

ES 9
C18
T45

years after its discovery by Columbus, gives a full account of their practice. He does not seem himself to have witnessed one of their feasts, but takes the word of other explorers who had suffered from these cannibals. "The wild and mischievous people," he writes, "called cannibals, or Caribs, accustomed to eat men's flesh (and called by the old writers *anthropophagi*), molest them (the explorers) exceedingly, invading their country, taking them captive, killing and eating them * * * * *. Such children as they take they geld to make them fat, as we do cock chickens and young hogs, and eat them when they are well fed. Of such as they eat, they eat first the entrails and extreme parts, as hands, feet, arms, neck, and head. The other most fleshy parts they preserve in store as we do bacon. Yet do they abstain from eating women, and count it vile." *

The first visitors to the Pacific coast also found tribes of man-eaters. Cook says that, upon his landing, the Nootka tribe of Columbian Indians brought to him for sale human skulls and hands not quite stripped of their flesh, which they made him understand they had eaten. Some of the bones also bore marks of having been on the fire.† Bancroft, in his *Native Races of the Pacific Coast*, cites other evidence in the same line. Coke speaks of one of the most degraded tribes of Snake Indians eating dead bodies and killing their children for food.‡

The aborigines of Mexico and Central America were far less barbarous than the natives of other parts of North America. While, therefore, cannibalism existed among them, it took the form of a religious ceremony. Prescott asserts, on the authority of the Spaniards, that the Mexicans were not cannibals in the coarsest acceptation of the term. They did not feed on human flesh merely to gratify a brutish appetite, but in obedience to their religion. Their repasts were made of victims whose blood had been poured out on the altar of sacrifice.§ A similar statement is made regarding the Itzas of Central America.

Among the New Mexican Indians the case was different. While tribes differed among themselves in regard to this practice, with many human flesh was sought as food. Incredible as it may seem, at least one tribe of Indians inhabiting Texas has practiced cannibalism within twenty-five years. Mr. J. G. Walker, formerly a member of the United States Army, and now a resident of Mexico, in a private letter to the author gives the following interesting facts:

* Peter Martyr's *De Rebus Oceanicis et Orbe Novo Decades*. First Decade.

† Cook's *Voyages to the Pacific*. Vol. II. p. 271.

‡ Coke's *Rocky Mountains*, p. 275.

§ *Conquest of Mexico*. 8th Ed. p. 84.