

they are visible nature-deities, such as Sun and Moon, Heaven and Earth, or more ideal beings, such as the First Ancestor, or Great Spirit. There is still great scope for improving and adding to the information already on record as to the religious systems of the tribes of the Dominion, and hardly any better mode is available than the collection of legends.

*Mythology.*—As is well known, most Indian tribes have a set of traditional stories in which are related the creation of the world, the origin of mankind, the discovery of fire, some great catastrophe, especially a great flood, and an infinity of other episodes. Such, for instance, are the legends of Quawteaht, taken down by Sproat among the Ahts, and the Haida stories of the Raven published by Dawson. These stories, written down in the native languages and translated by a skilled interpreter, form valuable anthropological material. It is true that they are tiresome and, to the civilised mind, silly; but they are specimens of native language and thought, containing incidentally the best of information as to native religion, law, and custom, and the very collecting of them gives opportunities of asking questions which draw from the Indian storyteller, in the most natural way, ideas and beliefs which no inquisitorial cross-questioning would induce him to disclose.

In studying the religion and mythology of the various tribes, and also their social constitution, their arts, their amusements, and their mental and moral traits, it is important to observe not only how far these characteristics differ in different tribes, but whether they vary decidedly from one linguistic stock to another. Some observers have been led to form the opinion that the people of each linguistic family had originally their own mythology, differing from all others. Thus the deities of the Algonkins are said to be in general strikingly different from those of the Dakotas. Yet this original unlikeness, it is found, has been in part disguised by the habit of borrowing tenets, legends, and ceremonies from one another. This is a question of much interest. It is desirable to ascertain any facts which will show whether this original difference did or did not exist, and how far the custom of borrowing religious rites, civil institutions, useful arts, fashions of dress, ornaments, and pastimes extends. Thus the noted religious ceremony called the 'sun-dance' prevails among the western Ojibways, Crees, and Dakotas, but is unknown among the eastern tribes of the Algonkin and Dakota stocks. It would seem, therefore, to be probably a rite borrowed by them from some other tribe in the vicinity of those western tribes. The Kootanies of British Columbia, immediately west of these tribes, are said, on good authority, to have practised this rite before their recent conversion by the Roman Catholic missionaries. If it is found, on inquiry, to have prevailed universally among the Kootanies from time immemorial, the presumption would seem to be that this tribe was the source from which the others borrowed it. Careful inquiry among the natives will frequently elicit information on such points. Thus the Iroquois have many dances which they affirm to be peculiar to their own people. They have also a war-dance which differs in its movements entirely from the former. This dance they declare that they borrowed from the Dakotas, and the statement is confirmed by the name which they give it—the Wasásé, or Osage dance.

Apart from the mythological legends, the genuine historical traditions of the different tribes should be gathered with care. In obtaining these