so also their inherited memories have been affected by contact with the new-comers. In many cases, they had adopted the creed of the invader before any attempt had been made to commit their own traditions and beliefs to writing. Some of the "histories" and "sacred books" of the semi-civilised Quichua, Maya and Nahua nations bear evident marks of intermeddling. When Christian theology, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, and Old Testament stories, such as those of the giants, the flood and the tower of Babel, appear, *totidem verbis* in American legends, they are, at least, suspicious. The frequency with which the Deluge recurs in the traditions of all the tribes and tongues from the extreme south to the farthest north, is extraordinary. But the same catastrophe is common to the civilised and uncivilised nations of the Old World. The singular fact, as Mr. Alfred Maury pointed out years ago, is that the American accounts come nearer to the Biblical narrative than most of the trans-Atlantic versions. The late Admiral Fitzroy was so struck with this discovery, that he wrote a discursus to show that the flood had been universal.[1] Careful and patient research may ultimately succeed in effecting a differentiation between such memories or myths as are by origin American, and those which have been brought from beyond sea during the last four centuries. A like process is necessary for the identification of what is purely American in the so-called aboriginal poetry. There is a natural temptation in translating from a barbarous into a civilised language to produce, if possible, something that will stand the test of literary criticism according to the standards of the latter. For purposes of logical investigation such paraphrasing is inadmissible. The plan adopted by the Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, is to preserve and record the myths and folklore of the Indian tribes which form the subject of inquiry in their own languages, "with interlinear translation, and without foreign coloring or addition, in connection with the several dictionaries of those languages." Till this has been done, with all the compositions proved, as far as proof is possible, to be of native American creation, we shall seek in vain for the true character of their literary work, or the highest point of excellence to which they attained.

It would be easy (if space permitted) to multiply, from sources within reach, examples of poetry attributed to American Indians, ranging from such rude cries as (according to Father LeJeune's narrative) neither singer nor hearer could understand, to polished compositions like the Peruvian love-songs, or the elegiac verse of King Nezahualcoyotl. But, in many cases, these productions come to us without any trustworthy guarantee that they are, even in substance, what they purport to be. The few authenticated instances show that, unaided from without, the inhabitants of pre-Columbian America had advanced from a very low to a comparatively high stage of poetic cultivation. Whether any one American people passed through all the stages on American soil, we do not know for certain, though there are indications that seem to justify an affirmative conclusion. Dance and song are common to all the groups of north and south and centre. We can trace their progress from rhythmic motion of feet and hands to the mimetic arrow dance, described by Schoolcraft; the ballet, in its various types, as portrayed by Brinton; and the finished drama, like Ollanta, or Rabinal Achi. So the folklore of the tribes has taken all shapes, from the scarcely articulate superstitions of the Fuegian savage to the Popol Vuh, the Votan

[1] It forms the final chapter of the Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of H.M.S. Adventure and Beagle, between the years 1826 and 1836.