"
••And—though he would not run—
To have it aimed at him seemed very queer fun;
•And he kept getting out of the way.

Yet he was a wise elder upon his own ground,
•Where no such adventures befel.
There, with his tall son, my Cornelius I found,
•And other chief leaders as well
Of the wars of their nation those old men would speak,
Legends such as in few years one vainly might seek;
•What I heard from them I will here tell.

THE LEGENDS.

"Our fathers, who at first lived here, fought with the Meyanow;
A savage race, who ate mankind, of habits vile and low.
They, long before, lived on this shore, if our old tales be true;
Who else but they would make such mounds as you have now cut through?"

It was Cornelius who told this: the truth he may have found,
For he was wise, and well he knew all the traditions round,
His ancestors "prevailed," he said, "yet some perhaps had been
Led captive by the cannibals—their bones we might have seen."
But no one knew the certain truth; it was so long ago;
And none with slayers, or with slain, would kindred claim or show.

p. 35

Then said he, "When the Meyanow had all been overthrown,
The Caribs came, and little peace by any race was known.
They seized our goods, killed all who fought, young people took away,
For food or slaves, across the seas, so ancient legends say.

"Those from the islands ceased to come; we for a time had peace;
But Caribs on the mainland seemed in number to increase.
On Orinoco numerous their warriors must have been:
Many on Essequibo dwelt, many on Corentyn.
And throughout Surinam we know they'd many fighting men;
Others, beyond the Marowin, were living in Cayenne.
But everywhere they are the same: they tinge their bodies red,
And with annatto smear their brows, which seem with blood o'erspread."

THE FIGHT ON THE BOWRUMA.

"Caribs from Essequibo banks to our Bowruma came,
In one special season; which was every year the same.
And more and more they harried sore all who were living there,
And made them cry, 'O let us die, 'tis more than man can bear!'

p. 36

"Our fathers then a war chief made, whom all men should obey.
And he, to rid them of the scourge, thought long, and found a way.
He in the forest chose a place; his men then cleared the ground,
And all the trees they cut were laid there, in a circle round,
Their branches all were outwards turned, while in the midst there stood
A strong built house, two arrows' flight from the surrounding wood.

"'Now every man give heed to me! we have some months to work,
And then must *fight*, for no man henceforth shall in covert lurk!
So have your weapons well prepared: of arrows get large store.'
And each man make a *buckler*, as our fathers used before.[1]

"So on the day appointed, to that house they all repair,
There made to be their citadel, and for the fight prepare.
Canoes they at the river leave, for Caribs there to view,
And men to draw them to the place and give the warning due.

"And they have lured now to that spot those warriors fierce and bold:
Who chase their watchmen through the bush till they the house behold.
p. 37
The barricade there makes them pause—still they will not give in,
Pride drives them on to take the place, so they the fight begin.

"Their men who try to clamber o'er the Arawâks shoot down;
Still their resistance, which seems weak, the Caribs hope to drown,
They bend their bows, their arrows keen by hundreds seem to fly,
Our men are galled, for bucklers broad scarce put those arrows by.

"At length is heard their captain's voice—he cheers them with his call:
'O comrades! ye have bravely *borne*, now *fight*, Lokono[1] all!
Fight bravely for your children dear—fight bravely for your wives;
You fight now for your parents old—you're fighting for your lives,
This day will clear those wretches from the face of this our land,
Their arrows fail! Now pour in *yours*, then *on them club in hand!*'

"Forth from the house run boys—and wives, each to her husband's side,
To hand him arrows, crouching low behind his buckler wide.
p. 38
Swiftly those arrows are poured in; they shoot with might and main,
And all the foremost Caribs are by those keen arrows slain.
The others to the river fly: but foes are there before;
And sternly in the forest they pay off the ancient score,
Till each red-painted warrior there lies redder in his gore!

—

That fight was on the Pomeroon, which we Bowruma call;
A little stream there marks the spot, well known to Indians all."

—

To tell of victory is sweet,
•Defeats few care to name;
But there invaders met defeat
•Who well deserved the same;
For where the Arapaiaco,
And fair Ituribisi, flow,
Those Caribs had spread bitter woe
•With arrow, club, and flame.

While their flotillas swept the sea
•None dared their power defy;
But every canoe would flee
•The "Carinyach!" fierce cry;
By that dread name their race they call;
On those who heard it fear would fall;
The swift might fly, the feeble all
•Would yield themselves to—die!

Their cry, denoting savage power,
•Spread horror and dismay,
On land too, at the midnight hour,
•At dawn or close of day.

p. 39

"Brave men," they sang, "our fathers were,
And we their fame and valour share;
Your lives are ours, your daughters fair
•And goods—must be our prey!"

THE FIGHT ON THE HAIMÂRA-CADURA.

The tellers of this legend were the old man and his son,
Who showed me, on the shady stream, how that fierce fight was won.

—

There is no need to tell again what has been told before;
Of how we suffered, from the Caribs, wrongs both deep and sore.

p. 40

They who oppressed our fathers here from Orinoco came,
Through Barima and Waiini, as we those rivers name.
Each year their painted warriors came, each year those rivers swept;
Poor captive women paddled them; and as they worked they wept.
Long time the Waraus, who lived there, their stern oppression felt;
Until they fled to "ita" swamps, where more secure they dwelt.

The Caribs wasted all that land; then said, "We'll plunder find,
In those parts where Mor•ca and its tributaries wind."
They came; but war canoes, too large, could not from Waiini pass:
Too little water was there then to float them through the grass.

"O friends! ere next wet season comes we must for them prepare!"
So spake our chief, and chose that hill, to make a refuge there.
Then from all parts his brethren came until they mustered strong,
To save their wives and children dear from violence and wrong.

"Now make a camp upon the hill, where women may abide;
We, who are men, will meet our foes down at the river's side."

p. 41

So to the river down they went, and there the captain made
A massive log of heavy wood, which in the stream he laid.
He fixed it tightly in each bank; the spot we now can show—
Just *there*—it near the surface crossed—not two hands'-breadth below.

"Now let each man prepare his club, his arrows, and his bow,
And each a pole, with hook at end—its purpose I will show.
Some go to warn our brethren dear, who near the Waraus dwell;
While some as scouts must watch for foes, and of their coming tell."

As our good chief had told his men, e'en so it came to pass,
When next, in those great swamps, the water overtopped the grass,
Many canoes, with painted crews, all warriors stout and strong,
Slow winding through those narrow streams, came paddling along.

They stopped at every village there, but could no people find;
No people, and of property but little left behind.
That all had down Mor•ca fled, by certain marks was shown,
And sore displeased those Caribs were, because the birds had flown.

p. 42

Yet still they paddle on and on, but no canoes can see;
Until a fishing craft appears, with young men two or three.
"O strive to catch that light canoe, which skims along so fast;
These men we'll chase unto their place, and plunder gain at last!"

They raise on high their dreadful cry: "Carinyach!" echoes round,
As if yon Waram•ri hill hurled back the hateful sound.
Onward they race until their "chase" is seen to disappear
Up this small stream; and, without pause, the Caribs enter here.
And here they have to wind about beneath the trees so high;
Yet still they onward rush and shout, nor think an ambush nigh.
The small craft slackens speed at length—it is not understood—
But they tear on with all their strength, and *strike the sunken wood*.

That first canoe is broken: overthrown are all her crew!
And as they rise, with savage cries, keen arrows strike them through.
Their comrades hasten at their cry, that they may help afford;
And forthwith, on the next canoe, a second shower is poured.
A third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth—the small stream winding round—
Allows no sight of that fierce fight, they only hear the sound,

p. 43

"Now, forward with your long hooked poles! let no foe get away!
They came without our asking, but we'll press them sore to stay!"
They grapple with those great canoes, they drag them to the land;
And there the brunt of battle is, all fighting hand to hand.
Some use the single-handed club, some that broad hardwood blade,
Two-edged, "sapak•na" called, which by both hands is swayed.

With the last boats the chieftain came—Manarwa[1] he was called;—
His men could not retrieve the fight, the slaughter them appalled.
And so, with two or three canoes, vowing revenge, he fled,
While our men held the battle ground, and buried there the dead.

—

Not long ago a portion of this river's bank gave way,
Exposing groups of human bones—sad relics of that fray.

p. 44

THE FIGHT ON THE WAIINI.

Ere long the Caribs came in force, that they avenged might be,
And our men, hearing, went to meet them on the Waiini.
The Waraus would not help us fight, for they were sore afraid;
But they would act as scouts and spies, so giving useful aid;
Until we drew our foes again into an ambuscade.

Again we won the victory, again o'erthrew our foes,
As each side fought with deadly hate, no cry for mercy rose.
One champion on our side there was, Bohirasiri named
(In old times oft his praise was heard, for in our songs he's famed);
The Carib chieftain in the face with three-pronged shaft he shot;
Struck down his warriors all around, and dragged him from the spot.
The barbéd weapon from his face the wounded chieftain tore;
But cruel was the gash it made, and he could fight no more.

Our men, when all was over, and our foemen crushed and slain,
Said, "What must be Manarwa's doom? shall he alive remain?"

p. 45

So warriors and elders grave in council met next day,
Where the old chieftain, wounded sore, was asked what he could say.
"Oh why have rou, these many years, vexed cruelly this land?"
To which he could no answer give, as most may understand.
But *this* he said, "Lo, here I stand!—Arise, some one, and slay!
I'm in your power. But if you spare, and let me go away,
My people all will grateful be, and, for their leader's sake,
Will not again invade your land, but peace for ever make."

Our race is not bloodthirsty. They resolved, our old men say,
To take the Carib at his word, and let him go away.
Four of his men alone still lived, they were with him set free;
And their old chief the promise kept, which gained his liberty.

Perhaps those Orinoco Caribs found our swampy land
Was not so easy, as it seemed, to ravage and command;
Perhaps they learned what men can do who slaves will never be:
Rememb'ring, too, that o'er picked men we'd gained the victory!
But still that act of clemency, we think, availed us more
Than if we'd slain ten thousand warriors on that bloody shore.

Whatever cause may be assigned, we found their inroads cease,
And since those fights, of which I tell, this region has had peace.

p. 46

ALLIANCE AND INTERCOURSE WITH WHITE MEN.

The Dutchmen to our fathers said,
"Make peace with us, and let us trade,
••In firm alliance joined,
In peace and plenty all may live,
While you to us assistance give,
••Guarding the woods behind.
Use your *stone* implements no more,
Of *iron* tools we have great store,
••Which you will better find,
Clothes, which your women ought to wear;
Combs, shining bodkins for the hair;
Beads, looking-glasses, bright and fair,
••To please the female mind."

Our fathers to them made reply:
"Your goods are pleasing to the eye,
But men such things may dearly buy
••With loss of liberty!
We all are hunters, free and brave;
No Arawâk must be a *slave*,
Make *that* your law, you then will have
••Faithful allies and free!"

We thus maintained our liberty;
The Dutchmen all declared us free,
••And well observed the same.
But Christ's good word was never brought
To us, nor were our children taught,
••Till other white men came.

p. 47

From them (Moravians), in Berbice,
Our brethren heard the word of peace,
Till trouble made their missions cease.
••*We* still were left alone.
At length to Essequibo came
The English: and the Saviour's name
••To red men there made known.

To us, then, came that Saviour's word,
Which most opposed, but some few "heard,"
••And helped to spread it round.
To our old foes, the Caribisce,
We paddled you, with words of peace,
••Which there acceptance found.
Then, with the red cross waving free,
To Waraus went, along the sea,
••To plant it on new ground;
That all red men might Christians be,
••And blesséd peace abound!

CONCLUSION.

Thus Sacibarra[1] (such his name,
Ere it "Cornelius" became)
••Would speak, when growing old.
Good chief! who, long before, to me,
Of that "High" Lord "whom none can see,"
••Their ancient legends told.

p. 48

And came *alone*, Christ's word to hear.
•Till others rallied round;
Who helped a mission church to rear,
•With cross and belfry crowned,
Reflected in the waters clear,
With palms and feathery bamboos near,
•Where he had cleared the ground.

All those who then met there, save one
(Whose hand now writes), are dead and gone.
The mission crowns a neighb'ring hill.
That river's banks are hushed and still.

No children now, with sportive grace,
•There swim from shore to shore;
But still the bamboos mark the place
•(Long since with "bush" grown o'er)
Which still one mem'ry loves to trace,
Where the chief sought his Maker's face,
•And told their ancient lore.

And *all* who told, in their sweet tongue
•(Most sweet, as all allow),
These tales, which to their race belong,
•Are still and silent now.
They wait us on that other shore,
Their voices here are heard no more!

Now turn we to the wilder lore
••Of the uncouth Warau.

Next

Footnotes

p. 6

1 Aiomun Kondi.

2 Ifilici W’acinaci.

3 W’amurreti-kwonci.

p. 7

1 The Ceiba, or silk-cotton tree.

p. 18

1 Literally, "island." Some one of the Antilles. This most ancient legend is the only one I know in which their former possession of the West India islands is mentioned.

p. 19

1 "Yauhahu simaira," a common expression denoting severe pain.

p. 26

1 The Arawâks have various dances. In one, the men challenge each other to give and receive alternate lashes round the bare calf or the leg, with a severe whip called "Maquarri," which is the name of the dance. This is a sort of funeral game, or commemoration of some departed male relative or friend, held some time after his death. It differs from the purely festive dance mentioned above.

p. 36

1 The crew of the first canoe which approached the fleet of Columbus on the shore of the southern continent were Arawâks, armed with bows and arrows, and *bucklers*. I have heard no other legend, however, of any aboriginal tribe, in which the latter are mentioned.

p. 37

1 Arawâks *call themselves* "Lokono."

p. 43

1 A common name or title among Carib chiefs.

p. 47

1 Lit., "beautiful hair:" name given in infancy.

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CONTENTS OF PART II.

•The Waraus (Guamons, or Guaranos) were dwelling where they now are at the time of the discovery of the southern continent. The early Spanish explorers, and Sir Walter Raleigh, who followed them, gazed with wonder at their fires, seen at night half way up the trees, as their expeditions passed by.

•The writer, searching for some traditions or their ancient faith or history, came, to his surprise, on the wildly romantic mythological legends which are here given.

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Legends of the Waraus.

—

INTRODUCTION.

WHERE Orinoco, through his delta wide,
By numerous channels, seeks the ocean tide;
Where, annually, his waters flood the ground,
And wide lagoons, with muddy isles, abound,
The fan-like branches of the ita palm
By thousands wave above his waters calm.
Those stately trees supply the rude abode
Which the poor Warau makes above the rising flood.

That race, of old from other regions driven,
Could not have lived, but for that shelter given.
Unwarlike, they could not their foes withstand,
But had to yield to them the higher land.
On fish and crabs those Waraus chiefly live,
Which in abundance there the waters give.
Their palm-tree[1] pith a kind of bread affords,
Its leaves give thatch and cords, the split trunk serves for boards.

p. 53

Yet some provision grounds those Waraus have,
Where land appears above the tidal wave;
And from their swampy refuges they come,
Beneath our rule to find a peaceful home.
>From Orinoco to Moruca's stream,
More numerous than other tribes they seem.
And farther east, where ita swamps abound,
Even in Surinam, the Warau race is found.

We called the tribes—a mission space to clear
At Waramuri, for the Waraus near.
Unkempt, unclad, their women there we found;
Their naked children wallowed on the ground,
With filth and ashes grimed—sad sight to see:
We wondered how such way of life could be!
Most wild and gaunt the men, who took no care,
And only wished to be—just what they were.
Lower than others, as he would allow,
And satisfied to be so, was the poor Warau![1]

MYTHOLOGICAL TALES.

THEIR ancient belief we had long wished to hear:
Some had said 'twas "romantic," while others said "queer."
••But, from shyness or fear,
••Till the twenty-first year,
Of their most knowing sorcerers none would come near.
Then, at last, a friend told me to send for "McLeod,"
p. 54
Who to be their *most learned* by all was allowed.
••And that Warau of fame
••(With the highland Scotch name),
After long hesitation, consented, and came.

His visit to us was a favour most rare:
So myself, our good teacher, and other friends there,
With honour received him, and offered—a chair.
••But he sat on the ground,
••With his Waraus around,
Whose costume was most "light and airy" we found.
••They—with long, matted hair,
••And bare skins—squatted there,
While their chief a striped shirt condescended to wear.

••Their traditional "word"
••A good friend there had heard;
Partly Warau was he, and to him we referred.
For a mixture most strange through some tales seemed to run;
Their most serious matters so blended with fun,
That (though none of the red men there thought it absurd)
We could scarcely believe it the "Old people's word."

"Oh tell me, McLeod, did not slaughter and woe
First cause the Waraus to that swamp-land to go?
Did you not live inland, where the clear waters flow,
Ere the fortune of war sternly drove you below?"

"Stern foes have indeed caused the Waraus to fly:
••But they first lived on high,
••Above yonder blue sky,
Ere they came down the good things of this world to try.
p. 55
Such, such is the tale of our forefathers given,
Who thus rashly lost their high station in heaven!"

••We opened our eyes;
••But he, calm and wise,
Superior smiled, and enjoyed our surprise.
Then resumed: "What I tell you, you will not believe,
Yet hear now the legend our elders receive."

I.

LEGEND OF OKONORÓTÉ.

"Say, Okonoróté, thou archer so gay,
With bright feathered ornaments, whither away?
Let the birds now beware or thy clear, glancing eye;
For thine arrows bear death to all creatures that fly!"

"With my arrows so keen I pursue a rare bird,
Of whose lovely plumage we often have heard;
That bird I must find, though I cannot tell where;
But its flesh I must eat, and its plumage must wear."

So Okonoróté went forth on his way,
To seek that rare bird with its plumage so gay.
He could only shoot *birds*, for above the blue sky
Were no living creatures, save those that could fly,
And the young Warau race, who in that high abode
Had been placed by their Maker, the Wise and the Good.

That search he engaged in for many a day;
But still, as it saw him, the bird flew away,
Till (surely some evil one brought it to pass)
He saw it alight in a clump of high grass.

p. 56

Then, lying flat down, he slid over the ground,
Like tiger or snake which some victim has found;
The distance diminished, yet still he crawled on,
Saying, "Oh for one shot ere the bird shall be gone!"

At length he had crawled within shot of that bird,
When lo! it flew up, as some movement it heard.
With keen arrow transfixed the bright beauty was slain,
And, with quivering wing, fluttered down to the plain.

Glad Okonoróté sprang up with a bound,
And, shouting for joy, made the meadows resound.
"No longer," said he, "need I rise with the sun
To pursue this bright bird, for my prize now is won!"

•••Then he searched all the ground—
•••Walked around and around;
Strange!—arrow and bird were nowhere to be found!
•••Such a loss who could bear?
•••He looked everywhere,
Till he saw a deep pit, and said, "Both must be there;"
And the sides being steep, he approached it with care.

