

American intellectual development. There is, however, no clearly marked line of partition between the culture of the central region and that which lay to the north and to the south of it.¹ The names of the prevailing forms of cultivated speech, the Maya-Quiché and the Nahuatl, seem to point respectively to Peru and to Mexico. Passing through the many scattered tribes of the Isthmus and Costa Rica, we reach, near Lake Nicaragua, the first sign of Central American culture among men of Nahuatl speech. Father Vasquez derives Nicaragua itself from the words *nican* and *anahuacos*, as though it were the abode of men of Mexican descent. The Nicaraguans showed their relationship to the Aztecs by identity of language, mythology, religious rites, calendars, manners and customs. The Mangues, of Nicaragua, whose name is preserved in Lake Managua, were there when the Nahuas arrived. They are related to the Chapanecs or people of Chiapas, one of the actual States of Mexico, but are not akin either to the Nahuas or the Mayas. To-day hardly any unmixed descendants of either race remain in Nicaragua. Benzoni records that in the middle of the sixteenth century, four languages were spoken in Nicaragua, of which the Mexican or Nahuatl was the most extended and the easiest to learn. At an early date, however, a mixed dialect came into use, "composed of a broken-down Nahuatl and a corrupt Spanish." The comedy-ballet of Güegüence, which forms the third volume of Dr. Brinton's "Library of Aboriginal Literature," is an illustration, not only of that mongrel dialect—the greater part of which, however, is easily intelligible Spanish—but also of the dances, songs, music, traditions, social manners and humour of the Central American half-breeds. Confining his attention to Nicaragua, Dr. Brinton says in his introduction, that the *bailes* (as these song-dances are called) are divided into five classes—simple dances, dances with songs, dances with prose recitations, *logas* or scenic recitations with music by a single actor, and complete dramas with music, ballets, dialogues and costumes. The *loga* or *loa* is peculiar to the Mangues. It is a rhymed monologue, recited with music and in costume and, though generally of a religious character, it is, like the medieval mystery plays, more like a burlesque than a serious composition. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that some of the usages associated with part, if not all, of these classes of dances, are more Spanish than aboriginal. Some of them may, however, be as much Indian as Spanish, as for instance, the vow to dance masked before the image of a saint.² It is quite possible that some religious customs of the Spaniards themselves may be survivals from heathendom, at least, as much as they are Catholic or Christian. The point of interest in connection with the subject of the paper is that, whether Nahuatl or Mangué in their origin, these dances can be traced back to pre-European times. In vain the invaders laid the foundations of their cities with the broken images of the Indian deities. The spirit of the old religion refused to die, and it is still clearly discernible all over Spanish and Portuguese America. The instruments used in the *bailes* and other entertain-

¹ Writing of the wild tribes of Central America, with special reference to the Indians of Guatemala, Mr. Hubert Howe Bancroft says: "Original lyric poetry seems to flourish among them, and is not wanting in grace, although the rendering of it may not be exactly operatic. The subject generally refers to victorious encounters with monsters, but contains also sarcasms on government and society." *Native Races of the Pacific States*, i. 701. Again he writes: "The song language of the Mosquitos differs greatly from that employed in conversation, a quaint old-time style being apparently preserved in their lyrics. *Ibid.*, p. 727.

² In an article, "From the Atlantic to the Andes", in *Scribner's Monthly* for December, 1877, p. 190, there is an account of a singular combination of heathen with Christian usage in the celebration of the festival of the Exaltation of the Cross.