

fact with momentous consequences, since it has left its impress on peoples so utterly devoid of all kinds of literature as the American aborigines. Woman, serpent and guilt—always of a lascivious character—are three points which seem inseparably connected. In a few cases, it is true, woman and man-serpent may be replaced by man and woman-serpent; but the nature of the relations between the couple remains identical. People will talk of ophiolatry; they will discourse on the Ophites and their unnatural cult of the matter, the serpent, as opposed to the spirit personified by their so-called Demiurgos, the Jehovah of the Bible; they will write learned dissertations on the serpent mounds of the old world and of the new; but if they cared to go to the root of the question, I think they would infallibly find guilty relations, either by word or by deed, between a representative of the human species and a serpent as the ultimate source of such monuments or religious systems.

In the case of the Ophites, it is a matter of notoriety that they worshipped the serpent because, by tempting Eve, he had introduced "knowledge"—*intelligenti pauca*—into the world. That the serpent effigies of America had a cognate origin can be proved by the relics a few of them have been found to contain; but more especially by the prevalence among the aborigines of the tradition of immoral commerce, in times remote, of a woman with a serpent.

Thus in Adams county, Illinois, a serpent effigy has been discovered with fire-beds and evidences of cremation of bodies in the bottom of the mound. Now, the phallic symbol was found there. Nay more, "the skeletons of two snakes were found coiled up between the hands near the secret parts" of some of the bodies<sup>1</sup>. The connection between the serpent and the woman, at least by implication, is here evident. In the first case, we have the ophidian mound and the phallic symbol, and in the second, serpent and lasciviousness are associated in a still more suggestive manner.

No less suggestive are the following facts gleaned from the mythologies and the archæological remains of the most important American nations.

As is gathered from the Codex Vaticanus, corporal ills were supposed among the early Mexicans to be produced by as many causes corresponding to the different parts of the body. Their therapeutics must have had something of a homœopathic character, since their doctors cured, for instance, the diseases of the tongue by the earthquake, those of the breath by the air, those of the teeth by a flint, etc. A coloured plate

<sup>1</sup> American Antiquarian, Vol. XVI., p. 17.