

skin; therefore, after the line came forth from its third coil the head man led it back toward the point whence it started, and as soon as he moved in that direction the dancers dropped out of line one after another at regular intervals, beginning with the last dancer, until the head man only remained; then the music ceased and the dance was ended.

The authorities seem to be agreed that there are no rattlesnakes in eastern Maine, the Maritime provinces, or any part of eastern Canada, nor is there any evidence that there ever have been any in those localities.* It seems a fair inference, therefore, judging from this dance, that one of the most important features of Micmac ritual has come into Nova Scotia from the southwest. The word *choogich* is indeed but a general name for reptile, according to Dr. Rand, but several Micmacs have assured me that it designates the rattlesnake. The Micmacs assert that the traditional object of the dance was to obtain the poison of the serpent for medicinal use, and that at one time long ago their ancestors used to dance it so much that nearly all of them were turned to serpents. The symbolism of the dance evidently coincides with the time of exuviation. In modern times I cannot find that the performance of the *choogichoo yajik* has been limited to any particular time of the year, further than that it was never danced in the winter; but this might have been due to other than ritualistic causes. It is, however, considered a proper feature at the election of a chief, and the connection of its symbolism with ritual and time relations of some sort is self-evident. In Maya the Pleiades are called *tzabec* or rattle asterism, and altars in the form of the rattle are numerous in Yucatan, as Major Beebe has pointed out to me in the illustrations of Charnay's *Ancient Cities*, pages 140, 149. The scorpion is also connected with the same stars in Maya mythology, and when we hear of the gathering of the poison for medicinal use we may recall the Italian cure for the bite of a tarantula or scorpion by the use of its bane (*similia similibus curantur*). In Peru, Yucatan, Mexico, and in almost all parts of the world this group of stars was preëminent

* Whatever may be the opinion of naturalists in this matter, it is a fact worthy of note that the Indian women of the Hudson bay region, particularly the Cree, formerly drank water in which the rattle of a rattlesnake had been boiled to relieve pain during parturition. See Harmon's *Voyages and Travels* (1800): Lond., 1820, p. 345. — F. W. H.