But gone was his arrow for ever and aye;
Gone too that bright bird with its plumage so gay.
And he, fascinated, unable to move,
Saw daylight *beneath*, him, as well as above!
•••There, far, far below,
•••He could see forests grow;
Wide plains, and savannahs, where rivulets flow.
And he looked down for hours those new wonders to view,
Thinking, "All is a *dream*, sure it cannot be true!

p. 57

•••"Some charm fills mine eye,
•••Or do I espy
On the green plains below, *living creatures* pass by?"
•He could see there the deer and the peccary go,
The choice paca, and others, which now we all know;
•••While birds which soar high,
•••Rising near to the sky,
And some, nearer earth, his clear vision could spy!

••••*••*••*••*

"Now hear, Waraus all! You know what I have seen;
And many here present to view it have been.
Prepare a rope ladder; I must go below
And see if those creatures are useful or no.
If it be as I hope, 'tis our people's great gain,
And if I lose my life, one man only is slain."

Oh, great was their fear lest his life he should lose;
But Okonoróté none e'er could refuse.
So all to the woods, picking cotton, would go,
For forests of cotton were there, as we know.
(Perhaps they used "bush-ropes" the cotton to aid).
It took many months, but the ladder they made.
It was lengthened above when too short it was found,
Till it grappled the trees upon this lower ground;
And it then, tight above, with strong braces was bound.

Bold Okonoróté, determined to go,
Strong-limbed, and brave-hearted, then ventured below.
'Twas a perilous venture, to come from above
By a ladder so frail, which light currents could move.
p. 58
And when he was down, he stood gazing around
In utter amazement at all things he found;
The fire, so abundant, he saw with surprise,
The quadrupeds strange, and their wonderful size:
For all seemed most wonderful then to his eyes.

He must have seen wild beasts devouring their prey,
For jaguars and snakes then had all their own way.
And he thought he would venture to taste some large game,
So he shot a young deer, and soon kindled a flame,
In the Indian style, with two pieces of wood;
And the ven'son he found to be excellent food.

Ascending again!—Oh, what labour and pain
To the quick-heaving chest!—to the limbs, what a strain!
It was hard to come down; but to climb up again!
•••(Though we came from the sky,
•••*I* had rather not try:
Some people turn giddy when mounting too high.)
It was done but *that once*, as you'll find by and by.

A portion of game he brought up from below;
Not much, but sufficient his people to show:
His words (and its flavour) put all in a glow.
"Oh! we cannot stay here; for there is little good
In the small birds around us: but animal food
•••We know to abound
•••On that lower ground,
Which Okonoroté for Waraus has found!"

So they asked no permission, but said, "We will go!"
And came down the rope ladder to this world below.

p. 59

All things then were young—no old people were found;
Small children they carried, and all reached the ground
In safety, save one—a poor woman, the last,
Who got wedged in the hole which the others had passed.

Her husband below her sore trouble could view,
And climbed back to give help, but could not get her through;
Then, his head turning giddy, he went down below,
Where his people all thought it a terrible blow,
And in clamorous talking gave vent to their woe.
They all asked how it happened. He could not tell how;
So the thing was mysterious to ev'ry Warau.

Then the women, upbraiding, would ask, "Is it right
For that man to come down, and not stay up all night?
Brave Okonoróté! he climbed up before;
Will he not go up now, with a man or two more,
Since the husband, resigned, has quite given it o'er!"

They all shrunk from the task, for a man there had said,
Whom they straightway discovered to have a wise head,
"Supposing you reach her, and can pull her through,
Will she not be the death of you all, if you do?
•••You will find it no fun—
•••She will come with a run;
Consider how you, in that case, can hold on?
You must be swept off, and our best men be gone."

••••*••*••*••*••*

p. 60

So the woman remains (though the ladder gave way),
And will always remain there, our old Waraus say,
She fills up the hole; and, good friends, that is why
We never can get a *fair peep though the sky!*"

••••*••*••*••*

He paused. Some were laughing, and all the rest smiled
At a "descent from heaven" so grotesque and wild,
Then the old Warau said, "You all think I 'make fun;'
But it is in *this way* that the legend must run,
And so I must tell it. If not, I have done!"

Being soothed, he resumed, in a different tone,
For the course of his legends more serious had grown.

II.
LEGEND OF THE DROUGHT.

"See the Warau race begin
Life in this new world below.
With their bows the hunters win
Plenteous food—no want they know;
Yet they feel within them grow
Anxious dread of future woe.

Safety, which in heaven they had,
Here on earth cannot be found;
Good is mingled here with bad;
Savage beasts of prey abound.
Reptiles coil in trees around,
Or lurk, deadly, on the ground.

p. 61

One thing then filled all with fear,
Scanty water and unclean!
'Twas not as we now see here,
Where large streams have long time been;
Streamlets small, in marshes green,
Then were all that could be seen.

"Oh, where shall we water find,
Till the wished-for rain shall fall?
Other woes we bear, resigned,
But this thirst consumes us all!
Let us now, both great and small,
On our mighty Maker call.

"We forsook our Father-friend:
We forsook His place on high;
Death by thirst He now will send;
Through his wrath these pools are dry.
To Him, brethren, let us cry,
He may hear above the sky!

"O Karima (Father) Thou!
We Thy place no more shall see.
Once in heaven each Warau
Happy was near thee to be.
But we have forsaken thee,
Thence proceeds our misery!

"Ka-id•mo (Master) Thou!
All things are at Thy command;
Seeking water vainly now
p. 62
We may roam through this dry land.
Must we perish 'neath Thy hand?
Wretched, miserable band!"

Kanonatu, throned on high
(So Waraus the Maker call),
Heard, and from the dark'ning sky
Caused the welcome rain to fall;
Made the rivers great and small,
Which abundance bring to all.

Women then, with happy glee,
Filled their vessells to the brim:
While the men saw joyfuIly
Glitt'ring fish in rivers swim..
Strange it seemed, and, like a dream,
Food and drink in every stream!

—

From my tale you now have heard
How Waraus came from on high.
What remains still of this "word"
I will tell you by and by.
Now the sun hath left the sky,
And your hour of prayer is nigh!

III.
LEGEND OF THE GREAT WATERS.

Years rolled on, and men, grown hateful,
•Ceased their passions to restrain;
Took their Maker's gifts; ungrateful,
p. 63
•Thanked him not for sun and rain;
But forsook Him once again,
When they ceased to suffer pain.

"Kanonatu," seeing slaughter,
•Acts of rapine, deeds unclean,
Sent their punishment by *water*,
•Which had once their blessing been.
Floods, obeying Him, were seen
O'er the hills and valleys green.

Eight poor men, in that disaster,
•With six women, trembling stood.
Pausing in His wrath, the Master
•Saw their hearts still true and good,
Bade them take the "bahbi" wood,
Safe to float amidst the flood.

Evil spirits of the waters
•Saw them then float past undrowned.
They were saved that sons and daughters
•Might again on earth be found,
And from them mankind abound,
Fish, and hunt, and till the ground.

••••*••*••*••*

He who saved them had provided
•Land, to which they might repair.
Streams appeared as floods subsided,
•One small lake shone bright and fair.
Yet of that he said, "Beware!
Shun its waters, bathe not there!"

p. 64

Well our sires obeyed the warning;
•Some to guard that lake they chose,
Lest some bather, danger scorning,
•There should meet with deadly foes.
Ages pass. No Warau goes
Where those waters calm repose!

IV.
LEGEND OF KOROBONA.

Two Warau maidens sweetly sang,
•"O waters calm and clear!
We love our happy walks to take
By thy sweet margin, woodland lake,
•And find our pleasure here."

Those maidens, from the hills at first
•That guarded spot would spy.
Then, though their brothers said, "Beware,
The lake is fatal, bathe not there!"
•They dared to venture nigh.

At length fair Korobona said
•(The elder sister she),
"We, by an idle threat restrained,
>From these clear waters have refrained;
•Come, sister, bathe with me.

p. 65

"For what is here to do us harm?
•We maidens are alone.
Waraus, with superstitious awe,
Both old and young obey the law;
•Intruders here are none."

Straight she plunged in; for scant attire
•Our maidens wore, I trow;
Though wild beasts' teeth, with woven seeds,
And shining stones (they had no beads)
•Adorned each young Warau.

Then both, through waters fair and clear,
•Began to dive and swim;
The elder sister, void of fear,
Went first; the other followed near,
•Obeying every whim.

Before her Korobona saw
•A rod of charméd wood.
Oh that some power had stayed her hand,
And forced the maid to let it stand—
•Her safeguard while it stood!

But, wild with glee, she shook the rod,
•And broke the mighty charm.
They saw a man-like form arise,
And Korobona was his prize,
•Held by a powerful arm.

p. 66

(A water spirit, 'neath the wave,
•Lay bound by mightier power;
Till some one, swimming in the lake,
Should dare that charméd rod to shake.
•*That* was the destined hour.)

"O Warau maid!" the spirit said,
•"Thy sister there may go;"
But *thee I hold*. O woman fair!
Thou for a time my home must share,
•And come with me below."

II.

Sad Korobona weeps at home
•Upon her sister's breast.
It had been comfort in her woe
That her four brothers did not know:
•*Now* she is more distressed.

••••*••*••*

O Korobona! time has passed;
•Thou art a mother now!
And lo! thy brothers, as they stand,
(The eldest with his club in hand),
•To slay thine infant vow.

"Kill not my baby girl," she cries;
•"Slay *me*—the mad and wild!
But she a gentle maid will be,
And serve you all most lovingly.
•O spare the helpless child!"

p. 67

Why should I dwell upon this woe,
•With greater far to tell?
Their hearts were softened by her prayer,
They gave the infant to her care:
•Though grieved, they loved her well.

••••*••*••*

Of that young child we hear no more,
•And think she must have died.
Meanwhile the spirit of the lake
Most strangely would his pastime take,
•Near that bad waterside.

A snake immense, from tree to tree
•Disporting he was seen;
Or, in his human form, would stand
Where gentle ripplets mark the sand,
•Beneath the branches green;

And sometimes as a man above,
•With serpent form below;
Until the keepers said, "What hand
Can this dread 'Wahma's' power withstand?
•His nature who can know?"

And Korobona hears the tale
•Of him who fills her mind;
Then, heeding not her sister's prayer,
Steals to the lake, and watches there,
•Resolved the truth to find.

p. 68

And long she waits beneath the trees
•Filled with strange hope and fear;
Whilst he, who can her presence spy,
In serpent form eludes her eye,
•Yet still is drawing near.

His head seems like a floating seed,
•By gentle breezes blown;
The tail, like filmy scum, is near
(Thus, seeking prey, such snakes appear),
•No other part is shown.

••••*••*••*

p. 69

Why, Korobona, dost thou stoop,
•That floating seed to view?
He cries, triumphant, "Thou art mine!
Unto thy fate thyself resign!"
•And captures her anew.

III.

The hapless Korobona now
•Lives in the woods alone;
Another babe there hides from view;
For if her fault her brothers knew
•Blood only could atone.

She weepeth sore for woes in store,
•Which she can well foresee;
But that fair boy her tears now warm,
Who shares in part his father's form,
•Her greatest grief is he.

She, in the day which gave him birth,
•At first essayed to fly,
But soon returned to that deep glade,
In which the helpless one was laid,
•Drawn by his feeble cry.

And by her sister, kind and true,
•Who o'er her errors wept,
That secret (soon to be revealed,
For eyes and ears cannot be sealed)
•Hath faithfully been kept.

••••*••*••*

One, passing by, the infant's cry
•Heard, and upon her came.
Then told her brethren, hunting near;
And soon she saw the four appear,
•All wild with rage and shame!

Two of them dragged their sister home;
•Two turned the child to slay,
There lying, helpless, in their view:
They with an arrow pierced him through,
•And left him where he lay.

"The child is dead," the slayers said,
•"The mother mad and wild!"
They let her go to make his grave.
But knew not that the care she gave
•Revived that hapless child.

••••*••*••*

He grew far more than other babes
•In wisdom and in size;
And, still concealed in some thick tree,
Till he his mother's form could see,
•Would shun all other eyes.

With food she daily sought the woods
•Where he was doomed to stay,
And there held converse with her child;
Till sorrow, by their talk beguiled,
•Would seem to pass away.

p. 71

But Korobona quite forgot
•That some her track might know—
Her track—by those small footprints shown!
Each brother then, her secret known,
•Prepared the shaft and bow.

"Oh, why," she said, "these arrows made,
•And these stone weapons too?"
The brothers gave her short reply,
Then through the woods they saw her fly,
•And hastened to pursue.

••••*••*••*

"Oh, hide me, mother, from their eyes,"
•The wretched victim said;
"Alas! why didst thou give me birth?
For I have found no place on earth,
•And now shall soon be dead!"

The mother, clinging to her son,
•Then screened him from his foes,
And left small space at which to aim,
Yet to its mark each arrow came
•From their unerring bows.

They cut him into pieces small,
•She cursed their cruelty:
"Vile slayers of the innocent!
The woes you fear will now be sent—
•And come through *you*, *not me!*

p. 72

"See here your Korobona lie!
•This spot shall be her tomb,
Where this poor blood o'erspreads the ground.
Think on it when your woes abound,
•And Waraus meet their doom!"

IV.

Of her who watched her outcast dead
•(In mournful "Bible word"),
And "suffered neither bird nor beast"
Upon the loved remains to feast,
•My Warau never heard.

He never heard! yet in his tale
•We seemed the like to bear,
How vultures and wild beasts could see
A mother in her misery,
•And none would venture near;

While food her loving sister brought;
•She, that the heap might bloom.
Laid bright green leaves and flow'rets red
Upon the body of her dead,
•Which had no other tomb.

There, sweet and fragrant, still was found
•That spot, by blood defiled.
A mighty wonder happened then,
For that great change which waits all men
•Touched not the serpent child.

••••*••*••*

p. 73

At length that heap, with flowers bedecked,
•Began with life to heave:
She seemed these words to hear, "Thy son
Shall now avenge his murder done:
•O mother, cease to grieve!"

And first a head and shoulders rose,
•Slow growing from that mound:
She saw a mighty form appear,
Well armed, to fill all foes with fear,
•With limbs complete and sound.

With weighty club the warrior stood,
•With bow and arrows keen;
White down adorned his short black hair,
His skin like copper shone, more fair
•Than with Waraus had been.

And with vermilion were besmeared,
•Like blood, his cheeks and brow.
Thus the first CARIB stern arose,
A warrior strong to smite his foes,
•Dread sight to each Warau!

••••*••*••*

The brethren four their warriors called,
•Appalled that sight to see;
But few to face his club would dare,
All those who did he slaughtered there,
•And forced the rest to flee.

p. 74

No Warau could his strength withstand;
•Their arrows turned away.
Their warriors fled to save their lives,
While he their daughters took for wives.
•And all their goods for prey.

And as his children still increased,
•They took the Warau's place.
Invincible, from Wahma sprung!
Though still (by mother) they belong
•To *our* despiséd race."

And now my tale is done at last;
•My people's fate you know,
Who from the heavens, in days long past,
•Came down to earth below,
And since to swamps were driven, where now
You may behold the poor Warau!"

V.
WARAU IDEAS CONCERNING DEPARTED SOULS.

When Waraus were, as we have shown,
•Oppressed by stronger foes,
The fears which they through life had known
•Beset them at its close.
Each charged his children when he died
To place his weapons at his side.

p. 75

"Lay bow and arrows in my grave,
•That I may keep at bay
The souls of foemen fierce and brave,
•And all who bar my way.
My soul, thus armed, none dare withstand,
To keep it from the spirit land!"

How different was the legend told
•On Trinidad's fair isle;
Where Waraus gathered fruits of old
•And rested there awhile;
Where souls of good men they could find
In glittering humming birds enshrined!

Those birds, like flashing jewels seen,
•Bedecked each lovely bower.
As ruby, topaz, emerald green,
•They kissed each fragrant flower,
And saw fair hills and forests rise
Around their blissful paradise.

But Chaymas dared those birds molest,
•Then—sank beneath the ground!
And now, where happy souls had rest,
•The lake of pitch is found.
Wild Warau myth of ages past—
To English readers told "at last!"[1]

p. 76

VI.
LEGEND OF ABORÉ
(*The Warau Father of Inventions*).

In those Warau traditions it moved our surprise,
That beneath their coarse veil of mythology lies
A lesson, which Christians deem holy and wise.
For those *first* legends show how mankind suffer woe,
Who their Maker forsake, in their own way to go,
And they differ in this from most others we know.

••••Ere McLeod went away,
••••Our good teacher one day
Said, "I ask one more story, you must not say nay,
Of all Warau legends you are the narrator;
Pray tell of Aboré, your first navigator."

So the old man his store of strange legends thought o'er,
And told *this* of which fragments had reached us before.

••••"In this world, we know
••••That for weal, or for woe,
Good spirits and bad ever move to and fro;
And all our old men will most strongly avow
That some help, but more hinder, the suff'ring Warau."

THE LEGEND.

••••"Aboré, away!
••••No longer delay,
Nor, loitering, stay to waste here half the day.
Men must hunt for wild bees while the sun says they may."
p. 77
She who thus chid the youth was a fine, handsome dame,
Who from childhood had reared him.—Wowtáh was her name.

Aboré the clever, Aboré the brave,
Had served her caprices like some household slave.
To follow her wishes the youth was content,
Although his keen mind on inventions was bent.
Bows, arrows, and such things he strove to improve;
But she was most jealous lest aught he should love
More than her, and from all his works sent him away,
To search the dense forests for bees, day by day.

"Sometimes he had ventured resistance to try,
But Wowtáh had quelled that by a glance of her eye;
And he had to obey, though he could not tell why.

That day through the forest quite gloomy he went,
To search out the honey for which he was sent,
When he saw, sitting down on the root of a tree,
A young Indian maid—fair and graceful was she.
"Oh, who can she be? I ne'er met her before;
She must be some stranger come down to our shore."

He passed without notice, as good Indians do,
But she said, "Aboré! thy parents I knew,
And this day I am glad their tall son here to view.
••••But what canst thou see
••••In that huge hollow tree,
Where serpents and scorpions hiding may be?"
p. 78
••••"I search these old trees
••••For the nests of wild bees,
That I may with their honey my kinswoman please."

"Aboré I the truth will appear by and by.
Wowtáh is a *spirit*. Such also am I!
We spirits assume any figure we please;
We change as we like, and we do it with ease.
••••Some appear as bush-hogs,
••••Some as jaguars or dogs;
While some, as large snakes, love the rivers and bogs:
But Wowtáh chose to be the great queen of the frogs.
••••By day or by night,
••••It was then her delight,
With a terrible croak, other creatures to fright.
(Sometimes to Waraus she would cause some alarm.)
A strange taste it was, though it did little harm."

Then the kind spirit told him how, "when a young boy,
He was seen by Wowtáh, and became her chief joy;
How she, in the form of a woman, deceived
His parents, and was in their cottage received.
How his parents soon died, and no mortal knew how,
But Wowtáh was suspected by every Warau."

