

supposed to be attached thereto. Thus, to choose an example among hundreds, according to the Navajos, the adopted daughter of the first woman reached maturity in four days; a stranger appeared to her in the woods on four successive days, with whom she thereafter passed four nights. Four days afterwards she gave birth to twins, who in four days grew to manhood, and for four days more remained near the place of their birth. Having gone to the house of their father, who was no other than the sun, the latter's wife was asked four times what had become of them, and, upon their being delivered up to their father, the sun impaled them on spikes of iron set up at each of the four corners of the earth, etc.¹ The same tribe's mythology speaks constantly of four worlds, four winds, four mountains, etc. Folk-lorists are well aware of the fact that the Mayas, the Aztecs, the Sioux, the Algonquins, in fact almost all other American tribes, attach the same importance to the number four².

Now, by a curious exception, this is replaced among the Carriers—and possibly among other adjacent tribes—by the number two. Thus in the preceding myth, mention is made of two serpents when one would have done just as well for the purpose; the unfaithful wife has two sons; her head is swallowed by two whales (a circumstance rather hard to account for!); the old man with the precious raft has two daughters, and kills people by means of two serpents. The thunder-bird has likewise two daughters. Finally two animals are taken on the Déné Noah's raft, and the hero does not settle on the new land before the wolf has gone twice to explore it. Another myth recounting the deeds of a sort of Carrier Hercules mentions among the latter's victims two giant snakes, two giant toads, two giant spiders, etc.

¹ A part of the Navajo's mythology, by W. Matthews, *Am. Antiq.*, April 1883.

² Speaking of the symbolism of the number four, I cannot refrain from hazarding a remark which may have its usefulness. There is a very prevalent disposition on the part of such folklorists as look to nature and the natural phenomena exclusively for an explanation of native myths, to see in the cardinal points north, south, east and west, the chief reason of the sacredness or of the widespread use of the number four among American aborigines. Their theory is probably grounded on fact as regards certain southern, half-civilized tribes; but I cannot help thinking that, in some cases at least, their explanation is wide of the mark. It should not be forgotten that the points of the compass are but imaginary divisions of space introduced for the sake of convenience by the abstract-grasping mind of the white and other superior races. At all events, some American tribes hardly know any such divisions. This is so true that the Carriers, whose vocabulary possesses some abstract terms, have not even any name for these would-be all important cardinal points. With them the east is *sa pa'a'ih t'séh*, "whence the sun rises up;" the west, *sa na'a'ih t'séh*, "where the sun sets;" the north, *ho'kwaz t'sa*, "the direction of the cold," etc., all explicative phrases, but no real words. Yet their language is rich in locative terms, most of which express some reference to a piece of water, lake or river. Such are, for instance, *mi*, "up" (*i.e.*, up stream or opposite to the outlet of a lake); *nta*, "down" (stream); *no*, "inland" (*i.e.*, away from the water); *ntson*, "down," towards the shore, etc., etc.