

Grant us this, O Huracan, enlightened and fruitful,
Thou who comprehendest all things, great and small."¹

"The strange wild poetry of the Quichés," says Mr. Short, "can only be fully enjoyed by pursuing the unabridged account." The story of the creation is narrated in language of inspired passion :—

"This is how the heaven exists, how the Heart of Heaven exists: he, the God, whose name is Qabauil.

"His word came in the darkness to the Lord, to Gucumatz, and it spoke with the Lord, with Gucumatz.

"They spoke together; they consulted and planned; they understood, they united in words and plans.

"As they consulted, the day appeared; the white light came forth, mankind was produced. While thus they held counsel about the growth of trees and vines, about life and mankind, in the darkness, in the night, the creation was brought about, by the heart of Heaven, whose name is Huracan. . . ."

"Gucumatz was filled with joy and cried aloud: Blessed be thy coming, O Heart of Heaven, O Huracan!"²

We are reminded of the Spirit moving over the waters, of herb and tree, of fishes and fowls, of beasts and men starting to life, at the vivifying touch, and of that day when "God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good!"

The Quichés, besides their wonderful National Book, have given to the world one of the rare aboriginal dramas of America, which have been saved from destruction. The play in question, Rabinal Achi, is a ballet, and is clearly a development from those imitative dances in which so many of the American races excelled.

The following passage from a sort of prophetic chant in one of the books of "Chilan Balam" is reproduced in the notes to the Maya Chronicles":—

"Eat, eat, thou hast bread;
Drink, drink, thou hast water;
On that day, dust possesses the earth,
On that day a light is on the face of the earth,
On that day, a cloud rises,
On that day, a mountain rises,
On that day, a strong man seizes the land,
On that day, things fall to ruin,

¹ As to the Quiché and Aztec origin-myths and the prayers to Huracan and Tezcatlipoca, Mr. H. H. Bancroft's *Native Races of the Pacific States* (vol. iii. chaps. ii and vi) may be consulted with advantage. Of the *Popol Vuh*, which was written by a Quiché in his own tongue not long after the Conquest, and translated into Spanish by Father Ximenes, Mr. Bancroft says that one consequence of the former fact would seem to be that "a tinge of biblical expression, consciously or unconsciously to the Quiché who wrote it, influenced the form of the narrative." At the same time, as the work also contains striking resemblances to expressions in the Edda and even the Veda, he concedes that the coincidence may be accidental. So also as to the prayers handed down by Sahagun, while he admits that "a certain amount of sophistication and adaptation to Christian ideas has crept into them," he deems it "just as evident, on the other hand, that they contain a great deal that is original, indigenous and characteristic in regard to the Mexican religion."

² *American Hero Myths*, pp. 210, 211, and Short's *North Americans of Antiquity*, pp. 212, 213.