She told him how "soon, from an infant in arms,
He had grown a tall youth through Wowtáh's mighty charms.
How, save to fetch honey, he scarce left her side,
And how he would soon have to make her his bride."

Then, pondered Aboré, "This tale may be right;
When Wowtáh is much pleased she will croak with delight.
She croaks at the honey, she croaks upon me;
p. 79
But bride to Aboré she never will be!
Oh, tell me, kind spirit, and I will obey;
Shall I go back and slay her, or flee far away?"

••••"O seek not to slay!
••••But heed well what I say,
'Twould be vain to shed blood, nor canst thou flee away,
Having *grown 'neath her charm*, still her slave thou must be,
Unless thou canst flee from her o'er the wide sea!"

She paused. The young man wished her still to go on,
But when he looked round the good spirit was gone.

The honey he found, and soon robbed the poor bees
(Where bees have no stings one can do that with ease),
Then returned to the house; where Wowtáh kindly spoke,
And welcomed him home with her most gentle croak.
As she had been cross in the morning, at night
She became doubly kind, just to put matters right.

But the young man was gloomy, and wrapped up in thought;
He said to himself, "Into bondage I'm brought,
But with the first dawn will escape far away,
And if this bad spirit can find me—she may!"

From morning till night then he marched through the wood,
But with the next daylight before him she stood!

••••Again he would roam,
••••And again be brought home;
He could flee to no place whither she would not come;
And the moment he caught the stern glance of her eye,
He was forced to return, though he could not tell why.

p. 80

Since, baffled and shamed, he could not get away,
He made up his mind his hard mistress to slay;
••••And he felt no alarm
••••At the thought of the harm,
For the death of his parents his vengeance would warm.

Then a cocorite palm he found, somewhat decayed;
It suited his purpose, and forthwith he made
A deep cut, that its fall might no more be delayed.
A small prop he then placed its great pressure to bear,
And removed that support when he saw her come there.

••••It fell on her head,
••••And he thought she was dead,
Saying, "Now I am free from the life I have led!"
••••But she from the ground
••••Rose, uninjured and sound,
For she could not be killed, as Aboré then found.

Almost in despair, he then thought on the day
When the good spirit said to him, "Seek not to slay!"
And then he remembered her words, "The wide sea;"
Oh, how can I cross it, that I may be free?"

He thought on all ways which the Waraus then knew
To float on the deep, and found none that would do.
There were then logs of wood on which men used to go,
With their feet hanging down in the water below;
And rafts of light branches, which sometimes were made,
When over smooth streams they their children conveyed.
••••But rafts of light wood
••••Could by no means have stood,
Or danced over the waves of that great rolling flood.
And he saw that for his purpose they were not good.

p. 81

The half of a gourd he could readily float,
But its shape, he soon found, would not do for a boat.
>From an oblong seed-pod his best model he drew,
Which he strove to improve by all methods he knew.

He formed a large vessel of wax—which, though drained
Of its former contents, in abundance remained;
He improved on its shape till our people might view
What they call "woibáka," but others "canoe."
••••Then his frail craft be tried
••••At the next "waterside;"
But his mistress came there, and severely she eyed—
Then broke it, and scattered the wax far and wide!

Determined to go, though in waxen canoe,
(He dared not work in *wood*, which far better would do).
He sought a young cousin, whom "brother" we call,
And begged him to help him, whate'er might befall.

••••"Aboré, with thee
••••I will brave the salt sea.
I should fear to remain, lest she next bewitch me!
We will work in the bush, where no Warau can see."

They must have used then a stone chisel or axe,
To cut wood, to make paddles, or strengthen the wax.
Food, and gourds to hold water, they had to provide,
Though forced, for the time, their equipment to hide.

Aboré then thought, "If Wowtáh chance to spy
Our flight, she will stay me with her evil eye.
I must prevent that, or, at least, *I will try*."

p. 82

So he took her a nest of fine honey to see;
Which was deep in the heart of a large hollow tree;
He'd before taken care a great wedge to prepare,
Which he drove tightly in, and Wowtáh was kept there,
Whose great love of sweets led her into the snare.

••••"Now, now we must fly—
••••To look back is to spy,
And be fixed by the power of that evil eye!
••••Brother, off and away;
••••Let us launch while we may!
We must pull for our lives now by night and by day."

"Ho, Waraus!" he then to his countrymen cried,
Who that waxen craft with astonishment eyed;
"*This, this* is the shape which your vessels must have,
With *this* they will readily dance o'er the wave.
Observe well *this form*, you will all find it good;
Make your woibákas so, friends; but make them of *wood*."

••••Thus be quitted the strand
••••Of our poor Warau land.
Men and women, regretting, were ranged on the sand.
And thus they beheld, from the wild ocean shore,
Their last of Aboré—they saw him no more!

••••*••*••*••*

••••Now, when he was gone,
••••Wowtáh, quite alone
In that huge hollow tree, began loudly to moan.
Some passers-by heard her, and, finding her plight,
p. 83
They would not let her out, for they said, "She's served right.
••••The young man of most brains
••••(For none like him remains)
She has driven away; let her die for her pains.

••••"The things he could make,
••••Which this female would break!
>From her he was right his departure to take.
••••We have seen his canoe,
••••And know what he could do;
Which, but for her malice, he *would have done* too.
••••He said he knew how
••••To clothe every Warau;
Not in such strips of bark as we're forced to wear now,
With a few shells and teeth strung to make a small show;
But in fair woven fibres from shoulder to toe.
And now—how to make such, we never may know."

No mercy was shown, though she still made her moan;
And she found by the silence the people were gone.
She knew that, as woman, she could not get free;
But near to her feet a small op'ning could see;
So, *again as a frog*, through that crevice crept she.

••••*••*••*••*

••••That was long, long ago;
••••How long none can know;
But ever since that she has gone to and fro.
Of late in the swamps, o'er our evening fire,
We talked of Aboré, when nigher and nigher
She came. We all knew by the sad croak she gave;
And we said, "She still grieves for her runaway slave!"

p. 84

SEQUEL TO THE ANCIENT LEGEND.

We offered our thanks to our old Warau friend,
And thought that his story there came to an end—
As doubtless it did, in the ages long past,
But he said, "Waraus heard of Aboré at last.

"He went o'er a smooth sea; and, ere long, be found land—
Some island—and landed upon that new strand.
There, discarding the wax, he a craft made of wood,
And visited places, just as he thought good.

At last he arrived where white people abound,
Whom poor and distressed above all men be found.
They did support life, he could hardly tell how;
Far more wretched were they than the lowest Warau.
When he saw them his heart with compassion flowed o'er,
And he said, 'I will make my abode on this shore.'"

So he made up his mind the white people to raise;
And the way be has done so deserves their best praise.
••••They, squalid and bare,
••••Had no garments to wear,
Till taught by Aboré good clothes to prepare.

He taught the white people to weave and to sew,
To be skilful in wood and in iron, we know,
••••From a nail to a gun.—
••••(Ah, you may think it fun—
But you *owe to Aboré* the things you have done!)

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••••And to this pray attend!
••••To the *whole world a friend*,
The good things he had made in large ships he would send.
He thus obtained wealth, though he cared not for pelf,
But strove to help others while helping himself.
He improved the rough plan of his first waxen boat
To the huge ships we see now—great monsters afloat—
Which bring you all things, from a pin to a coat.

'Tis said that Aboré still lives, though no tree
That grows in our woods can be older than he.
The magical power which, when he was young,
That spirit imparted, has made his life long,
If he were to return she would claim him again;
So he's *forced* in the white people's land to remain.

Yet presents he used to send every year;
>From the time the Dutch told him they found Waraus here.
Those presents *they* gave in their colony's name;
That was nonsense! *We knew* from Aboré they came.
But they all at once ceased, and *some must be to blame*.

We think that in Georgetown they still are received;
That he would cease to send them cannot be believed.
Knife and gun, ammunition, a cutlass and hoe,
Rum, needles and pins, with some coarse calico,
Were once freely given to each. Alas! *now*
There is *payment* demanded from ev'ry Warau!"

The presents here mentioned, as every year made,
Were the price of assistance to Indians paid.
When slavery ceas'd their help was not required,
So the custom of annual "presents" expired.
p. 86
No loss to the Indians, but great moral gain;
For now they must *work* for the goods they obtain.

••••Such opinion may be
••••Held by you or by me,
But with that the old Warau would never agree.

We gave him some clothes; he had earned them full well;
Having come six days' voyage these legends to tell.
And we strove in his language Christ's words to explain,
••••That some better gain
••••He might thereby obtain;
But in Warau traditions he chose to remain.
He returned to his place near the Barima's shore,
And we saw old "McLeod" at our missions no more.

••••*••*••*••*••*

The creed of his race he had shown in these tales;
Shown, too, how their faith in strange spirits prevails.
In *their* service alone the Waraus used to live;
But now to their Maker due worship they give.
••••Though the bones which we found
••••In the cannibal mound
Made them think Waramuri a weird haunted ground;
Now around that huge heap Christian Waraus abound.

And civilisation first showed itself there,
In their women's neat hair and the clothing they wear.
••••For much better off now,
••••As all races allow,
Than his forefathers were, is the Christian Warau.

Next

Footnotes

p. 52

1 The mauritia (or morische) palm, called by the Arawâks "ité."

p. 53

1 Warau—pronounce the latter syllable like "row," a quarrel.

p. 75

1 C. Kingsley's "At Last," chap. viii. One can imagine the delight with which the author of "Westward Ho," with the tropical scenery he had long read and dreamed of in all its glorious reality around him, must have listened to the legend of "the humming birds"—the sweetest myth of the western world.

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CONTENTS OF PART III.

•The Caribs, when discovered by Columbus, were in possession of the smaller West Indian islands, and had begun to attack the larger.

•Of their origin nothing certain is known. Humboldt states that the opinion common amongst Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was that they came from the vicinity of Darien, and that more recently they were supposed to have come from the northern continent.

•But the constant tradition of the *Caribs themselves*, both in the islands and on the main, claims *Guiana* as the cradle of their race, and the *Orinoco* as the point from which they started on their career of conquest.

•A comparison of their language with that of the Orinoco Tamanacs, and with that of the Chaymas to the north of that river, will confirm, as far as language can, the truth of their tradition.

Next

p. 90

Legends of the Caribs.

—

I.
HISTORICAL SKETCH.

FROM Orinoque, in days of old,
The Caribs (so their legends told)
Came forth, to ravage and command,
And spread their power o'er sea and land.

By conquest they the isles possessed,
Those lesser gems which stud the West.
Where no male Arawâks remained,
They made, of ev'ry isle thus gained,
•A cannibal stronghold.
Then, 'gainst the larger islands went—
Or to the southern continent—
•Their warriors strong and bold!
Famous for valour and for wiles,
Those seas, for near five hundred miles,
•Their red Vikings would roam;
And warlike women guard their isles
•While they were far from home.

When white men came, and conquered all,
The milder race was doomed to fall:
In Cuba—as in fair Hayti—
Enslaved by Spanish cruelty,
p. 91
•Or slain—*all* passed away!
But Caribs made a fiercer stand:
Fighting till death, that for their land
•Invaders dear might pay.
None thought of yielding—few of flight;
Then women, maddened with the sight
•Of their brave husbands slain,
Would rush on pikes and swords—to fight
•The battle o'er again!

Meanwhile their race upon the "main"
Had fought, supremacy to gain.
And this became their nation's boast—
"From Orinoco to the coast,
We hold the tribes in terror all,
And lord it over great and small!"

All those who near the ocean dwelt,
Friendship for English Raleigh felt.
"A naked race," wrote he, "but I
Have met none braver 'neath the sky."
•They fought a common foe:
So on Caronit Corentyn,
And Essequibo wide between,
•His boats might freely go—
E'en to white Rupununi's wave:
For Caribs loved that warrior brave
•Who wrought the Spaniards woe;
And long they kept the flag he gave,
•That they his ships might know.[1]

p. 92

STRUGGLES WITH EARLY COLONISTS.

Where Caribs held the sovereign sway,
White colonists they kept away.
The Spaniards and the Portuguese
Fell, by their weapons and disease.
The Dutch, with Arawâks allied,
Might in their settlements abide,
On Essequibo and Berbice;
Importing negroes, they had peace.
But from the Surinam, men say,
The English twice were driv'n away—
And Frenchmen likewise from Cayenne—
By those same "brave, though naked men."
One story of those times will show
How they could strike a fatal blow.

—

"Bretigny—man of evil fame—
First Governor to Cayenne came.
•Frenchmen were there before,
Living as Indians there in peace—
Their wives and language 'Caribisce';
•Thinking of France no more.

"Stern their new ruler, harsh his deeds,
For trifling acts the white man bleeds;
•Most cruel was his sway.
p. 93
The natives, too, he dared oppress.
Then Caribs vowed, in stern redress,
•That tyrant chief to slay!

"But Indian women often love
The European far above
•Their own red countrymen.
So Cortez found in Mexico.
And thus Bretigny came to know
•His danger in Cayenne.

"Soon as, from female lips, he heard
The Carib plan, he gave the word
•To 'seize all Caribs' there.
Each casts himself into the wave,
And in a shark will find his grave,
•Ere bondage he will bear.

"'Ho! hasten, Frenchmen, all of you;
Bring quickly forth my large canoe—
•Myself will take command.
Upon those wretches we must fall,
And slay forthwith, or drown them all,
•Ere they can reach the land!'

"Swim now, ye Caribs, for your lives!
Or you your children and your wives
•Will nevermore behold.
That great canoe can swiftly run;
Her crew have halberd, sword, and gun;
•All Frenchmen, strong and bold!

p. 94

"They gain the shore. Then, in pursuit,
Bretigny lands—for without fruit
•He will not turn again.
'Tis evening. Still he searches there;
And finds an Indian cabin, where
•He may all night remain.

"Ah!—little does Bretigny know
The tactics of an Indian foe!
•The trees have eyes to see
Where he abides; and all the night
The Carib warriors, armed for fight,
•Are coming noiselessly.

"With morning light they all appear,
Hundreds of painted warriors near,
•Each with his bended bow.
Vain will the sword and musket be
Against their rapid archery;
•And that the guardsmen know.

"Then, roused from sleep, Bretigny sees
Their forms, red gleaming through the trees,
•Surround him everywhere.
Wrapped in his cloak, he silent stands
To meet his fate from Carib hands
•By club and arrow there.

"They slay his guards, then rage around
Wherever colonists are found;
••Destroying all white men.
p. 95
The Frenchmen come again, but fail;
'Tis twenty years ere they prevail
•And settle in Cayenne."[1]

••••*••*••*

At length each colony became
Too strong to dread the club and flame;
While the fierce Caribs had, we know,
A native and more savage foe.
On Orinoco fierce the strife—
Many a warrior lost his life.
Then the brave Eastern clans would go
To fight and crush that native foe.

II.
WARLIKE LEGENDS.

THE CARIB WAR PATH.

THE way they marched to all was known,
Custom had made that track their own.
'Twas to those rovers mere child's play
To plunder there, sometimes to slay,
•And often to enslave.
And all the peaceful tribes, who dwelt
Around—the heavy hand had felt—
•Of Caribs, fierce and brave.

p. 96

Their large canoes were often seen
As they sailed round from Marowin
And Surinam to Corentyn,
•Then towards that river's head.
Above the falls they cross Berbice,
And march where all is perfect peace
•(For peaceful are the dead).
That region they have swept quite bare,
And all the people who lived there
•Are captive, slain, or fled.

O'er Essequibo then they go;
Plunder Macusis, or, below,
•Sweep the Brazilian plain.
Or towards those mountains bend their course
Where noble rivers have their source—
•The Pacaraima chain.

Then, northward of that mountain line,
With the Caroni men they join.
There many rivers have their rise.
Descending one, they soon surprise,
•Near Orinoco's tide,
Some peaceful village; or destroy
A warlike band, and thus annoy
•Their foes who there reside.

On rafts concealed they float near shore,
With grass or branches covered o'er.
Sometimes on fallen trees they glide,
Such as come downward with the tide.
Woe to the victims they surprise!
p. 98
All adults slain, each girl a prize
•Must in their hands remain.
Then with the plunder of the place,
Their own far distant homes to grace,
•They eastward turn again.

••••*••*••*

Once from those parts a message came
That tarnished was their ancient fame,
And from their nation's warlike name
•The glory had been rent.
To reassert the Carib might,
Her thousand warriors for the fight
•Then Essequibo sent.
That number largely was increased
By Caribs who lived farther east;
By Surinam's bold fighting men,
By warriors even from Cayenne;
•And they all westward went.
For sore was then the nation's need,
And every Carib man made speed.

Gay ornaments they cast aside,
War's stern equipment to provide.
Weapons and hammock each man bore,
Cassava bread, and meal in store;
With paint each face was reddened o'er,
•To terrify their foes.
All left their families that day
The stern war summons to obey.
Burning their enemies to slay,
•None could in peace repose.

p. 99

THE WAR ON THE ORINOCO.

Now when they reach Caroni's banks,
They find additions to their ranks.
From fair Barahma, Waiini,
And Amac•ru, men they see;
•Some from Bowruma's head.
All come to fight the Cabré race,
In Cabré blood wash out disgrace,
•And thus avenge their dead.

By desultory fights enraged,
Both sides in earnest had engaged.
The Cabrés made their clans unite
Under one leader for that fight,
•And dealt a deadly blow.
The Caribs, who till then believed
Themselves invincible, received
•A total overthrow!

Most of them were in battle slain,
Many were drowned, and few remain
•To tell how went the fight.
But there is one[1] remembers well,
Who has been spared that he may tell
•Of the succeeding night.

p. 100

He then was forced to climb a tree,
That thence he might the better see
The savage victors eat the slain;
And there the wretch had to remain
•Till morning, legends say.
The chieftain, Tep, released him then,
And bade him "bring his countrymen
•For food some other day."

Ah! better had the victors spared
That horrid deed and taunt, which, heard,
Inspired with deadly hate their foe,
Who vowed to strike a mortal blow.

They vowed, and had it in their power,
Their strength increasing every hour.—
•Allies by hundreds came.
At length ten thousand men, they say,
The Caribs mustered for the fray,
•To wipe away their shame.

In deadly fight they met again;
Each meant to conquer or be slain.
•The Caribs victors were.
Their fury nothing could withstand—
Though Cabrés met them hand to hand,
•And fought with wild despair—
Nor thought of turning from the fight:
They found the memory of that night
•Was heavy then to bear.

p. 101

They saw the numbers of their foe,
Which seemed continually to grow;
And so—returning blow for blow—
•They fought; and perished there!

Their warriors then in battle fell:
And stern the fate, as legends tell,
•Of *all* who bore their name.
For, soon as that grim fight was done,
Extermination was begun;
•Soiling the victor's fame.

