

ments are nearly all aboriginal, though allowance must be made for Spanish and even Negro influence. They do not differ greatly from primitive instruments everywhere.

Between the Nahua colony of Nicaragua and the body of the race in Mexico, there intervenes an area covered by various tribes, but of which those of Maya and Quiché speech are by far the most important. "Maya was the patrial name of the natives of Yucatan," writes Dr. Brinton. It was heard of as early as the year 1503-4, during Columbus's fourth voyage. The late Dr. Berendt enumerated no less than sixteen affiliated tribes, including the Chantals of Tabasco, the Tzendals to the south of them, the Chols on the Upper Usumacinta, the Kichés and the Cakchiquels in or close to Guatemala, and the Huastecs on the Panuco in Mexico. These languages are said to differ from each other, and from the central Maya, no more than the Neo-Latin tongues do from Latin and from each other. One legend of the Mayas, pointing to their arrival from the east under the leadership of a hero-god, Itzamna, Dr. Brinton explains as a solar myth. Another, which indicates an immigration from Mexico, under a hero named Cuculcan, he deems worthy of attention, as it is mentioned in the native chronicles, and was maintained by intelligent aborigines at the time of the Conquest. The connecting point is found in the Huastec branch, north of Vera Cruz, which, it is suggested, may have been the rearguard of a great Maya migration from the north southward. There are also traditions common to both Mayas and Nahuas or Aztecs. The Mayas were, in some respects, the superior race. They were a literary people, making use of tablets, and employing hieroglyphics which, however, are still a puzzle to the learned. Dr. Valentini's view of the Landa alphabet is now generally held by scholars and, indeed, the bishop did not claim for it the character which has been so frequently attributed to it.¹

"The Maya Chronicles," edited by Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, forms the first volume of Brinton's "Library of Aboriginal American Literature." The first of the records which gives it its title was published as an appendix to the second volume of John L. Stephens's "Incidents of Travel in Yucatan," a work which began a new era in American archæological research. The others were not previously published. The "Chronicles" are entirely apart from the Maya hieroglyphic rolls, the fourth of which was recently published in Paris, under the editorial supervision of M. de Rosny. They were composed after the Conquest, by natives who had been taught the language of the conquerors, and who availed themselves of the alphabet to write the Maya language. Gathering whatever knowledge of the past remained in the memories of old men, or could be deciphered from the ancient codices, they committed them to the custody of the *litera scripta*. Some of the histories thus compiled in Maya date as far back as 1542, by which time some of the natives had become adepts in the use of the pen. They all, wherever prepared, bore the name of "Books of Chilan Balam," which was the designation of a class of priests. They are generally anonymous. It was from them that Señor Pio Perez, who first made the revelation to the world, derived his knowledge of the Maya system of computing time. Dr. Carl Hermann Berendt made a large collection of such manuscripts which, after his death, came into the hands of Dr. Brinton. Some of these, with the document already mentioned as appearing in the work of Stephens, are comprised in "The Maya Chronicles." The Maya text is accompanied by a translation and copious notes, historical and ethnological.

¹ The Landa Alphabet a Spanish fabrication, by Philipp J. J. Valentini, Proc. Am. Ant. Soc., 1880.