

It seems to me, then, as I said, probable that the feelings of the whole American race in these ideas obey another and higher impulse: that they place their paradise far beyond the prairies, as they say, at the end of the world," and that their imagination seeks and finds it in following the brilliant course of the sun and planets. I fancy the whole idea has an astronomical origin, if I may be permitted to use the term, and this view is supported by the Indians calling the Milkyway "the path of the dead," or "the path of souls." Among the Ojibbeways, the milky way is called "Jibekana," which word has that meaning. They would scarcely place their path of souls so high if they merely wished their dead to reach the prairies, or if they did not rather wish them to hurry after the setting sun.

We Europeans have so accustomed ourselves to connect the idea of paradise with the east and the rising sun, that we have at first some difficulty in following the opposite reasoning of the American aborigines. We picture to ourselves the rosy-fingered Helios rising each morning fresh and renewed from the garden of Paradise; and besides, all the roots of our history and primeval traditions lie in the East, the home of all the European races and their patriarchal progenitors. But the western tendency of the Indian fancy is no less beautiful and natural; and, perchance, like our longing for the East, based on history. They compare their life-day with that of the sun. As the sun, when dying out in the west, becomes transfigured on his departure, and wondrous regions seem to lie expanded there, so they let the souls of their departed flutter after him, and be submerged with him in ether in those Elysian fields in which he sinks to rest.

From his Indian informant he got the following account of the "path of the soul" after death:—

Here my friends began telling me of a great, straight path, and its branch and side roads, of a great strawberry that lay in the path of souls, of a river, and a serpent before the entrance to Paradise. I did not readily understand it all, so the full-blood Indian at length said to me. "Hadst thou a pencil and a piece of paper I could draw all this accurately for thee, and then explain it much better." I gave him what he wanted, and my man began drawing and measuring, as if he were preparing a map, very thoughtfully and silently. When he had finished he laid the following sketch before me.

"Listen now," he said, "and see. This is the earth (A,) a rectangular parallelogram. On the earth God has planted his law, like a tree straight upwards, or like a path straight forward. Some wander the right path (B), but many got on to the side paths of the lane (a, a, a, a,) These run into the desert.

"When men die, they all go after death along the path of souls (C). On the centre of this path (at D) thou seest the strawberry lying on one side. It is extraordinarily large, and is said to taste very sweet. A man stands by it, who invites all passers by to taste it. But they must not accept it, for whatever soul does so is lost at once. Those that resist continue their journey prosperously till they come near Paradise. It is altogether a journey of from three to four days. Then a large broad river bars the way. Over it there is no regular bridge. Something that looks like a great tree stump lies across it. Its roots are firmly fastened on the opposite shore. On this side it raises its head, but it does not reach quite to the land. There is a small gap over which the souls must hop. The log, too, is constantly shaking. Most of the souls spring across, balance themselves properly, and save themselves. Those, however, that jump short, or slip off the bridge, fall into the water, and are converted into toads or fishes. Hence it is not good when the deceased are bound to a board, for otherwise they might more freely, and perchance, save themselves by swimming. If fastened to a board, they can easily be carried down with the stream. Little children, too, fare very