The conquering Caribs then could go
Where Orinoco's torrents flow;[1]
Where castellated rocks are seen,
O'er the vast foam, with summits green;
Whose graceful palms and forest trees
Seem shadows, till the wished-for breeze
•Disperse the mists around.
Returning home, each Carib brave
Would pass by many a bloody grave:
But, from those falls to ocean's wave,
•*No living foe* was found!

p. 102

III.
MYTHOLOGICAL LEGENDS
OF THE ANCIENT WORLD.

THE Caribs now from foes are free,
Enjoying feast and revelry.
A large canoe is brought on shore,
And with "paiwari" running o'er.
Gay feathers crown each warrior's head,
Each has his body tinged with red;
And each, with strip of cotton dressed,
Disposes it o'er back and breast.

Their women, who most wild appear,
Less clothing than their husbands wear,
•Yet each herself adorns.
For anklets, woven bands we see;
Another band below each knee.
(Pins *now* through lower lips project,
As if each would her face protect,
•But *then* they all wore thorns.)
Some stain their skin with spots of blue,
And thus, attractive to the view,
They watch the dance, and join it too.

Men beat the drum, or sound the flute
•(The thigh-bone of some human foe);
But all at length are hushed and mute,
•And empty is the large canoe.

p. 103

The feast is o'er; but old men stay,
And pass in talk another day.
Of wise old chieftains, warriors bold,
And battles in the days of old,
They tell. While some, from eastern streams,
Discourse on these more ancient themes.

1. THE FIRST PEOPLE.

From on high mankind descended;
•Not (as some would say) for food:
They to *cleanse this world* intended,
•That it might be fair and good,
Bright and free from soil or stain,
As the moon, or starry train.

While they toiled, the clouds receded,
•Which had borne them from on high:
Vainly for their help they pleaded;
•None restored them to the sky.
Thus mankind remained below,
In a world of toil and woe.

••••*••*••*

As they wandered, pangs of hunger
•Forced them clayey earth to take;
Which, that they might starve no longer,
•Making fire, they tried to bake.
But their cakes, when they were "done,"
Were like sand, or crumbling stone.

p. 104

Tamosi[1] had there provided
•Wild fruits, suiting beast or bird.
By those creatures kindly guided
•To the trees which each preferred,
Men partook: but still would sigh
For the food they left on high.

2. THE FIRST CULTIVATION.

Tamosi, the Mighty Maker
•(Whom no mortal eye can see),
Made, that man might be partaker
•Of His gifts, a wondrous tree.
Though on earth huge trees have grown,
None like that was ever known.

High o'er all its head uprearing,
•Cloudlike mass of brilliant green!
On its noble branches bearing
•Fruits, which none before had seen.
Each a different kind would bear;
Beauteous clusters, high in air!

Lower down—its trunk surrounding,
•Plaintains grew, bananas sweet:
All choice plants were there abounding
•Which we now (in gardens) meet.
p. 105
Golden maize, so fresh and fair,
Waved its plumy tresses there.

Sweet cassava one might find there,
•With the bitter, 'neath the fruits;
Yams, potatoes, every kind, where
•Widely spread its mighty roots.
There was found, in pristine state,
All that men *now cultivate*.

••••*••*••*

'Twas Maipuri, that way roaming
•(Whom some white men "Tapir" call);
From the river's margin coming,
•He observed it first of all;
In the woodlands, where it grew;
While no other creature knew.

Daily, through the forest stealing,
•He devoured its fruits which fell;
Its existence still concealing:
•What he fed on none could tell.
Men, who saw him fat and sleek,
Sent forth scouts the truth to seek.

First, "Woodpecker." He kept tapping
•(From long habit) each old tree.
Shrewd Maipuri heard him rapping,
•And another way went he.
But the Rat, with silent toil,
Tracked his steps—then *shared the spoil*.

p. 106

Shared it—till some food, delicious,
•Sticking to his lips was found;
And mankind, become suspicious,
•Made him show that feeding ground.
All exclaimed, "O noble tree!
Precious gift of Tamosi!"

••••*••*••*

Then an oracle commanded—
•"Cut it down!"—They wondered all;
Yet sharp stones, as fate demanded,
•Caused it in ten months to fall;
Crashing, thund'ring to the ground,
While they fly, or tremble round!

Then, a fair division making,
•For his field each man provides;
Slips and cuttings freely taking
•From its branches, roots, and sides.
"Gaining thus at once," 'tis said,
"Precious fruits and daily bread."

3. THE ROCK AND THE WOOD.

Pleasant as the breath of morning
•Was the life which all lived then.
But misfortune came; a warning
•Of still greater ills to men.
'Neath the roots of that great tree
Some a sacred grot could see.

p. 107

Saw they there the Water-Mother
•Bathing in her loved abode?
That it was her form, none other,
•Soon the swelling waters showed.
Men had all been swept away
By a gushing flood that day—

But a rugged rock, befriending
•(By what power none can know),
Closed the fountain. They, attending,
•Saw it stop the mighty flow;
And drew near that rock, which then
Gave forth oracles to men:

Saying, "Though I from the waters
•Save you, there may come a day
When yourselves, your sons and daughters,
•In a flood will pass away.
Listen, then, mankind, to me,
That *your years like mine* may be.

"In yon wood are spirits dwelling,
•Who will tempt you day by day.
If you dread the waters swelling,
•Answer not, whate'er they say!
You are safe while you obey,
Heeding well your rock-stone grey.

"And if age bring evils on you,
•Wrinkled skin, and whitening hair,
You at will may cast them from you,
•Youth renewing, bright and fair:
p. 108
As the serpent glideth clear
From the slough he scorns to wear!"

••••*••*••*

Time has passed. Deteriorating,
•Men grow careless day by day.
Till their hearts, long hesitating,
•Voices from the wood obey.
Heeding what those demons say,
They despise their rock-stone grey.

From the grove then comes, beguiling
•(Sent by man's malignant foes),
Yarrekáru.[1] Men, all smiling,
•See, as towards the rock he goes.
None prevent; whilst he, alone,
Undermines their guardian stone.

As the shades of night close o'er them,
•To their hammocks all repair.
Little reck they that before them
•Stand grim death and dark despair.
From the grove come, mockingly,
Cries of "Waters cover me!"

They respond, "O friend, we hear them!"
•Laugh, and turn to slumber on;
Till the rush of waters near them
•Terrifies the stoutest one.
p. 109
And these words, in solemn tone,
Issue from the outraged stone:

"Lo! the swelling floods before you,
•See their *waters cover me!*
Soon they will be closing o'er you;
•I no more your help can be.
Yet had you but faithful been,
Death no man would e'er have seen!"

••••*••*••*

Swell the mighty floods, prevailing,
•Death's approach in them they see.
Loud their cries, but unavailing,
•"Climb the hill!" or "Climb the tree!"
Tempests rage and torrents flow,
O'er mankind wild waters go!

Yet to three or four is given
•Safety till the floods subside,
For a "komoo" palm (by heaven
•Made to grow) surmounts the tide.
All whom that tree does not save
Sink, as rocks, beneath the wave.[1]

p. 110

Thus they—while, round the evening fire,
•All in their hammocks swing.
Some curious youth might then inquire,
•"Who made some wondrous thing?"
"What mighty hand could ever trace
Those figures on the lofty face
•Of rocks, which now our eyes
View—near the Orinoco head,
And elsewhere (they are widely spread)—
•With wondering surprise?"

And then some western sorcerer old
Would to the young the tale unfold
Of him who held high place, we see,
In Tamanac mythology.
No hand but his, they think, could trace
Those carvings of an ancient race,
•Which vanished long ago;
Where savage Indians, in their place,
•Now wander to and fro.

IV.
LEGEND OF AMALIVACA.

WHILE the deluge was subsiding
•From some land of unknown name,
O'er the mighty waters gliding,
•Great Amalivaca came.
Sailing on where now are seen
Widespread plains and forests green.

Ocean waves he had crossed over,
•Sailing in his large canoe;
p. 111
From that other side a rover,
•Seeking lands and people new.
Doubtless sent our race to raise,
Helping men in many ways.

In the sculptures I am showing,
•Now so high, his work you see!
Waters at that height were flowing,
•So he carved them easily.
Carved them from his great canoe,
Taught mankind to carve them too.

Each device and time-worn figure
•Had, of old, its well-known lore;
Voiceless all—they spake with vigour
•To the *eye* in days of yore.
But our wisest all allow
None can read their lessons now.

••••*••*••*

When the mighty floods were failing,
•And the land again was seen,
There were not (as now) prevailing
•Widespread plains and forests green.
Wildly rugged all the ground,
Then Amalivaca found.

But his brother gave assistance,
•And by that good brother's aid,
Overcoming all resistance,
•Smooth and gentle slopes he made.
p. 112
Many rocks and cliffs, men say,
By their power were charmed away.

Thus the earth for habitation
•Much more suitable was found:
Then said he, "Communication
•There must be with all around.
In a forest path or road,
Each perforce must bear his load.

"But when a *canoe* is bearing,
•Heavy burdens light become;
So let each man make his 'clearing'
•Near some stream, and fix his home.
All around us streams we see;
On them let your traffic be."

Men, who heard him thus advising,
•Said, "Amalivaca, hear!
With the falling tide, or rising,
•Easy is our course, and clear.
We the current then obey,
Going with it either way.

"When we pass the tidal power,
•Going up, no help is found:
Heavy is the work each hour,
•Weariness and toil abound.
Now exert thy wondrous skill—
Strive to remedy this ill."

p. 113

Then he spent much toil and trouble
•On great Orinoco's flood;
Strove to make *its current double*;
•Grand idea—wise and good!
But that stubborn stream, they say,
Would persist in its own way.

With a double current flowing,
•One side up, the other down,
We might either way be going
•Swiftly from each little town.
Would the river not do so?"
Orinoco answered, "No!"

Then he strove the tides of ocean
•To the upper stream to bring;
But the river, with emotion,
•Said, "You seek a fatal thing:
If the tide should higher go,
All will be submerged below!"

Water seems a yielding creature,
•Mov'd by passing breeze or shower;
None can change its stubborn nature
•Who has not its Maker's power.
This Amalivaca learned;
And from fruitless labour turned.

••••*••*••*••*

When he from this land departed,
•Having done what he could do,
p. 114
Some with tears, and all sad-hearted,
•Watched his lessening canoe.
And from that time nevermore
Comes he to this Western shore!

When the black-robed teachers found us,
•We inquired "if they had seen
Him, who left such marks around us,
•Who had our Great Teacher been;
Who those high rocks sculptured so?"[1]
And we grieved when all said, "No!"

The Caribs, in their conq'ring hour,
Had reached the zenith of their power.
A few years pass; and then we see
Those who were near the Caroni
Beneath the monks live peacefully;
Till revolution shatters all,
And in the crash those missions fall!

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LEGEND OF MANÁROWA.

I.

SWEET is his Essequibo home:
Yet still Manárowa will roam
•To gain more power and fame.
Though, from that river's sources—south—
To Dutch plantations near its mouth,
•The tribes all fear his name.

From Orinoque to Corentyn,
Fighting and plund'ring he has been,
•The bold Manárowa!
The Indians round him own his sway.
And slaves, as tribute, to him pay:
•All, save the Tarumá.

They on that stream above are found;
But he, to reach them, must go round,
•Ascending the Rewa.
For the great Essequibo Fans,
Never yet passed, like mighty walls,
•Confront Manárowa.

The chief has pondered long, and said,
"Those Tarumas we must invade,
•And take them by surprise.
O'er those grim cat'racts we will haul
Our light canoes; and on them fall,
•As coming from the skies!"

p. 116

Now he has scaled one wat'ry wall,
Where a small island in the fall
•Precarious footing gave.
With toil they hoist and carry o'er
Their craft; which float where none before
•E'er danced upon the wave.

With that great fall they scarce have done,
Ere they come to a *greater* one.
•No footing there is found.
Their chieftain says, "We now must clear
A pathway through the forest here,
•And drag our vessels round."

Thus they, still toiling day by day,
O'er falls and rapids work their way
•With labour most severe.
They pass the mouth of Cuyuwine—
Some woodskins are before them seen;
•"The Tarumas appear!"

The rocks are high, the Caribs nigh,
No power is theirs to fight or fly;
•They sink beneath the tide.
The Caribs line each rocky shore,
But those poor Tarumas no more
•Will be by them espied!

"Have we," the chief exclaims, "thus far
Come through such perils to make war
•On an amphibious race?
p. 117
Themselves and woodskins they now hide,
In caverns deep beneath the tide:
•And thus elude our chase!"

Abandoning that river then,
The Carib chieftain leads his men
•By land, to hunt their prey.
Returning homewards (says our tale),
With captives, to the Dutch for sale,
•By a less dangerous way.

••••*••*••*

To all on Essequibo known,
The tale had to a legend grown,
•Of that "amphibious race"
Eluding him, "who ventured o'er
A path no mortal man before,
•Or after, dared to trace!"

Thus they, for near one hundred years:—
A white explorer[1] then appears;
•Who to the Taruma
Crosses, o'er every dangerous fall,
Giving thar highest, worst of all,
•Its name—"Manárowa."

II.

The rule of Holland passed away,
"Stabroek"[2] now owns the British sway.
•Manárowa has come
p. 118
The British governor to see,
With his red-coated soldiery,
•And hear the fife and drum.

Stout Caribs, chosen from his band,
Attendant on their chieftain stand,
•Each with his feathered crown,
Red paint, and scarf, of cotton made
(Six yards), o'er back and breast displayed,
•With tassels hanging down.

The governor receives him well;
For one is there the tale to tell
•From Aruabisi shore;
"How Arawâks and Caribisce
Had both prepared to break the peace,
•And fight it out once more.

"But when the British magistrate
Had called their chiefs—to mediate
•At 'Henrietta' there,
All Caribs, by Manárowa,
Were ordered (and his word was law)
•From fighting to forbear."

'Twas so. An aged man told me,
When *he* made peace, I went to see
•(Though then a little thing),
His stately form I viewed with awe,
And white men said, 'Manárowa.
•The Caribisi King!'"

p. 119

In Demerara 'twas the same;
When he before white rulers came,
•The savage he could hide.
Young officers, prepared to laugh,
Found him no object for their "chaff,"
•But calm and dignified.

Some wished for an experiment,
And gained the governor's consent
•To test the Carib's nerve.
A well-rammed cannon, placed near by,
Was, without warning, fired, to try
•If he would shrink or swerve.

It startled *some of them* (the "bang"
Shook the whole house with fearful clang);
•Manárowa was calm.
Nor limb nor muscle moved he then.
The governor said, "Gentlemen,
•For, nerve—who bears the palm?"

Loaded with gifts, see him return
(Allies of white men such can earn);
•And his glad tribe behold
A crescent on his breast appear,
Not silver, such as "captains" wear—
•Manárowa's is *gold!*

Yet glory is but for a day,
Prosperity will pass away,
•Old age must still come on.
p. 120
And when Great Britain, with a frown,
Viewed the slave-trade, and put it down,
•His business was gone.

(Then to the governor, a slave—
A Carib—for a present, gave,
•As chiefs of old would give.
Refused, he clave the young man's head,
Turned to his men, and sternly said,
•"Let no more captives live!")

And when, for such, a sale was found,
In Surinam, upon new ground;
•Manárowa was dead.
Small-pox and *rum* consumed his clan;
He saw them dying, man by man;
•Grieved, and his spirit fled!

—

CONCLUSION.

THE remnant of his once great clan,
•Which held its head so high;
Then withered, as by deadly ban,
•Brazilians forced to fly.
For they an English teacher heard,
And learned from him the Saviour's word.

They came to Georgetown with their grief,
•For who such grief could hide?
And there I saw their youthful chief
•Walk by his pastor's side,
With that broad crescent on his breast
p. 121
•His grandsire wore of old.
In sad procession came the rest
•And their sad story told.
Macusis mingled with the band,
All driven from Macusi land.

And here it boots not to relate
•How war almost befell;
Nor that good Christian teacher's fate,
•Which mission records tell.
His work and he have passed away;
Both will be found another day![1]

On other rivers Caribs live;
To whom we long have sought to give
•The knowledge of our Lord.
And courteous they have ever been
To us amidst their forests green.
Some think their ancient ways the best,
But many Christians are, professed,
•And learn the Saviour's word;
Which taught and held in Christian love
(That *gentle* power—all powers above)
Is mightier than their club of old,
Wielded by warriors strong and bold;
More piercing than their arrows keen,
More glorious in its triumphs seen,
•Than white man's conquering sword!

Next

Footnotes

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1 Bancroft (1769) mentions it as still preserved by them.

p. 95

1 In 1664, under M. de La Barre. The English had by that time made a settlement on the Coma, or Surinam, which, in 1667, was exchanged with the Dutch for "New Holland," the present New York. Essequibo and Berbice (now English) were colonised by the Dutch in the early part of the seventeenth century, and remained in their possession nearly two hundred years. Demerara was also founded by them, though at a much later period.

p. 99

1 Humboldt's account, Some of our Caribs say that *two* men were thus spared.

p. 101

1 *The great cataracts (or Raudales) af Atures and Maypures.*

As the Caribs themselves have always been accused of cannibalism, it is but fair to the survivors of that race in Guiana, to say that all those whom I have spoken with deny that their fathers ever were guilty of it, save in mimic action, as a vaunt or threat, to terrify a foe.

Humboldt, who treats the subject fully in his "Narrative," acquits the continental Caribs of the charge, while admitting the cannibalism of the Cabrés (as stated above), of various other inland tribes, and of the *Caribs of the islands* in former days.

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1 "Tamosi Kabo-tano" (Ancient one of Heaven), The Supreme Being.

p. 108

1 I-arreka-ru (Acawoio, "Iwarreka"), the *monkey*.

p. 109

1 There is an episode, usually given here, of a "cocorite" palm, which mankind strove to ascend, because its top reached the heavens. A poor woman, not in a condition to climb, led the way. When halfway up she was turned into stone by terror and exhaustion. None could help her, and none could pass over her. All who tried to do so became rocks likewise. The terrified survivors then climbed the komoo, and were saved.

p. 114

1 Humboldt, who records the legend of Amalivaca, considers those *rock-carvings* to be "traces of an ancient civilisation, which may have belonged to an epoch when the tribes, which we now distinguish by various names and races, were still unknown."

Whether the mystery attached to those rude sculptures will ever be solved, *even in part*, it is at present impossible to say. In the interest of science, it is desirable that a collection of photographs of the most remarkable—not only on the Orinaco, but (if possible) from the Rio Negro to the Corentyn—should be made and compared.

p. 117

1 Mr. C. B. Brown, 1870.

2 The present Georgetown.

p. 121

1 Rev. T. Youd. Founded Pirara Mission, 1838. Driven from it, 1839. Died (at sea), 1842.

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CONTENTS OF PART IV.

—

•The settlements of the Acawoio clans extend from the vicinity of Mount Romima eastward to the Berbice, and to the Orinoco on the north.

•Closely connccted with them—in langunge, and probably in origin—are their neighbours, the Macusis

and Aracunas, with their various branches and subdivisions.

