

reproduced in the Tenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology¹ explains these mysterious relations. Now the cause assigned to venereal diseases was the serpent, and the serpent was regarded according to the commentary thereon "as that from which their diseases proceeded in their commencement²."

The culture hero of the Aztecs, in whom was also worshipped the human reproductive principle, was Quetzalcoatl. According to Dr. D. G. Brinton³, who speaks after Torquemada⁴, "he was the god on whom depended the fertilization of the womb," and "sterile women made their vows to him, and invoked his aid to be relieved from the shame of barrenness." Now one correct translation of his name is "the beautiful serpent" and one of his surnames is, in the Nahuatl language, synonymous with the virile member. Serpent and phallus—and, by implication, woman—are here again associated.

In the volume emanating from the Bureau of Ethnology quoted above is also reproduced what looks as a pictograph which is stated to have been found in Guatemala. It represents two personages, one, a skeleton, probably symbolical of death, and the other, a person with an emaciated face and in a recumbent position, evidently indicative of a state of sickness. The cause of this is clearly shown in the shape of the serpent, which here again has the same suggestive relation to man, since it is made to encircle the loins of the diseased personage⁵.

But a still stronger argument can be derived from the prevalence of the serpent myth among the American aborigines. We have already noticed it among two different Déné tribes. Among the Abenakies the story is that an oft-married woman was followed by her sixth husband to a wild place among the rocks and finally to a pond. After she had sung a song, a serpent came out of the deep which twined around her and enveloped her limbs and body in its folds⁶. Here we have, therefore, adulterous intercourse with death as its consequence, viz., that of her successive husbands. A variation of the same myth recounts the similarly guilty commerce between a married woman and Atosis, a beautiful serpent.

Among the Zunis, the serpent is said to have gained power over the daughter of a priest-doctor who was wandering near a lake and married her.

¹ Washington, 1893, Plate XLIX.

² Tenth Annual Report, etc., p. 614.

³ American Hero-Myths, p. 128. Philadelphia, 1882.

⁴ *Monarquia Indiana*, Lib. XI, Cap. XXIV.

⁵ *Ubi Suprà*, p. 730, fig. 1235.

⁶ American Antiquarian, Vol. XVI, p. 29.