

Sodom and Gomorrha? It may seem strange that a historical event of comparatively so local an importance should be commemorated in the folk-lore of an American people. Yet it might perhaps be explained that the awfulness of its nature compensates for the limitedness of the territory which it affected. I may be mistaken in my interpretation of this, as indeed in that of the preceding myth; but I cannot help seeing therein some resemblance to the story of Sodom's prevarication and chastisement, and a corresponding dissimilitude from any other event recorded either by history or mythology. Let us rather analyse the main points of our present legend and compare them with the Biblical recital.

And here I must premise an important remark. This myth, in common with the preceding, recounts the story of a crime and its consequences; but a very little reflection will make it clear that the guilt pointed out as material for punishment is, in the second legend, of a quite different nature from that of the first. In the first story, we see criminal relations of a woman with a serpent punished by the death of the woman and the wretchedness of her children. In the second, we have also guilty intercourse of a married woman with a person other than her husband; but, let it be carefully noted, this is not put down as the cause of the conflagration that ensues. After her unseemly conduct, the woman suffers no other pain or anguish than regret for the death of her lover, while the whole country, and with it a large portion of the people, are burnt down in expiation of the attempted crime of the beautiful young man with the outraged husband. Can sodomy be more graphically described or its punishment better assimilated to that of the ungodly inhabitants of the plain cities?

The husband here, no less than the God-fearing Lot of the Bible, escapes free; while the cause of the conflagration, the voluptuous young man, in common with the majority of the population, pays with his life his unnatural crime.

The gathering of the sap or cambium layer of the pine with the apologue of the little red-headed woodpecker are naturally nothing else than the pod which contains the fruit, the shell that conceals the pearl, namely, the historical fact. So much so, that these circumstances vary with the locality of the narrator, while the nature of the guilt itself with its consequences remains identical.

The native fondness for the apologue is no doubt responsible for the anecdote at the end, no less than for the transformation of the young man's head into a bird's scalp. Unable to account for the fact related by their ancestors, the aborigines must have thought they had discovered