

The following remarks accompanied this tale when published in "The Sun":—

This tale of Sedit and the Hus brothers is a splendid bit of aboriginal American philosophy, and touches on topics which have exercised many minds besides those of primitive America. The subject of life and death is treated here so simply, and at the same time so well, that I believe few readers would ask for explanation or comment.

Some statements, however, touching Sedit are not out of place, I think. The coyote is very prominent in the mythology of every region where he is found. The basis of his character is the same in all myths that I have collected. He is a tremendous glutton, boastful, talkative, cunning, exceptionally inclined to the other sex, full of curiosity, a liar, a trickster, deceiving most adroitly, and is deceived himself at times. He comes to grief frequently because of his passions and peculiar qualities. He is an artful dodger, who has points in common with the devil of European folk-lore, being in many cases an American counterpart of this curious and interesting personage.

Of Northern Pacific coast tribes in the United States, the Modocs have given most distinction to the coyote. Among them the chief coyote is a trickster on the grandest scale, and has obtained possession of the indestructible disk of the sun, through which he is immortal, or, at least, is renewed every day to carry that luminary. Because of his vanity and boastfulness, the coyote undertakes various enterprises in which he fails through his passions.

Sacred springs and small lakes in the mountains are very prominent in the Modoc religion. A young man who hopes to be a magician or a doctor goes to these mountain springs before he is married or knows woman. There he fasts and watches a week or longer until he is nearly exhausted. If he is to be a magician or doctor, spirits appear to him in this interval. A coyote went to those mountains (in the time before men were on earth, of course), hoping to gain great magic power, but on the way he ate various kinds of food hateful to the spirits of the springs. These spirits were disgusted with the odor of food that came from him, struck him with mange, drove him away, made him hungry, foul, and