•Of the history of those races we know very little beyond what their family traditions may supply. Schomburgk thought that the Macusis formerly lived on the Orinoco. He states also, on historic evidence, that the Arecunas formerly dwelt on the Uaupes, or Ucayari, a tributary of the Rio Negro. All beyond is enveloped in the mist of ages.

Next

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Legends of the Acawoios.

—

INTRODUCTION.

WERE that which seems a dream accomplished now,
And mortal man to tread Roráima's brow,
He, from that mighty wall, the homes would see
Of scattered clans—a people wild and free.
From one old parent stock those races all
Have sprung, which we the "K•pohn-y•mu" call.

One, whose forefathers were their chiefs of old,
At my request, their ancient legends told;
p. 126
Their quaint mythology—(its op'ning page
Like some sweet idyl of the "golden age"),
And old-time wars, 'twixt those whose children come
To find, on mission land, a peaceful Christian home!

I.
MYTHOLOGICAL LEGENDS.

THE FIRST MAN AND ANIMALS

1. PRIMITIVE STATE.

FIRST, my Acawoi narrator
•Told how beasts and birds were made;
How the Mighty, their Creator,
•Gave them Laws to be obeyed.
Made them of *one speech* to be,
Bade them live in unity.

That there might be no oppression,
•Man was made, and placed o'er all.
That first man, of wise discretion,
•"Makonáima's son" we call,
Just, as well as kind, was he:
All obeyed him lovingly.

Ere the sun's bright rays were burning,
•All dispersed in forests near;
With the cool of day returning,
•Glad his loving call to hear.
Each one of his food would bring;
Homage paid to man—their king.

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No great trouble or disaster
•Could oppress them or annoy;
For the man, their gentle master,
•In their good placed all his joy.
Surely, we no more shall see—
In this world—such unity.

••••*••*••*

Then, 'tis said, great Makonáima,
•Made for them a wondrous tree,
Capp'd with clouds, like high Roráima,
•Bearing fruits abundantly—
Every kind—the meed to be
•Of their love and loyalty!

2. THE MONKEY'S EXPLOIT.

What the Caribs may tell of that wonderful tree,
With our own native legend would mainly agree;
But we say that "Ahkoo"[1] the noble tree found—
That our *first man alone* brought it down to the ground,
And the animals helped him in planting around.

For the beasts and the birds were industrious all,
Till "Iwarreka" (so the brown monkey we call)
p. 128
•••To the spirit of play
•••And sheer mischief gave way;
Then he plagued and tormented the rest all the day.
•••His work was not done,
•••For he thought but of fun,
And into the wildest excesses would run.

He grinned when they begged him to let them alone,
So they to the master complained—every one.
•••He pulls at our tails,
•••Or nips with his nails,
And will bite us severely when any trick fails."

So the master passed sentence on that wicked elf—
"Iwarreka, leave us, and work by thyself;
It will keep thee from mischief to go to yon spring,
And thence, in a basket, fresh water to bring."

••••*••*••*••*••*

When the tree was cut down, the good master soon found
Swelling waters within: and he saw there abound
Those fishes which now swim in rivers around.
•••"Though more labour for me,
•••This a blessing will be,
To have fishes in fresh water, as in the sea.
"I will spread them," said he; "every river shall share:
For all rivers have equal right to my care."

•••Then, addressing the well,
•••He said, "Wilt thou tell
For what purpose thy wonderful waters now swell?"
And he found that those waters, ere next rise of sun,
O'er the world, all around, were preparing to run.

p. 129

Then with dexterous hands a wide basket he made,
Which, inverted, he over the hollow stump laid;
And such was its virtue that, while it remained
As he placed it, the fountain within was restrained.

••••*••*••*••*••*

Iwarreka, meanwhile, obedience shirking,
•••Had given up working,
And near to the spot at that time he was lurking.
He, seeing the basket thus placed with such care,
Said, "The choicest of fruits our sly master hides there.
•••I will take while I may,
•••Now they all are away,
Such a fine chance as this will not come ev'ry day."

So, with a light spring, on the margin he stands;
The basket he raises with pilfering hands—
One moment, no more—for a terrible flood
Bursting forth, sends him rolling in water and mud.
•••With splutter and scream,
•••He is borne down the stream:
A warning to all the dishonest, we deem.

His screams are sufficient the others to scare,
They all come in affright, and the master is there;
But more for themselves than the monkey they care.

•••"See the water!" they cried,
•••"Pouring over the side.
See! the fishes are all swimming down with the tide.
See, the stump and the roots are all forced from the ground,
And the land disappears as the waters flow round.
O man, our good leader! we cleave to thy side,
And thou for the safety of all must provide."

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So the man leads the way, till before him he sees
A tall hill, with high rocks; and some cocorite trees.
Then says, "We may find a last refuge in these.
•••You, who rest in a tree,
•••Here may climb up with me;
And in yonder high cave all the others must be."

So the birds fly up first; and then up the tree go
The opossum, coati, and others you know.
Black monkeys and brown soon the master surround,
All striving to get farthest off from the ground.
There the queer spider monkey, with long limbs, is seen.
"Sakuwinki's" lithe form, and his fur olive green;
The red-bearded one, which "Arowta"[1] we call;
The marmosets small—and, in fact, monkeys all,
There sit, in the palm, to be kept safe from harm,
With their tails round their neck, curled, to keep themselves warm.

Such a rain then succeeded as none before knew,
Nor has such been experienced by me or by you.
Fierce lightning, loud thunder; no sight of the sun
Till three or four nights into one night had run.

••••*••*••*••*••*

The man sat with patience, for, do what he would,
He knew that he never could stay that great flood;
But he let fall the seeds of the cocorite tree,
To tell, by the splash, where the water might be.
He at length found it lower; at last it seemed gone;
Then they ate of the palm-fruits, and welcomed the dawn.

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3. MISHAPS.

Thus the man, beasts, and birds were preserved, as we see,
Though cold, wet, and hungry, of course they would be.
But *some* met with *troubles*, of which, sages say,
Their children bear tokens to this very day.

And first, the "baboon," as your creoles now call
The great howling monkey, the reddest of all.
His voice, we are told, ere he climbed up that tree,
Was more pleasant to hear than his person to see.
He began *first* to roar, as he felt his heart fail,
When those waters were wetting his feet and his tail,
And he knew they would drown him if they should prevail.

••••With his cries sore distressed,
••••All began to protest,
But he louder and louder his terrors expressed.
Though his throat did not burst with the strain of those cries,
It *then grew* to be twice its original size!
And its shape we may see when his sons meet our eyes.

••••*••*••*••*••*

The man bore up bravely, our old legends say,
But his flock, grown unruly, gave trouble that day;
••••Few cared to obey,
And each, like the monkey, desired his own way.

He bade all keep their places till he should have found
If danger awaited them on the damp ground;
••••And the trumpeter bird
••••With the others then heard,
Yet he would not from getting down first be deterred.

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"Yahgahmi, beware!" said the man, with a frown,
As into a nest of fierce ants he flew down.
Alas, for the bird! for that raverious swarm,
Ere the master could capture him, did him great harm,
••••Each leg was a stick
••••(Though once fairly thick),
For those ants had deprived it of all they could pick.

Having cleared off the ants, the long-suffering man
Said, "I'll kindle a fire, if I possibly can."
The sticks which he carried, though not kept quite dry,
Would, by friction incessant, yield fire by and by.
It was kindled at length; and then, while he looked round
To see if of fuel some kind might be found,
The "mar•di"[1] pecked up the red coal from the ground.
••••And away the bird flew,
••••So that no one then knew;
But, in time, his misfortune they plainly could view;
For his throat, much inflamed, took a fiery glow
From the coal he pecked up (for an insect) below.

••••*••*••*••*

The man looked for his fire; and before him then stood
The first alligator, come forth from the mud.
That reptile was then well-conducted, they say,
And had come his respects to the master to pay.
But the rest, who disliked him, said "*He* took the fire!"
And the man, cold and weary, gave way to his ire.
Forcing open his mouth, to search there (he was wrong),
Found his tongue in the way—and he pulled out the tongue![2]

p. 133

O sad were the mishaps of that fatal day—
The reptile, disgusted, went (*tongueless*) away;
And *from that time* made war on all creatures, they say.
He never could need a memento of wrong,
When he thought of his huge mouth, bereft of a tongue.

4. END OF PRIMITIVE STATE.

Then the birds and beasts, rebelling,
•Soon forsook their guardian mild;
Pride of freedom in them swelling,
•In the forests all went wild.
There their children bear, we see,
Tokens of their ancestry.

Though no ants their limbs assail now,
•Thin-legged "*trumpeters*" are bred;
On bright embers none regale now,
•Still *marudis'* throats are red.
Alligators—wanting tongues—
Show (and share) their father's wrongs.

Still *red howlers* loudly bellow,
•(As their father did from fear)
Night and morn; each horrid fellow
•Frightens all weak creatures near.
Monkeys, still by mischief led,
Like their sire, a "ducking" dread.

Free as air then roved those creatures;
•(Save their wild notes, all grown dumb),
p. 134
Till they saw, with savage natures,
•Beasts of prey and hunters come:
Felt their bloody, cruel reign,
Wished their guardian back again.

—

Wondrous deed and strange adventure
•Of that good man I could tell;
But their length might meet your censure.
•So I cease while all is well.
Yet must say that every day
Bad men sought the good to slay.

Envy made their hatred stronger:
•He was forced to leave them there.
Yet, when they were suff'ring hunger,
•Sent for them his bread to share.
They, partaking of his food,
Sought again to shed his blood!

Then, a precipice ascending,
•On that cliff immense and high
(With a faithful few attending),
•He was seen beneath the sky.
Evil men he left below!
Here to suffer want and woe.

And he left no track behind him,
•All who sought to climb would fall;
None could follow there to find him,
•'Twas like high Rorairna's wall!
Nay, since none now know its name.
Some may think that cliff *the same*.

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II.
HISTORICAL AND WARLIKE LEGENDS.

THEIR WAR WITH THE CARIBS.

SEEK you to know the story of our race?
Its origin no living man can trace.
We only know our ancient dwelling-place.

My ancestors once dwelt, our legends say,
Where Masaruni cuts his rugged way
From mountains, where stupendous rocks abound,
By falls prodigious, to this lower ground.
North of that river my forefathers dwelt
In days of old, and no great evils felt.

'Twas by the Caribs they were forced to flee;
Though small the Carib gain, as you will see.
That race then lorded it o'er all the land,
And all the other tribes had felt their hand.
Not yet our Acawoios, who were sure
That they, 'midst rugged mountains, dwelt secure.

1. FIRST INROAD OF THE CARIBS.

Great was the horror, when a cry
At night proclaimed the Caribs nigh!
•They came, a num'rous train;
And ravaged through the neighb'ring land,
Where our bold brethren made a stand;
•Some Caribs there were slain.
Nought could their comrades' wrath assuage,
p. 136
Who killed their captives in their rage;
•Then, seeing boys remain,
They maiméd some, and some *impaled*,
To show their vengeance had not failed.

Our warriors met, an angry train,
That ere the Caribs came again
•They might for them prepare.
And our old chief said, "Brethren, see!
'Tis *here* their next attack will be;
•This place must be our care.
Help me this house to fortify
With palisado, strong and high,
•That we may keep at bay
Those murderers, until you come
With men from ev'ry distant home
•To sweep them all away."

'Twas done. All joined to fortify,
With palisado strong and high.
•Then the far-seeing chief
Said to his neighbours, "There must be,
For us, and for each family
•Whose danger causes grief,
From this house down to yon ravine,
A passage which cannot be seen—
•A passage underground."
They made it, working day by day,
Some dug, some bore the earth away;
While others propped the roof, they say,
•To make it safe and sound.

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2. THE SURPRISE ON THE CUYUNI.

While they were all assembled there,
A breathless scout bade them "Prepare!
For, Caribs now are on their way,
They come, the whole of us to slay!"

Then said the chief, "Who could have thought
Of such good news as now is brought?
•Since *all are here* to-day.
Arise I we need no longer talk;
We'll save the Caribs half their walk,
•By meeting them midway!"

Our warriors to Cuyuni go.
And from its banks behold the foe
•Coming before the breeze.
Their frail but numerous barques draw nigh;
Our men with hate those foes espy;
•Yet close amidst the trees.
They hide themselves and see them land.
Their foes, reclining, on the strand,
•Then eat and take their ease,
No scout; no watch! They know no fear.
Nor think a deadly ambush near!

Hark, that fierce cry! As up they start,
At each man flies a fatal dart:
•One half their death-wounds bear.
The others, with a dreadful cry,
At once to their flotilla fly;
•*Their weapons all are there!*

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No valour can regain the day.
•Death falls in every blow;
Their men will for no mercy pray,
•And ours no mercy show.
Soon, half in water, half on land,
Two hundred corpses line the strand.

Our warriors, bloody from that fight,
•Then up the river go;
To bathe in water clear and bright:
•For there clear waters flow,
Though with dead bodies—sickening sight—
•And blood, defiled below.

3. SIEGE OF THE FORTIFIED HOUSE.

Again the Caribs, strong and bold,
Returned, as our old chief foretold;
•Who, speaking to his men,
Said, "For each warrior we have slain,
He sure, when they shall come again,
•The Caribs will bring *ten*.
And I, to meet them, can rely
•On none but you, who live near by."

It was so. When the foe drew near,
To help him he saw few appear.
"This place is lost," the chieftain said,
•"But they shall surely pay
Full dearly, with their warriors dead,
•For what they get this day!"

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Then to the women: "Ye shall live;
•Wait till the fight is high.
And *foes engaged*, then, when I give
•The signal, quickly fly!
Fly through the tunnel's friendly shade.
Fly silent through each forest glade;
•Utter no timid cry!
Thither we soon shall follow you,
But first, what this small band can do
•'Gainst numbers—we will try!"

••••*••*••*

The Caribs to the assault drew nigh
And scanned the place with curious eye,
•But saw their leaders fall.
From bulwarks strong swift arrows flew.
How fatal soon those Caribs knew—
•Tipped with "wourali" all!

To storm the place, forth from the bush
Came their best men with furious rush.
Their shocks soon made the timbers shake.
•Which some began to hew.
Those who an entrance strove to make
•By climbing, our men slew;
Yet still the place they tried to take.
•The many from the few!

Some dug beneath the wooden wall,
And made a hole through which to crawl;
But those who entered that way, *all*
•There entered but to die!
Amazed at such resistance, then
p. 140
The Carib chiefs called off their men
•Not to retreat or fly—
But said, "Our warriors brave are slain
By foes who still untouched remain.
•A safer course we try!"

Then flaming arrows swiftly poured
Upon the loop-holed sides of board,
•And that thatched roof on high.
Soon roof and sides were in a blaze,
And they their joyfur shouts could raise
•Of "Victory!" the cry.

They burst the enclosure, waiting there
The shrieks of agony and fear.
Had any wretch rushed forth in pain,
They would have thrust him in again.
But quiet, save the fiery roar,
•They round all things remain.
Our men had gone down through the floor,
And soon would reach Pur•ni's shore,
•Not to return again.

The Carib warriors then perceived
Their hopes of vengeance all deceived.
•The fire in vain might roar—
The flaming house burned to the ground;
But no charred skeletons were found.
•The passage—covered o'er
With burning timbers—none could heed.
All said, "'Tis sorcery indeed,
•Such as none knew before!"

p. 141

The chiefs then—while the numerous dead
They buried—to their warriors said,
•"Brave Carinyach, give ear!
Demons unhurt can warriors slay,
And heavy is our grief this day,
•Our loss of men severe.
We have no wounded. All are dead!
Some were but scratched, yet fire has fled.
•No longer we stay here!"

So when our warriors came, they found
But blackened ruins on the ground:
And many new-made graves around,
•Filled with the Carib dead.
Then our men followed on their track,
But they delayed not, hastening back.
Nor chief, nor warrior, then would stay;
So to this day our people say,
•"They burned the house—and fled!"

CIVIL STRIFE.

1. THE AGED FRIENDS.

WE kept away the foreign foe;
Yet from ourselves were doomed to know
•An evil greater still.
And that great evil to our race,
We to one man's transgressions trace,
•His hatred and self-will.

p. 142

On the Pur•ni, loved of all,
Dwelt one whom we will "Koé" call;
•Too long his other name.
A chief was staying at his home,
A friend from Masaruni come,
•In rank and years the same.

There the loved guest fell sick and died;
And Koé's fortitude was tried
•The heavy grief to bear.
With his old friend two sons had come:
When they were gone he left his home,
•And went to live elsewhere.

The two young men, who went their way,
At sunset on the second day
•To Masaruni came.
They told their elder brother there,
And had his furious wrath to bear,
•Reproach and bitter blame.

"Our father there is dead, you say?
Then Koé took his life away
•By poison or by charm!
If I am chieftain, here this day,
My warriors shall with me straightway
•Avenge this grievous harm."

Then long the younger brothers prayed,
To turn him from his wrath, and said,
•"Koé is not to blame:
p. 143
He grieved when our good father died;
If you assail him, you provide
•For all deep grief and shame!"

Still he with causeless anger burned.
And would not from his wrath be turned,
•And so—our troubles came!
Ekahruwa, so he was called.
From no fierce crime would shrink appalled.
•But breathed forth death and flame.

2. THE MASSACRE AND PURSUIT.

"Alas! why are we captives here?
Why forced to bear, by fate severe.
•The plunder of our home?
Why have we seen our fathers slain?
No Caribs sweep the land again—
From *our own race* this bloody stain
•And misery have come!"

Five youthful maidens thus bewail
Their heavy lot: until words fail.
•And tears alone remain.
But their stern captors cry, "Beware!
And patiently your burdens bear,
Or you the bloody fate shall share
•Of those before you slain!"

••••*••*••*

p. 144

Ekahruwa, by sorcery led,
Had vowed to cleave the hoary head,
•As a most righteous deed.
Of Masaruni men a band,
The desperadoes of the land,
Hastened to march 'neath his command,
•With secrecy and speed.

And they to Koé's place had come:
There, finding he had left his home,
•Stern was their leader's eye.
The neighbours spoke, he would not heed,
But said, "Has he escaped indeed—
The hoary wretch I doomed to bleed?
•Then *you* for him must die!"

So cruelly those men he slew,
And would have killed the women too:
•Then said his men, "Refrain!
Ten men this day we've helped you slay;
It is enough—we will not stay.
Take now the girls and spoil away,
•And hasten home again!"

••••*••*••*

Some of their number nevermore
Shall see wild Masaruni's shore;
•For far and wide have spread
Tidings of that flagitious deed,
And all Pur•ni men make speed
•To view their slaughtered dead.

p. 145

Young men to save the maidens fly,
And every forest path they try,
•Like dogs to hunting bred.
And when the murderers' track is found,
They shout the news to all around;
Then on in silence, save *one sound*,
•Their rapid Indian tread.

