

Their record covers a period of from 1,420 to 1,704 years before the Spanish settlement, according as the *katun* or cycle is estimated at twenty or twenty-five years. Interesting as they are from some standpoints, these succinct annals add little to our information. They suggest "obstinate questionings" rather than supply satisfying answers. One thing, however, they clearly show, that the Mayas were rich in myths. They had two famous culture heroes, Itzamna and Cuculcan, the former, whose name is enshrined in Itzamal, being associated with a migration from the east, and the latter, with a movement from the north. Hernandez, sent by Las Casas to Yucatan in 1545, fancied that he detected traces of Christian doctrine in the legends told him by the Maya priests. Mr. John T. Short would reject the story altogether, but Dr. Brinton thinks that if the correct forms be restored to the names, what is fanciful will disappear, and what is real will remain. It is not the first time that zealous missionaries have found the doctrine of the Trinity in heathen mythology. It is sufficient for the purpose of this paper to be assured from manifold evidence, early and recent, that the Mayas had the imagination and the constructiveness of a poetic race. The Votan of the Tzendals, a kindred tribe, is one of the most extraordinary of American culture heroes. It would seem, however, that his character and exploits are, at least, as much the creation of Iberian fancy as they are the development of Tzendal tradition. He "is" writes Mr. Short, "a mystery, and to arrive at his true character or office is simply an impossibility." Votan is said to have crossed the sea from the east, from Valum Chivim, by way of Valum Votan, to apportion the land of a new continent to seven families that he brought with him. The date assigned for his journey is the year B. C. 1000. The city which he founded is identified with Palenque. The legend in which his acts are recorded, is said to have been written by one of his descendants of the ninth generation. The book having long been jealously guarded by the people of Tacoaloya, in Soconusco, was at last discovered by Francesco Nunez de la Vega, Bishop of Chiapas, who destroyed it. Another copy was, nevertheless, in possession of Don Ramon de Ordonez y Aguiar, of Ciudad Real, in Chiapas, and from him Dr. Paul Felix Cabrera obtained some account of it, which he supplemented from his own imagination. The story has given rise to the wildest speculations, even sage and cautious men allowing themselves to be misled into all kinds of false affinities of language and mythology. Some have recognised Odin, others Gantama in the Tzendal culture-hero. Dr. Brinton derives the name from a pure Maya word, signifying "heart"—the "Heart of his people." That such an expression is not without precedent in the aboriginal language of reverence or supplication, he shows by citing the occurrence of a similar term in the sacred legend of Quichés, the Popol Vuh. It is found in the following prayer to their deity, which may also serve as a fair illustration of the style of the work:—

"Hail, Creator and Maker!

Regard us, attend us:

Heart of Heaven, Heart of the Earth,

Do not forsake us, do not leave us.

God of Heaven and Earth, Heart of Heaven,

Heart of Earth, consider our prosperity always;

Accord us repose, a glorious repose,

Peace and prosperity, justice, life and our being.