

VII.

As long as my life lasts, I will follow thy wandering shade: yea, though water, fire, earth and air should attempt to stand in my way!"

Many of these *yuravis* have been collected by Signor Zegarra, Mr. Clements R. Markham and others. But it was not in elegiac poetry only that the Peruvian bards are said to have excelled. Prescott writes that they "selected the most brilliant incidents for their songs and ballads, which were chanted at the royal festivals, and at the table of the Inca. In this manner, a body of traditionary minstrelsy grew up, like the British and Spanish ballad poetry, by means of which the name of many a rude chieftain, that might have perished for want of a chronicler, has been borne down the tide of rustic melody to later generations." That the preservation of such productions without the medium of writing was not impossible, is fully borne out by what is known of the Hindoos, the Arabs and the Celts.

North-east of the region occupied by the Quichuas, in the great valley of Cundinamarca, there lived at the epoch of the Conquest a people known as the Chibchas, or Muyscas. It formed a link in the chain of half-civilised races that extended along the western highlands from Chili to New Mexico. Its tradition seemed to indicate a mixed ethnology. The Chibchas had the artistic faculty largely developed, and their poetic sense is revealed by their mythology. One of their myths has reference to a bearded white man who taught them the arts of civilisation. (Bancroft's *Native Races of the Pacific States*, III. 269.) The only other important linguistic group was the Salivi, which comprised the Atures, whose learned parrot still spoke the language of his teachers, when all the race had perished, and none could interpret the remembered words.¹ Besides those mentioned, the isolated tribes and tongues of South America were, and are, virtually countless. Those at which I have glanced are, however, the most conspicuous of Mr. Keane's four great groups. First of these is that which comprises the austral races, consisting of the Fuegians, the Patagonians, the Puelche, or Pampas Indians, and the Araucanians. Secondly, there are the Brazilian races—a mainly geographical grouping—of which the most distinctive feature is the far-reaching Tupi-Guarani ethnical and linguistic family. Thirdly, there are the Peruvian and Bolivian races, with two respective central tongues, the Quichua, and the Aymara, and which also include the Antisian federation, the "Antis" of the Ollanta drama. Lastly, which brings us to the border of Central America, there are the races of New Guiana and New Granada, including the Chibcha, or Muysca, the Salivi, the Arawack, the Carib, and a host of other languages and tribes of uncertain affinities. All these families of mankind had reached at least the starting-point of human progress; for even the wretched Teekenika of Tierra del Fuego has shown himself susceptible of improvement under missionary teaching. Some of them had advanced some way along the path that leads to civilisation.

In Central America, at the time of the conquest, the proportion of civilised or half-civilised communities to the bulk of the population was greatly in excess of what it was either in South or North America. It is there, indeed, that we find the best products of

¹ Humboldt's *Views of Nature*, pp. 172, 188, 189.