••••*••*••*

'Tis evening of the second day,
The ravagers are on their way;
•They hear a deadly groan.
The hindmost falls, and his death cry
Warns them that some dire foe is nigh:
•And soon that foe is shown—

For arrows rattle through the bush,
And arméd men with furious rush
•(To captives welcome sight!)
Dash forth, and let the maidens free,
Who now their hateful captors see
•In swift and headlong flight.
Each for himself will now provide,
And though their chief would stem the tide,
•None dare await the fight.

Then to his foes he calls, "Draw nigh
One at a time to fight; and I
•The whole of you will slay!
Which of you can compete with me
In swiftness, strength, or archery,
•In sport or bloody fray?

p. 146

"Now hear, Pur•ni people, all!
Nine men I've seen around me fall,
•By your sharp arrows slain.
Put them against the men I killed;
Still is my vengeance unfulfilled,
•And I must *come again*.
I come—and that old man shall die;
If him you screen, or aid to fly,
•None living shall remain!"

The threats Ekahruwa had made,
The arrogance he then displayed,
•Left them astonished quite:
When, darting through the forest glade,
•He vanished from their sight.
No living foe they then discern,
And soon the cheerful watch-fires burn;
•The maidens rest all night.
Then, with the spoil, all homeward turn,
•Glad of the morning light.

3. THE DUEL.

Ekahruwa soon came again,
And at his back a numerous train
•From red Roráima's wall.
They came to shed that old man's blood:
Pur•ni men against them stood,
•Prepared to stand or fall
In his defence. While, man by man,
Our countrymen of every clan
•Came, and the chieftains all.

p. 147

The chiefs to mediate drew near,
Called on the aggressor to appear,
•And asked him what he knew.
"No evidence," said he, "I show;
By dreams and secret arts, I know
•That he my father slew."

It matters not what you may say,
My men support me here this day;
•They all believe as I.
I stand here with my numerous band;
Koé must perish by my hand,
•Or I myself will die!"

The old man's family then said,
"Think not that you his blood can shed,
•While we alive remain!
We are prepared with you to fight
Singly, and thus defend the right,
•Upon this grassy plain."

Then said the other, "Fight and die!
Yet in his blood shall Koé lie!"
•He paused. For forth there came
The man whose blood he longed to shed;
The old man with the good white head,
•Whom none but he would blame.

He said, "O K•pohn-y•mu all!
No man for me shall fight, and fall
•By this proud boaster's hand!
p. 148
I here forbid my friends the fight:
This hand, though weak, may do me right;
•A fair field now command!"

Him no entreaties could dissuade.
"'Tis better thus to die," he said,
•"Than see my people slain."
So each,—with bow and arrows keen,
And club,—is placed upon the green.
•Few there from grief refrain—
When the old man, upon the field,
Lays down the club he once could wield,
•But ne'er shall wield again,
They see him but one arrow take,
And, till his foe should onslaught make,
•There tranquilly remain.

Ekahruwa begins the fight:
Shifting his ground from left to right,
•His well-aimed arrows fly.
Yet nothing by their flight he gains,
For well that aged man retains
•The keenness of his eye.

Some with his bow he puts aside,
From others swerves, and they go wide;
•Till, with a savage cry,
The strong man says, "My arrows sent
Are from their course by *sorcery* bent!—
•My club I now will try."

p. 149

Swift he comes on, with fell design:
•But midway checks his speed.
He sees the sting-ray's deadly spine[1]
•On the opposing reed.
And as he notes behind the reed
•The glance of that firm eye,
He for the first time doubts indeed
•Which of the two must die.

He then retires, and shifts his ground;
•Firm the old man remains.
The foe makes feints, and circles round;
•He still his place retains.
From side to side the foe may fly;
•He "covers" him with steady eye.

Once more Ekahruwa retires;
•Pauses; regains his breath.
Then cries, while rage his soul inspires,
•"To one, or both, come death!"
Straight he comes now, with flying bound;
•The arrow leaves the string;
One piercing shriek thrills all around,
The strong man lies upon the ground,
•Reached with his last death spring.

••••*••*••*

p. 150

Shot through the breast, he groans and dies;
•The chieftains all draw near;
Where, o'er the corpse, a brother sighs,
•Then says, "All men, give ear!
I stand to clear this old man's name,
Though it be to my brother's blame.

"I well know how my father died,
And often have I vainly tried
•To stay this growing ill.
Yet for my brother came to fight,
For, though his deeds were far from right,
•*He was my brother still!*

p. 151

"He now is in fair battle slain:
And ere we home return again,
Listen to me, Pur•ni men,
•To all of you I call!
My brother did to death consign
Some of your men, in number *ten*:
While of his men you killed but *nine*.
•*Himself* you've now seen fall!
The *deaths art equal*. Let each side,
If any wrong remain, confide
•In these good chieftains all.
My brother's corpse I bear away;
Peace be between us from this day!"

4. BLOOD-FEUDS AND DISPERSION.

The wise young chief a peace had made,
And for a time the mischief stayed;
Yet civil strife was but delayed;
•At length its fury came.
Men saw war-parties raging go,
'Twixt plain and mountain, to and fro:
Till none security could know,
•All dreaded blood and flame.

Our family went north, they say,
Since they their brethren would not slay;
And crossed the hills; till, far away,
•Barahma they could see.
Some sought the Demerara Fall,
The Arawâks there welcomed all,
p. 152
And gave to them a warrior tall,
•Their guide and chief to be.
The Caribs thence had swept away
An ancient race, as old men say:
But our men kept all foes at bay,
•And lived there peacefully.

At length some warriors order made
With those who in their country stayed:
One sturdy chief made all afraid:
•"Pi•pu" (stump) his name.
But bad men then *Kanáima* sought,
And secretly their murders wrought.
For never can such men be brought
•Their bloody feuds to blame.

—

III. KANÁIMA.

FROM the base of high Roráima
•To the widespread Eastern sea,
Votaries of dread Kanáima
•Track their victims secretly.
Deadly vow must each fulfil,
Real or fancied foe to kill.

He who that dread vow is taking,
•Family and friends must leave;
Wife and children all forsaking,
•No discharge can he receive.
Still around his victim's way,
Hovering night and day to slay.

p. 153

If the victim, warned of danger,
•To some other place should fly,
Soon th' assassin, though a stranger,
•Will to that retreat draw nigh.
Patiently he bides his time,
Waiting to commit the crime.

Stealthily each step he traces,
•Hiding till he strikes the blow.
Poison in the mouth he places
•Of his victim, lying low.
Then, if found with swollen tongue,
None will know who did him wrong.

When the grave has closed upon him,
•The destroyer hovers round:
Dread Kanáima's spell is on him;
•By it he must still be bound,
Till he pierce, with pointed wood,
Through the grave, and *taste the blood*.

Stern Kanáima thus appeasing,
•Who withdraws his direful aid,
All his horrid influence ceasing
•When that off'ring has been made.
Uncontrolled, the votary then
Goes, and lives with other men.

One, who passed us on the water,[1]
•Had his victim lately slain;
p. 154
There, triumphant, fresh from slaughter,
•He was hast'ning home again,
Feathered crown adorned his head—
Bright red spots his skin o'erspread—

Spots, to show that, nightly ranging
•(So their sorcerers declare),
He, into a jaguar changing,
•Could his victims seize and tear.[1]
As the "were-wolf" of the East
Prowls, on human flesh to feast.

••••*••*••*

Should the victim 'scape him living,
•Or, if dead, be borne away;
He, no horrid off'ring giving,
•Finds Kanáima on him stay,
Still the spell upon him lies;
Mad, he wanders till he dies.

One, who sank with forests round him,
•To our Mission hill was borne;
First, an ocelot, which found him,
•Horribly his head had torn.
Head and hands he raised in pain,
Scared the beast, then sank again.

Sank—for life no longer striving,
•Christian Indians found him then,
Arawâks, his strength reviving,
•Bore him to his countrymen,
Healed and fed, Kanáima still,
Christians all he vowed to kill!

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BLOOD REVENGE.

I.

"Even where just law commands it,
•Awful doom is 'Blood for blood.'
But where *private hate* demands it,
•As th' avenger thinketh good,
Bloody work, from sire to son
Handed down, is never done.

For some old offence or error,
•For some grave ancestral wrong,
We must live in constant terror—
•For some deed committed long
Ere we drew the vital breath,
We are doomed to cruel death!

••••*••*••*

From the Masaruni river
•Wahmoro, good chieftain, came;
Hoping thus his name to sever
•From his brother's life of shame.
Men by poison lost their lives,
And that brother took their wives.

Soon, with wives and children, flying
•From his foes, to Wahmoro,
He found safety, there applying;
•Yet in his old ways would go,
Spake of things which should not be
To his nieces, secretly.

Following his evil nature,
•'I,' said he, 'the chief must be.
p. 156
Men approve my strength and stature,
•*You*, as *wives*, shall live with me.
If your father bar my way,
Father, brother, I must slay.'

Deeply Wahmoro was grieved,
•When those words his daughters told.
Then this message he received
•From his uncle, grey and old,
'By thy brother doomed to die,
At the point of death I lie.'

He (with words which blast like lightning)
•Had addressed old Orubu:—
'With a man whose hairs are whit'ning,
•What hath this young wife to do?
Ill this woman suiteth thee,
Give her therefore unto me.'

'Ill it suits,' replied the old man,
•'Thus to give one's wife away;
He who seeks must be a bold man,
•Though my hair be turning grey.
She, who children bears to me,
Must I give her up to thee?'

Then the bad man said, 'Forgive me
•'Twas in jest I spake to thee;
No annoyance I will give thee,
•Faithful friend I mean to be.'
Yet, with poison, he, false friend!
Brought the old man to his end.

p. 157

Dying, but to vengeance wedded,
•'Wahmoro,' the old man said,
'Take my bow and shaft spear-headed,
•With them lay my murderer dead.
That, sad duty falls on thee,
Head of all our family.'

To the chieftain's son, then leaning
•O'er his hammock, thus he said:
'Take this club; full well its meaning
•He will know; then cleave his head.
Ere he do the same to thee
As to others and to me.'

They, the proffered weapons taking,
•Held them in the murd'rer's view.
Stern he eyed them, never quaking,
•Though his doom full well he knew.
'Strike!' said he, 'for Orubu,
I shall have avengers too!'

Swift his household, armed, to save him,
•On the two assailant's pressed;
But the wound that arrow gave him
•Nailed one arm across his breast.
By the club he then was slain,
Fiercely battling on the plain.

Vainly his brave sons, defending,
•Two young striplings at his side,
As they saw their sire contending,
•O'er his body fought—and died!
p. 158
Neighbours then, who saw that fray.
Bade the chief *the whole* to slay.

'Heard ye not his threat? Take warning!
•Slay his broods ere they can slay.'
But the chief, such slaughter scorning,
•Bade each mother 'not delay.'
'Here,' said he, 'you cannot stay;
Rear your sons—but far away.'

II.

"Years rolled on, still coming, going,
•Then the impostor[1] summoned all.
Said that he 'the Lord' was showing,
•'Christ, on whom the white men call.'
Wahmoro's whole family,
With their tribe, went forth to see.

Disappointed, and returning
•To their fair Barahma home,
After God their hearts were yearning,
•Till they said, 'Once more we'll roam
p. 159
To Bowruma's giant tree:
'Neath its shade our rest shall be.'

Simple teaching there was given
•To three races, dwelling near,
Of that Lord, who came from heaven;
•Each, in its own tongue, could hear.
We besought that *we* might have
That which you to others gave.

In our tongue, through kindred nations,
•*Printed* truths then wide we spread.
Men (drawn by the illustrations)
•Came from Masaruni head.
Came from fair Cuyuni banks,
Learned to pray and give God thanks.

Others then Christ's Church were rearing;
•Your good bishop, chief of all,
Went with us, the red cross bearing,
•Past the Demerara fall.
Went as far as he could go,
Where Berbice—where Wai'ni—flow.

Macusisand Arec•nas,
•Tribes to whom our tongue is known,
Came to us with Patam•nas,
•Showing how that seed had grown.
Still they came, inquiring train;
With them *children of the slain*.

Came his sons, now tall of stature,
•Came his grandsons, active band.
p. 160
Sorcerers said, 'Revenge is nature.
•We will guide some vengeful hand.
They who strive Christ's words to spread,
Now shall suffer *for the dead*.'

One, from Wahmoro descended,
•Seemed to bear a special doom;
Stealthy foes his steps attended,
•Dangers round him still would loom.
When he sought a distant home,
Thither would the assassin come.

Hunting once, he ceased his labour,
•Tired, beneath a tree to stand;
From behind—a deadly neighbour—
•Sprang 'Kanáima,' club in hand.
From the club and knife he fled,
Ere that foe could strike him dead.

Swift he fled, (who would have tarried?)
•Found his foe run swifter still;
Empty was the gun he carried,
•How could he expect to kill?
Yet he turned upon the foe,
Struck, *for life*, one random blow.

As he swerved, his foeman, springing,
•Aimed the death-blow—missed his aim;
And the gun-stock, swiftly swinging,
•Full against his body came.
Prone he fell, but was not dead:
Twice the other struck—and fled.

Oh, what else in that great danger,
•Could the destined victim do?
p. 161
You would strike if some fell stranger
•Sprang upon, to murder you.
And, *like me*, would grieve, I know,
From the hour you struck the blow!"

••••*••*••*

Wan and haggard were his features;
•Telling his own secret woe.
Brave he was, but hunted creatures
•Evermore expect a foe.
Many live in constant fear,
Thinking a "Kanáima" near.

Counsel, which to him was given,
•Here I need not tell indeed.
Sweet the lesson brought from heaven,
•Not to "break the bruiséd reed:"
Taught by Him, who all the opprest
Calls, to "*come*'" to Him and "*rest*."

Next

Footnotes

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1 "Ahkoo," the *agouti*, or *acouri*. This little animal takes the part which, in the corresponding Caribi legend, is given to "Maipuri," the *tapir*. The *tree* itself, the source of all cultivation, is the same in both; and the *monkey*, though in different ways, releases the pent up waters of the flood.

Though differing widely now, the ancient traditions, as well as the languages spoken by these two nations, and some others, now widely spread, point to a common origin at some remote period.

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1 "Arawata," in the Caribi; Spanish, "Araguato."

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1 A bush fowl, called by the Acawoios "Okura."

2 The tongue of the alligator, previous to this calamity, is supposed to have been long and flexible.

p. 149

1 Arrows thus pointed are believed by the natives to inflict greater agony than any other weapon; and the terror they inspire is often heightened by superstition.

p. 153

1 Archdeacon Jones and myself, on the Upper Demerara, in 1865. That "Kanáima" murderer, we found, had followed his victim and friends from the vicinity of Roráima to Georgetown and back, killing him on his return.

p. 154

1 A set of jaguar's claws, hung up in sorcerer's hut, have the same threatening signification.

p. 158

1 In 1845, all the Acawoios, and many Caribs, went to that man, near the river Cako. We were unable to stop the movement. They were so numerous that food could not be got, so the imposture collapsed under the weight of too great success. The man was not an Indian, and his ultimate object was never known.

To "Capui" (the moon), one of the leading Acawoios, he gave a "commission" as from the Lord. It had a *leaden seal* attached, and was written in hieroglyphic characters, invented, of course, by himself. Those were the days of "Joe Smith's" early Mormon successes, and our impostor seemed to imitate him as far as he could.

Legends of the Acawoios.

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Fanciful Legends.

—

INTRODUCTION.

HOIST again the red cross! Let us voyage once more
•••Where the wild torrents roar,
•••As we haul the boat o'er:
And our red men all point as they paddle away,
To where the grim cayman is lurking for prey,
•Midst the sandbanks and rocks by the shore.

We encamp ere the sun quits the evening sky,
•••Or the night-birds flit by
•••With their strangely-weird cry:
And our Indians join in our evening prayer,
Make their camp-fires and sup—to their hammocks repair,
•And tell tales till the moon riseth high.

Oh, strange are the legends in which they delight!
•••Some tell how each sprite,
•••In the "merrie moonlight,"
With his comrades (as animals) joins in the dance.
Such are not malignant, though sometimes, perchance,
•Human beings they sorely affright.

p. 167

Of some pillar-like rocks, which the traveller sees,
•••They will say, "They were trees
•••Which once waved in the breeze."
And of others, like men or strange animals shown,
Say, "They once lived and moved, but are turned into stone,
•Having failed the Great Spirit to please!"

And he who would win those wild people should know
•••How their strange legends go,
•••And how their thoughts flow.
His teaching more readily they will receive
When they find that he knows what their old men believe;
•And thus his good seed he may sow.

BAHMOO AND THE FROG.

"OH, what mean these croaks, like a concert of frogs,
Such as we, oftentimes, near our marshes and bogs,
•May hear at still evening's close?"
"'Tis the chorus to one of our popular tales,
Levelled at a division of race which prevails,
•And pretending to show how it rose."

THE LEGEND.

"Come with us, O Bahmoo, to hunt the huge frogs,
Which are found nowhere else in our rivers and bogs:
Good food; though in size they approach the bush-hogs:
•Some excellent sport you may find."

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••••Thus our young men addressed
••••Their friend Bahmoo, a guest,
Who had come to their "place" of adventures in quest,
••••And, perhaps, of a wife to his mind.
For, as you may know, our young men often rove
A long distance in search of a girl they can love.

And now these young hunters set forth on their way;
Each one with his weapons and ornaments gay.

"Take a cudgel, O Bahmoo!" said they, "if you go,
For those creatures are sturdy, and take a hard blow."
••••Then answered Bahmoo,
••••"I leave weapons to you,
And tell you beforehand what *I* mean to do.
••••The first frog that is found
••••Upon yon marshy ground,
I will jump on his back, and will twist his neck round,
And so kill him without more ado!"

••••*••*••*••*••*

Now the chief of those frogs was a spirit, they say,
Who o'erheard Bahmoo's boast, and forthwith, in the way,
Full of fun, near the river, he squatted or lay.
There he seemed half asleep; while around him awoke
A deafening chorus of croak upon croak.

Our young men, well used to it, were not afraid,
But Bahmoo half shrunk from the row those frogs made,
•It was such a wild hullabaloo.
••••As from each monstrous throat
••••Pealed the long rolling note;

p. 169

••••And he heard it resound,
••••Far and near, all around,
•"Boro-ohk," dying off in "boro-oo!"

When the boaster looked grave, it was thought a good joker
And his comrades enjoyed it. Although no one spoke,
•He knew they were laughing aside.
So he ran at that first frog, and sprang on his back,
And, to twist round his head, threw his arms round his neck,
•And then—found himself in the tide!
For the frog-chief, returning his ardent embrace,
Said," Come, my dear friend, with me, home to my place,
•Just to *see* it, if not to abide."
••••Then he sprang off the ground,
••••And with wonderful bound
And a splash, that was heard a long distance around,
•They plunged in where the deep waters glide.

