

myth and the Zuni Iliad; while their love poetry has developed from the Sioux's simple offer of a modest tepee to the intensely passionate emotion of the Peruvian *yaravis*. If we would follow the steps of such a progress from its humble beginnings to the goal at which it paused, we may learn much by wandering with such a companion as Catlin, from wigwam to wigwam, and from tribe to tribe, till we have gained some insight into the genius of the race in its own wild home.¹ The dances by which, according to the traveller just mentioned, the Indians, north of the Gulf of Mexico, give expression to their emotions are as various as those emotions themselves. The eagle, the snow-shoe, the discovery, the begging, the slave, the pipe, the scalp, the buffalo—these are only a few of the names by which they are designated.² In almost every case, words accompany the movements—there being all grades of significance, from a mere meaningless lilt to a genuine song, intelligible and even enjoyable, in a translation. Sometimes the meaning has been lost, and the empty sounds are repeated with the reverence of superstitious awe. When Father Petitot asked the Dené-Dindjie what they meant by invoking "the mouse with pointed snout," they replied that it was a mystery of which they did not wish to speak, as they would be speaking of the spirit of death.³ Strange that the same little creature should enter into the mythology of two races so far apart in every way as the Greeks and the Athabascans, and in connection with the same worship, that of the sun!⁴ It is to the abundance of such unexpected analogies that the mythology and poetry of aboriginal America owes not a little of its many-sided interest.

¹ Among recent contributions to the literature of the subject by persons who have gained their information through intimate intercourse with the aborigines, I would direct attention to the extremely interesting article by Dr. Franz Boas on "The Poetry and Music of some North American Tribes," which was published in *Science*, April 22, 1887. Therein the author gives examples both of songs and airs that he collected among the Eskimos of Baffin Land and the Indians of British Columbia. Some of these songs are joyous, others are mournful, while several of them reveal a rapturous appreciation of what is beautiful and sublime in nature. No people says Dr. Boas, are fonder of music than the Eskimos, while almost every Indian village in British Columbia has its singing-master.

² As to that most frightful rite of self-immolation, the Sun-dance, still practised by the Sioux, the Blackfeet, and some of the Western Crees, see an article on the Blackfoot Tribes, by Horatio Hale, in the *Popular Science Monthly*, June, 1886.

³ "Those weird tales, which to us are puerility or poetry, according as we please to regard them, were to their believers history, science and religion." *Native Races of the Pacific States*, by H. H. Bancroft, iii. 14.

⁴ In his instructive little book, *Custom and Myth*, Mr. Andrew Lang has a chapter on "Apollo and the Mouse," but he does not refer to the Tinné folklore.