Bahmoo tried to escape, but the frolicsome sprite,
Which possessed that huge frog, in his paws held him tight;
•And, when they emerged from below,
He said," Mount on my back, it is much the best way,
And we will enjoy ourselves this pleasant day,
•As over the river we go.
We will sing, as we swim along, merry and gay:
And my people, as chorus, shall join in the lay,
•Each chanting his loud 'boro-oo.'"

So each neighbouring frog lifts his head from the tide,
And the others respond from the banks, far and wide;
••••At the voice of their king
••••They all merrily sing—
•"Boro-ohk, boro-ohk, boro-oo!"

p. 170

But meanwhile, Bahmoo's comrades, pray what have they done?
Well, at first I must say that they thought it no fun:
•To see their friend caught by the frog.
But as soon as they saw him upon the frog's back,
With loud peals of laughter, they cried, "Twist his neck,
•And bring him here dead as a log.
••••Then, when he is dead,
••••And you've done what you said,
Of all our bold hunters we'll make you the head,
•Our champion in forest and bog!"

••••'Twas severe, I must own;
••••But 'tis very well known,
That to braggarts *who fail* little mercy is shown.
And so Bahmoo, when mocked by the frogs' "boro-oo,"
Heard his comrades laugh loudly, and join in it too.

At length he arrived at the opposite shore;
The frog had sung merrily all the way o'er
•(Such a jolly old frog none e'er knew).
"You see I have carried you safely," said he.
"How pleasant to swim in such good company!"
•Then o'er his head Bahmoo he threw,
Saying, "Though it be painful to part, I must go,
For your people are killing mine yonder, I know.
•Adieu, my good Bahmoo, adieu!"

He then dived below; the man saw him no more,
But remained there alone on that desolate shore.

p. 171

When the young men had finished their frog-hunt, they hailed
For Bahmoo to swim back; but entreaties all failed
•To draw him from that other side.
He dreaded their laughter, and would not again
•Adventure himself in the tide,
Lest that frog he should meet. So he had to remain,
•And there for himself to provide.

"And that is the reason," our old people say,
"Why his children are separate from us this day."

••••*••*••*••*••*

"His children? Why, where could Bahmoo find a bride?"
"Well, most likely he'd found one ere quitting our side,
••••Who would not quite approve
••••That the man of her love
Should be there day and night quite alone.
••••She might not have a boat,
••••But a 'woodskin' will float,
Which her woman's wit would most surely provide;
And, paddling herself, she would be at his side.
•Woman's love greater wonders has done,
••••And few things, we find,
••••Will deter woman-kind,
When once it has thoroughly made up its mind,
•As the wisest of Indians own."[1]

THE MORAL.

When tempted to boast of what you "*mean* to do,"
Pray remember the frog, and vain-glorious Bahmoo.

p. 172

LEGEND OF THE HAIARRI ROOT.

AN old man, who often caught fish in the river,
•Would take his boy with him his fortune to try;
And the father, with wonder, observed that wherever
•The boy swam about, there the fishes would die.

But as, after cooking, he safely could eat them,
•He took the lad with him to bathe day by day:
Till the fish knew his plans, and, resolved to defeat them,
•They made up their minds the young swimmer to slay.

They cared not attack him, of course, in the water;
•To venture *there* near him would never have done.
But they chose an old log as the scene of the slaughter,
•Where he, after swimming, would bask in the sun.

There the fish which had spines all sprang rapidly o'er him,
•And each struck his spine in the youth as he lay;
But, worse than all wounds from the others before him,
•And *fatal*, was that of the deadly sting-ray.

When the father his son through the forest was bearing,
•The dying youth saw his blood drop on the ground;
And he said, "Father, watch for strange plants here appearing;
•My blood will take root, and avengers abound."

••••*••*••*••*

Thus was found the *Haiarri*, which, washed after bruising,
•In pools or small streams, makes the fishes our prey.
Think on what *the fish gained*, when the roots you are using,
•Or when anger tempts you a foeman to slay!

p. 173

THE GREAT SERPENT'S SKIN.

I.

THE birds with mankind once their forces combined
•An immense water serpent to slay,
Who was fond of all creatures—and those he could find
•Would embrace, in his own pressing way.
Beasts and birds, human beings, with him all *went down*;
So the men came to kill him from each little town.
Their gay feathers and paint made a glorious show,
And each warrior was eager to strike the first blow;
•While the birds came to help in the fray.

They all promised his skin to whoe'er should begin,
•And make him come out of his pool;
But every warrior they asked to step in
•Said he fought "*upon land*—as a rule."
Then came forth the cormorant chief, who could see
In the deep the snake's neck round the root of a tree.
Darting down, he drove through it an arrow he bore
(Which had a line tied to a tree on the shore),
•Emerging triumphant and cool.

Then, with many a shout, the men capered about,
•And began *very gently* to haul;
Then more strongly; but still the snake would not come out—
•He seemed fixed there, like any stone wall.
When forced out at length by his horrible wound,
His tail made the warriors all scamper around,
While the birds in wide circles seemed whirled by the wind.
But he had to give in; and was finally skinned,
•'Midst the shouts and wild cries of them all.

p. 174

That struggle took place on the Cako, men say;
Where the snake's length is marked on the rocks to this day.

II.

When the cormorant chief claimed the skin as his prize,
The chief or the warriors affected surprise,
And said, "We might *give* you the skin, as you say,
But how are you going to bear it away?
••••••••Just try, if you please!"
••••••••"With much pleasure and ease!"
••••••••The bold water-bird said;
••••••••Then he lifted the head
As a sign to the others, who knew what he meant,
And swooped down on the skin with a rapid descent;
Each seized on its margin, beginning to fly,
And the skin, like a banner, went streaming on high!

But the warriors, disgusted, used very strong words,
And have, since that time, become hostile to birds.

III.

The birds flew to a place quite secluded, and there
Their leader said, "Comrades, this spoil we will share:
So let each take the part which he happened to bear."

Now the skin was most brilliant, red, yellow, and green,
Black and white, in such patterns as never were seen.
So, delighted, each bird took what happened to come,
Which he placed on his shoulders to bear safely home.

Then a wonder ensued! Birds of soberest hue
Became of those colours, white, yellow, and blue!
Parrots then were first seen dressed in red and in green,
p. 175
And macaws in such plumage as never had been,
Scarlet, purple, and gold! But what more need I say,
When we see them fly past us in beauty each day?

As it happens with men—when brave warriors who toil,
And go through all the danger, get *least of the spoil*—
Even so—to the champion, who thus adorned all.
The *snake's head*, with its sombre tints, happened to fall.
But he seemed quite contented, whatever befell,
Saying, "For an old diver it does very well!"

—

VARIOUS LEGENDS.

WHILE resting from our toil by night,
•We hear strange stories told;
And tales of beasts and birds delight
•Young hunters, keen and bold.
From whom each wild bush note is heard,
For well they mimic beast and bird.

Of him who on the cayman's back[1]
•Crossed and recrossed the tide;
Or one who from a jaguars track
•Would never turn aside,
They tell; or praise to him afford
Who caught great snakes with slender cord.[2]

p. 176

••••*••*••*

Of mermen or mermaidens wild
•We hear, in legends grave:
How handsome youth, or maid, or child,
•They draw beneath the wave!
Or snatch them from the bank above,
•Some say, "through envy," some, "through love."

••••*••*••*

Some tell us of Peaima's[1] hair,
•And him who dressed his head;
But stripped: then on it, raw and bare,
•Poured pepper seeds—and fled.
"With growing peppers crowned," they say,
"The monster sought the man to slay!"

Wild is the tale—its sequel long,
•Yet Indians laugh to find
The man outwit, with lying tongue,
•The monster's simple mind.
'Tis ever so. In heathen lore
Are heathen morals—and no more.

THE SORCERER'S DAUGHTER.

THE chief of our sorcerers stood by the water,
•No mightier wizard existed than he;
And he looked with compassion upon his fair daughter,
•As love-sick and sad as a maiden can be.

p. 177

"Oh, father!" she cried, "he has no one to cheer him,
•That lonely young hunter—so brave and so free!
Make me *like to his dog*, that I may venture near him;
•I die for his love—while he looks not on me!"

"Take this skin," he said sadly, "and draw o'er thy shoulders;
•A dog in the eyes of thy loved one to be;
Its wonderful magic deceives all beholders!
•Be rid of thy madness—then come back to me!"

••••*••*••*••*••*

Then the young man, beloved of the sorcerer's daughter,
•Would start with *four* dogs through the forest to roam,
But would come back with *three*: for the struggle and slaughter
•One never would join in, but always ran home.

With the sweet eventide to his cottage returning,
•He round the place swept up as clean as could be;
Cassava bread baked, and the fire brightly burning;
•And said, "Some good neighbour has done it for me."

When they all had denied it, he said, "'Tis some spirit,
•Who, seeing me lonely, thus strives to be kind."
Then he saw gazing at him that dog void of merit,
•Whose look was so strange that it puzzled his mind.

The next day, as he the swift game was pursuing,
•He counted his dogs, and he round there but three;
Then he said, "Till I find what your comrade is doing,
•I leave you here tied to the trunk of a tree!"

p. 178

Then—silent and swift—to his cottage returning,
•He round a small crevice—peeped through the thatch wall,
And saw, baking bread on the fire brightly burning,
•The lovely young damsel, whose hand had done all.

With exercise flushed, all her features were glowing,
•Her form bending lithe in its fine symmetry;
As she listened to hear distant barking, not knowing
•That he whom she loved all her movements could see.

And there hung the charmed skin, the whole secret revealing;
•He sprang in and seized it with heart light and free;
"No longer," said he," this fair maiden concealing,
•Thy magical charm shall have power o'er me!"

And into the flames he then thrust it; the rather
•That she strove to take it, her beauty to hide.—
Then she wept. But he said, "Now return to thy father;
•I follow, to claim thee—my beautiful bride!"[1]

THE DEMARÉNA.

SOME tell of him, of human birth,
•Who saw in troops advance
The sons and daughters of the earth,
•And joined their mystic dance.—
Danced at an elfin maiden's side,
And wooed her for his fairy bride.

p. 179

Then said her father, "None would dare
•(No man has been so brave)
Deep in the earth our home to share,
•Or 'neath the shining wave.
Dar'st thou?" "I dare!" the young man cried,
"With this fair Demaredu bride!"

The chief replied, "So let it be!
•He must be fond and brave,
Who dares to join our family
•Beneath the earth or wave.—
To him and his, but none beside,
•Give we a Demaredu bride!"[1]

p. 180

ORIGIN OF THE AMAZONS.

(*An Ancient Legend of the Inland Mountain Tribes.*)

I.

OF the fierce "Worisiana"
•(Such their nation's name)
I can tell the ancient story:
How their warlike strength and glory
•First began in shame.

For a chieftain's wife, "To-eyza,"
•Faithless dared to be,
Caring nothing for disaster;
Haughty was her lord and master,
•Haughtier was she.

At the women's place of bathing,
•Thus To-eyza said:
"Some call marriage a protection;
I esteem it base subjection;
•Better far be dead!

"Such as we, by parents given,
•Nought of love can know;
All our days we spend in sorrow;
'Work to-day,' and 'work to-morrow,'
•Ever 'work'—and woe!

"Spurn with me this shameful bondage!
•Yon black jaguar see—
See, in that disguise, my lover!
Men like him can soon swim over,
•And will set us free!

p. 181

"Call his name! Let Walyarima
•Be our signal cry;
Ye who seek emancipation
From your husbands' domination,
•Now behold it nigh!"

II.

But three men saw Walyarima
•From a neighbouring wood.
Saw and heard, and told the story—
Told their chief, "To-eybor•ri,"[1]
•How the matter stood.

To the women, on the morrow,
•Calm, the chieftain said,
"Toilsome hunting is before us,
Hunger may be hanging o'er us:
•Make cassava bread."

When for roots they all departed,
•To the stream he went;
Bade some striplings there "keep moving,"
While, concealed, the rest (approving)
•Heard his stern intent.

Those who bathed cried, "Walyarima!"—
•Called the hated name,
Spread their long hair on the water;
p. 182
While each bow lay near for slaughter;
•Walyarima came.

As he came, the chief, to meet him,
•Dashed into the tide,
Sent his mighty arrow through him;
While the others, swimming to him,
•Smote him—as he died.

Grimly, his remains they bore then
•To the women's shed—
To the ridge within, suspended,
Left them (for a taunt intended)
•Hanging overhead.

••••*••*••*

Came, in Indian file, the women:
•Each her burden bore;
Sternly then their husbands eyed them,
Shrinking from the sights beside them,
•On the roof and floor.

Last of all came in To-eyza:
•Blood fell on her hand,
Firm she stood, her high head rearing
(E'en the chief admired her bearing)
•Beautiful and grand!

Then said he, "We go a-hunting;
•Speed, and make the bread—
Bake to-night: we cannot tarry,
Bread for five days we must carry."
•"Be it so," she said.

p. 183

"Bring the meat; and strong paiwári,
•More than e'er before;
We your wives will then provide you,
And, that night, will dance beside you,
•If we dance no more!"

III.

In the heart of proud To-eyza
•Burned a raging flame;
For that drop of blood inspired her,
And the demon power, which fired her.
•On the others came.

"For revenge only hearts are burning—
•All our hearts," said she.
"Savage insult men provide you!
Ask no questions—I will guide you;
•You shall all be free!"

••••*••*••*

From his hunting came the chieftain;
•Laden were his men.
Beasts and birds they brought home twenty,
Smoked or fresh. Then all was plenty—
•All was feasting then!

For the women of paiwári
•Had abundant store—
All the men had drunk, and rested;
Till the thirsty ones requested
•To be served with more.

Then a calabash each woman
•Filled up to the brim,
p. 184
To her husband meekly handed,
(So To-eyza had commanded)
•Fatal draught to him!

She had mixed cassava juice there,
•Bringing death to all;
Soon, in agony appalling,
Vainly for assistance calling,
•Down the warriors fall.

••••*••*••*

"Now rejoice!" exclaimed To-eyza;
•"Women, ye are free!
Nevermore shall husbands rule you,
Beat, oppress, and then befool you,
•If you follow me!"

Some, *with boys*, had fled; the others
•Through the midnight hour
Danced, with simulated gladness;
Every bosom filled with madness,
•By the demon's power!

IV.

Winding through the woods in order,
•See a female band,
Hammocks, food, and weapons bearing,
For a weary march preparing,
•To some distant land.

p. 185

To their leader, tall To-eyza,
•All obedience pay.—
Sometimes fighting, sometimes flying,
Mainly on their bows relying,
•They must win their way.

Many a discontented woman
•With them gladly goes.
They proclaim emancipation;
Call themselves the "Woman's nation;"
•Husbands treat as foes.

Driving off the men, or slaying,
•To their wives they say,
"With your daughters we receive you;
If you keep your sons, we leave you
•Here, with them to stay."

On they march, and others follow,
•Swelling thus their band;
O'er those females madness creeping;
Like an epidemic, sweeping
•Women from the land.

••••*••*••*

But, meanwhile, the poisoned victims
•Kindly friends had found;
Shuddered at the bones before them,
Scared the vultures brooding o'er them;
•Placed them in the ground.

Then they followed up those women,
•Made the hindmost fly;
Swiftly chased to overtake them,
But their captives none could make them,
•They preferred to die.

p. 186

Soon they came to dark green forests,
•Saw their bravest fall;
In their blood the strong men weltered,
Shot by female archers, sheltered
•By each leafy wall.

Then they paused; a wise man saying,
•"What have we to gain?
Of what use to man is woman,
Who regards him as a foeman?
•Let them march again!"

So those women, still proceeding
•Tow'rds the setting sun,
Passing safely through all dangers,
Made a settlement as strangers,
•All their journeys done.

••••*••*••*

There their haughty queen, To-eyza,
•Gave them maxims clear:
"We will welcome men as lovers,
If they come as errant rovers;
•*None must settle here.*

"Of their children born amongst us,
•Send the boys away;[1]
p. 187
But whenever girls we bear them,
Joyfully we all must rear them;
•Our successors they!"

••••*••*••*

Ages since have passed; their children
•Still observe those laws,
Tell the tale of Walyarima,
'Midst the mountains of Parima:
•Still maintain their cause.

—

THE KANÁIMA FATHER.

As a "Kanáima tiger"[1] dire,
•Old Tounawai was seen,
Lurking, with eyes that shone like fire,
p. 188
•Amidst the branches green.
His son came hunting there alone,
His "old-time arrows" tipped with *bone*.

Without success the monster sprung;
•An arrow pierced his jaw;
As from his mouth the weapon hung,
•He broke it with his paw.—
The young man, as Kanáima fled,
Picked up his splintered arrow-head.

••••*••*••*

Next day came home the guilty sire,
•And said, with many a groan:
"O son, my mouth seems all on fire!"
•The son drew thence a *bone*.
Which fitted (so the legend said)
Into that splintered arrow-head.

Then spake the broken-hearted son:
•"We leave thee here this day;
I have a wife, while thou hast none:
•To gain her thou wouldst slay—
Slay!—with the dread Kanáima charm,
A son—who never did thee harm."

—

LEGENDS OF THE SKY.

SOFT moonbeams tip the trees above,
And our red camp-fires light the grove
Beyond; each glade seems, like the tomb,
In deep, impenetrable gloom,
Save where the fire-fly sheds his light,
p. 189
Pale flashes, quickly lost in night.
On every side strange sounds are heard
From insect, reptile, beast, or bird;
But louder than each forest noise,
Resounds the chat of men and boys.

Some talk of stars, so bright and fair
From east to west, soft gliding there.
Some—of the meteors flashing high,
Like arrows flaming through the sky,
And some, perchance, recall to mind
A tale of heaven's most awful kind,
Whose gleaming light trails far behind.[1]

And now, our camp-fires waning low,
Anew replenished, brighter glow;
While from the trees large dew-drops fall,
Which our red friends "star-moisture" call.

Then, as fresh light springs from the fires,
Of some grave elder one inquires:
"O father! tell of Oroan,[2]
The friend of darkness, foe of man."

LEGEND OF OROAN.

THEN tells he how fierce "Oroan,
The dark-browed enemy of man,
•Seizes the *sun* on high.
p. 190
And strives to quench the solar fires,
Till, scorched and blackened, he retires,
•Some other time to try."

Or how, "upon the *moon* his power
He turns, to rend her, or devour.
Then her bright features none can trace,
For blood besmears her beauteous face,
•And darkens all the sky;
Till from the tribes of men below,
Loud cries and prayers upwards go:
'Cease, Oroan, to work us woe,
And spare the light on high!'

"They rouse the spirits of the air,
Who to the suff'rers' aid repair,
•And force the fiend to fly.
Her darkened face from blood they clear,
Till its bright beams again appear,
•And nations cease to cry."

—

Then, while the constellations bright[1]
Fill the high heavens with glorious light,
One, pointing to the eastern sky,
Exclaims, "Behold Serikoai!"

p. 191

LEGEND OF SERIKOAI.

I.

IN days when spirits talked with men,
•And all the world was young,
Wawaiya, lately made a bride,
Saw a young tapir by her side
•Walk quietly along.

"Oh, what art thou," the woman said,
•"Thus walking here by me?"
"They call me 'Wailya,'" he replied,
"With changéd form I seek thy side,
•For thou art fair to see!"

She, when her husband went to hunt,
•Would to their field repair;
And daily, as she went and came,
Through forest path, it was the same—
•She met the tapir there.

And pleasantly the creature spoke,
•And well she loved to hear;
Till, through his artful, glozing word,
Serikoai, her once-loved lord,
•Became to her less dear.

Then boldly the seducer said,
•"Come, run away with me!
Far, far away we both will fly,
And, where this wide earth meets the sky,
•My country thou shalt see.

p. 192

"'Tis there I reign in manly form:
•There thou shalt be my bride!"
"Alas!" she cried, "if I should fly,
My husband, brave Serikoai,
•Would slay us side by side!"

"I charm thine axe," the sorcerer said,
•"And it shall speak to thee.
Heed well what that good axe shall say,
And see thou do it. That same day
•Thou shalt be safe with me!"

II.

"Wawaiya," said Serikoai,
•"Come where our pear-trees grow.
In yonder old provision ground
Last month I saw young fruits abound;
•They must be ripe, I know."

"I go with thee," the wife replied,
•"But I mine axe must take.
Whilst thou art climbing in the tree,
I'll cut such dry wood as I see,
•Our nightly fire to make."

Then to the sharp'ning stone she went,
•As if her axe to grind;
And every time it touched the stone,
The word "Sahtai," in threatening tone,
•Seemed borne upon the wind.

p. 193

"Dost thou not hear, Serikoai,
•The axe here speak to me?
Still, as I rub, these words resound,
Oh! 'I must cut;' or, 'I must wound!'
•What can their meaning be?"

"Whene'er an axe is sharpened there,"
•Said he, "I hear the same;
So let us haste, nor lose the day,
To idle fancies giving way;
•Women are oft to blame."

Resentment then within her burned,
•As with her lordship went.
That direful sorcerer drew her on,
And with his charms her heart had gone,
•Till she could not repent.

Then many ripening fruits they saw,
•Ban•nas sweet were there;
But still the man would climb that tree,
Where he his fav'rite fruit could see,
•The "avoc•do" pear.

••••*••*••*

Wawaiya, cast thine axe away,
•Bid the enchanter flee!
Why do thy handsome features frown?
Slay not thy husband coming down;
•For good and true is he!

p. 194

Alas!—inspired by direful charm,
•(The axe its influence knew,)
She raised her hands to strike the blow,
The deed is done—the man lies low,
•His leg is clean cut through!

She meets his eye, and in it reads
•Wonder and deepest woe!
Then hurries from that bloody scene:
With Wailya, through the forests green,
•And o'er the hills to go.

III.

The husband lay, and thought to die;
•His life-blood ebbed away.
A kindly spirit passing then—
A friend to true and suffering men—
•Revived him as he lay.

Inspired, the man an eyelash plucked,
•(Upon it was a tear;)
He blew it in the air—it flew,
A little bird of beauteous hue;
•Then waited, hovering near.

"O birdie!" said the bleeding man,
•"Haste! to my mother fly,
And call my name!" The birdie knew,
And straightway to the mother flew;
•And called, "Serikoai!"

p. 195

"Why call my son, 'Serikoai?'
•Oh, birdie, tell me true!
Why dost thou flutter to and fro?
Thy meaning, bird. I cannot know:"
•Then back the sweet bird flew—

And swiftly came again the bird.
•Taught by the suff'ring man:
"Oh, mother! thy Serikoai
Is sorely wounded—left to die!"—
•Forthwith the mother ran;

She ran, and stumbled as she ran,
•(Old age asserts its power);
Yet through dense bush she hurried on,
To help her foully-stricken son
•In that malignant hour.

"Oh, loving mother! art thou come
•Thy dying son to cheer?
Better than all fair wives, like mine,
To whom fond men their hearts resign,
•Is one good mother near!"

Then that kind spirit saw their love,
•Propitious from on high:
To healing balsams added charms,
Till, saved, in his good mother's arms
•He left Serikoai.

p. 196

IV.

"Oh, who is this that wanders on,
•Still searching all the ground?
A man of mighty strength he seems;
Though pale and worn;—his keen eye gleams
•On everything around.

A wooden prop one limb supports
•The shapely leg is gone!
Yet, like a warrior armed for fight,
With bow and club from morn till night,
•He still keeps moving on.

And every forest path he tries,
•No track there meets his eye.
For many an eve, and many a dawn,
Have passed since that false wife has gone
•Who maimed Serikoai.

••••*••*••*

The rains, which washed her track away,
•Had left no traces near;
No sign where human life had been:
Till, near some trees, a sprout was seen
•Of *avoc•do pear*!

He scanned the bush all round, and thought
•An opening he could spy;
And followed that until he found,
Another pear-shoot on the ground;
•Then brighter shone his eye.

p. 198

His hope of finding them revived,
•And served his heart to warm:
For she had said who saved his life,
"A sorcerer hath bewitched thy wife—
•A man—in brutish form!"

He thought of her who took those pears,
•And ate them by the way;
How rains, which could her steps efface,
Had caused their seeds to sprout apace,
•And grow as there they lay!

V.

Still, sad and worn, the man went on
•Towards the rising sun,
And said, "Earth's limit must be nigh;
Nearer and nearer is the sky;
•My task will soon be done."

He found small footprints of his wife,
•The tapir's, too, were clear;
Then saw them both together walk,
Too much absorbed in cheerful talk
•To think of vengeance near.

He shot the Wailya through the heart
•Ere he could change his form;
Then cut his wicked head away;
And all the ground on which he lay
•With his heart's blood was warm.

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Then cried the husband, "He is dead,
•Whose charms bewitched thee sore.
Return, O wife; return to me,
Or through the earth, the sky, or sea,
•*I follow evermore!*"

••••*••*••*

He cut and smoked the tapir's flesh,
•Then followed up his wife:
And saw her from a neighbouring hill.—
A shadowy form pursued her still;
•The Wailya's—as in life!

They fled; and to the earth's steep edge,
•Drew nigher and more nigh.
A chasm wide they then could view;
Straight o'er the gulf the woman flew
•Into the deep blue sky.

Her lover followed, and, enraged,
•The husband followed too—
And, ever moving through the air,
The chase unceasing follows there:
•As we may nightly view.

••••*••*••*

She, as a cloud-like mass of stars,[1]
•Shines, when the night is clear;
The Wailya, too, is following nigh,
Turning a fierce, though bloodshot, eye[2]
•Upon the husband near.

p. 200

As, bright with stars, his mighty form
•Seems rising in the sky,
Shoulders and sound limb glitt'ring there,
With that broad belt he used to wear:
More faint—the prop which helped to bear
•The maiméd Serikoai![1]

Thus with their legends, grave or gay,
The hours till midnight pass away.

Meanwhile we, from our hammocks, see
•The northern constellations rise;
While, round the cross, shine brilliantly
•The glories of the southern skies.
Still croak the frogs, the night-birds call;
•Still chirp the crickets loud and gay;
At length we slumber, one and all,
•Till from the east looks forth the day.

—

THE OLD MAN'S FALL.

I.

•FROM the brow of this hill,
•While all nature is still,
The roseate dawn we view;
•As the sweet eastern light
•Decks the vapours of night
With every glorious hue.
•And the trees are all kissed
•By the low morning mist
In the forests—now dripping with dew.

p. 201

•See, the rivers gleam white
•In the fast-growing light,
Like snow in the new-born day;
•For the mist covers all
•With its silvery pall,
Though soon it will vanish away;
•When the fog and the dew
•Which around us we view
Shall give place to the sun's glowing ray.

•Yet, though vanishing here,
•It will not disappear
From the face of Potáro's great fall;[1]
•Where the brown river breaks
•Into rocket-like flakes,
Flashing down a precipitous wall.
•There, by night and by day,
•The beautiful spray
(Oft clothed with the rainbow) is waving away,
•Ever changing—yet lovely through all!

•It is waving and whirling,
•And gracefully curling;
In starlight cold, and the moon's silver ray,
It riseth for ever—still whirling away.
•And the sun has no power
•At his noontide hour
•To remove that white veil,
•Or cause it to fail
From the face of the "Old Man's Fall!"

p. 202

II.

••••"The Old Man's Fall!"—
••••Why do Indians call
By such a strange title that cataract high,
Whose broad torrent, below, seems to come from the sky?
The Indian legends, as may be made clear,
Are sometimes romantic, but more often queer.
••••And the one we have here
••••May be classed with the "queer."
It was told Mr. Brown, of exploring renown,
Who discovered that fall as the stream he came down.
'Tis the tale which the Indians tell to us all,
To show why they call it the Old Man's Fall.

THE LEGEND.

•••"Some people of old
•••(So our forefathers told)
Had their village above the great fall.
•••One, a feeble old man,
•••Passing life's usual span,
Was half blind, and a burden to all.

•••"For, though once strong and fleet,
•••His poor suffering feet
(It might happen to white men or negroes,
•••For want of due care)
•••Had—burrowing there—
Some scores of vile vermin, called "chegoes."

•••(Some ladies, we've heard,
•••Take offence at that word,
And express it with more or less vigour.
p. 203
•••We would give no offence,
•••So, in the same sense,
Will use "insect," and banish the•.)

••••*••*••*

The old man grew more helpless, and gave them more work,
And the care of his feet more and more they would shirk;
••••Till the young women all,
••••And the boys, great and small,
Said, "Oh! what is the use? Let him lie there and bawl!
His feet every day are becoming more sore,
As the insects increase there each day, more and more;
We give up the care of him! Mind him, who can?
He's become such a troublesome, horrid old man!"

What was to be done? Though they all wished him dead,
The men were unwilling to cleave his poor head.
"Let him go to the spirit-land!" some then would say,
"The river may take him and bear him away,
If he still suffer here he must die all the same!
We can help him no more, so we are not to blame."

Then the head men commanded, "Bring now a wood-skin;
Put the old man and his little property in;
••••Let nothing remain,
••••For we seek no such gain,
But to get rid of trouble and finish his pain.
So we send him away the next world to begin,
But will not send him empty, for *that* were a sin."

p. 204

The young men obeyed. They soon brought a wood-skin,
Put the old man and his little property in;
They then launched him forth. As be swept down the stream,
The loud-growing roar must have seemed a bad dream;
One quivering moment—then, over the fall
Went wood-skin and victim, with "insects" and all!

••••Perhaps just then his countrymen
••••Felt they had not done well;
••And the bell-bird bright in plumage white
••••Tolled forth his passing knell.
••••It may have been so—
••••It was long, long ago,
••And none living now can pretend to know.

••••But some Indians say
••••(Believe it who may)
••••That as over he went
••••In that dreadful descent,
••Some power interposed with a kindly intent.
••••And, to save his poor bones,
Man, with wood-skin and freight, were all turned into stones!

Rocks (the wood-skin and package) are now seen by all,
••••Who may visit that fall
But where's the old man? It is not quite so clear
••••That be doth appear,
••••"He's perhaps washed away.
Strong currents wear rocks very fast, people say.
p. 205
••••First his ears and his nose,
••••Then his fingers and toes"
(If we'd faith in the legend we thus might suppose),
"For the figure, though stone, when thus worn would soon go,
And be borne as fine sand down the rapids below."

Such are the main points of the legend now told
By the red men who dwell near that cataract old.
Will that story be heard while the mist shall endure
O'er their "Koe-tu'euk," called by us "Kaieteur"?
Or will it die out, when pure Indians all
Shall have ceased to exist near their "Old Man's Fall"?

p. 206

CONCLUSION.

THE old creed of each race in our legends is shown,
Their belief, while the white man as yet was unknown;
While amidst their grand forests no Christian was seen,
And no prayer rose to God from their foliage green.

Here the mild Arawâk and the bold Caribisce
(By the gospel of Christ now united in peace),
The grave Acawoi, and more careless Warau,
A glimpse of their mythical heroes allow.
While Macusis and others—but space here would fail
To name all—have their part in some "fanciful" tale.

To those who have sent them the faith they receive;
Sweet hope of the lowly, and all who believe,
They here show, in return, that traditional lore,
Which was all they possessed—they could offer no more!

In forests primeval, on many a stream,
'Neath the sun's burning glow, or the gentle moonbeam,
By the Indian fire, or in that peaceful home,
Where, to talk with his teacher, the red man would come;
'Midst bright mission prospects, 'midst sickness and fear,
And voyages, reaching their fortieth year,
The selection was made which is now given here.

Forgive, gentle reader, whate'er seems absurd
••In each quaint native "Word;"
And think kindly of those whose old tales we have heard.

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Footnotes

p. 171

1 The frog chorus in this legend, when taken up by the native audience, all admirable mimics, has a most amusing effect.

p. 175

1 "Bernau's Missionary Labours," p. 167.

2 The tiger slayer, a Carib, and the snake-catcher, an Arawâk, are not mythical personages. They belonged to the last generation, and both became Christian converts. The former would attack any jaguar, and cleave his skull with axe or cutlass. Of the skill and daring displayed by the latter in the capture of a kolokon•ro snake, with only a cord and forked stick, the writer was an eye-witness.

p. 176

1 An Araidai, or goblin of the woods, who had become dissatisfied with his coarse and matted locks, and wished them to be made like those of human beings. Pahndun, a captive, undertook to gratify him, with the above result.

p. 178

1 From the "Ebes•tu" (*changed* or *transformed*), heroine of the above legend, the Ebesoana (Arawâk family) take their name.

The names of those families all descend in the *female* line, and no individual was permitted to marry another of the same family name.

p. 179

1 From the above union, the existing Demaréna (Arawâk family) are supposed to have sprung. They bear, of course, their mother's family name; and in ancient days considered it "the correct thing," in accordance with the legend, to intermarry solely with their father's family—the "Korobohána."

These latter have a strange legend of their own. They believe that they originally came from above the clouds. The weight of a heavy woman broke the rope by which they were descending; and communication was thus cut off between those who had reached the ground and those remaining above. The Great Spirit, pitying the latter, supplied them with wings and plumage; and they came down, to colonise the trees above the heads of their brethren—still privileged to live near, and to converse with them, though changed into "Koriouka" *parrots*.

This legend, though grotesque, affords another instance of the belief (which our pages have shown) expressed by various myths, but almost universal amongst the aboriginal races of Guiana: of a *descent* from a *higher* region, or state of existence.

p. 181

1 "Walyarima" is the name of the animal whose appearance was assumed by the lover while swimming the river. "To-eybor•ri" and "To-eyza" are titles, denoting authority, masculine and feminine respectively. The *proper names* seem to have been lost in the lapse of years.

p. 186

1 This agrees with the old legends, told to Raleigh and others. But many Indians now say that the male infants were *always* destroyed, and their fathers warned *not to return*, on pain of death.

With regard to the subject in general. The expeditions for war and plunder, so common nmongst the

South American tribes in former ages, would often draw away all the males in a district capable of bearing arms, and sometimes they *never returned*. The women, left by themselves, p. 187 drew together for mutual defence; and being, in those days, all well trained to the bow, would (like the women of the Caribi islands) defend their homes and children fiercely agninst all comers.

Such a state of things—said still to exist in some wild regions of that vast continent—will account for the tales of Orellana and others, of their *fights with Amazons*.

It does not, of course, account for the murder of husbands, and utter rejection of marital authority, in the legend before us. Whether that tale ever had any foundation in fact, it is impossible to say. Wild and unnatural as it is, it has deeply impressed the minds of the Aborigines; and the writer has, in his researches, come upon various legends (both tragical and comical) founded on the *scarcity of wives*, after their (supposed) terrible Exodus.

1 The spotted "arua" (or harua) of the Arawâks, spelt *jaguar* by the Spanish discoverers, is commonly called "tiger" by the colonists who frequent the bush. It is called "tobi" by the Waraus, and "kaikusi" by the Caribs and Acawoios.

p. 189

1 The great comet of 1843.

2 The great demon of darkness, who causes eclipses.

p. 190

1 The native ideas respecting the constellations differ widely from ours. For instance, the Southern Cross is supposed, by many clans, to represent a "paui" bird resting on a tree. The star, *Beta Centauri*, is a hunter stealthily approaching it. *Alpha Centauri* is the hunter's torch (or firebrand), held *behind him*, so as not to alarm the bird by its glare. Some call it another hunter, lighting the first. Other constellations have *narratives* connected with them; of these, "Serikoai," the legend given here, is the most interesting specimen.

p. 199

1 The Pleiades.

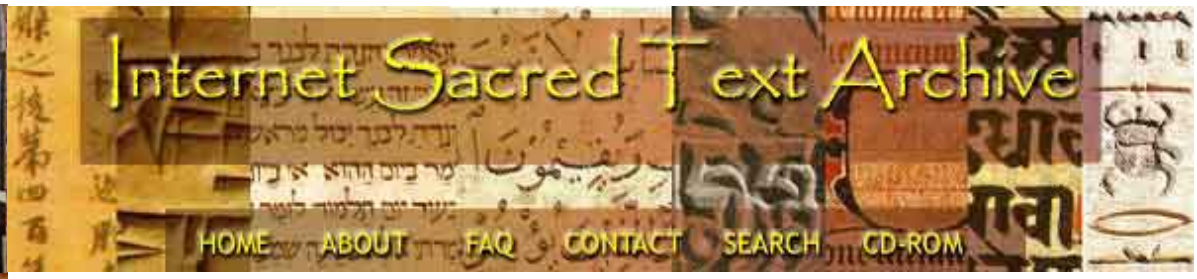
2 The Hyades represent the tapir's head. The red eye is Aldebaran.

p. 200

1 The constellation Orion: Rigel indicating the upper part of the sound limb.

p. 201

1 This great fall is 822 feet in total height, by 369 feet in width. Its upper part is 741 feet perpendicular.



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Native American Religions

Topics

Native American religion, mythology and folklore are covered extensively at this site:

A long-standing problem with this section (and several others at this site relating to traditional peoples' spiritual beliefs) has been the lack of authoritative information. We are in the process of expanding this section by scanning public domain ethnographic accounts on specific Native American religious and spiritual practices. We are fortunate that there is a wealth of such material available, which makes it so much more puzzling why more of it is not on the Internet yet.

The study of Native Americans by anthroplogists has had its share of bad science and ethical problems. However, the texts we are in the process of scanning were written by 19th and 20th Century ethnographers who were known for their careful and respectful approach to the people they studied. These were scholars who lived for years with the people they studied, and obtained permission to transcribe their oral sacred literature.

General

These texts cover a wide range of Native Americans or don't fit into one of the categories above.

 Tales of the North American Indians by Stith Thompson [1929]
The classic cross-cultural Native American folklore study.

 The Soul of the Indian by Charles Eastman [1911] *100,801 bytes*

 Indian Why Stories by Frank Linderman [1915] *163,221 bytes*

 Old Indian Legends by Zitkala-Sa [1901] *105,552 bytes*