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NOTES ON THE COSMOGONY AND THEOGONY OF
THE MOJAVE INDIANS OF THE RIO COLO-
RADO, ARIZONA.

EARLY on the morning of the 24th of February, 1886, I left the train of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad at East Bridge station, the westernmost one in Arizona, situated on the banks of the Colorado River; through the failure of telegrams sent in advance, there was no one to meet me from the post to which I was travelling, Fort Mojave, one of those poems in dreariness nowhere to be found save in our own military establishment, on our remote frontier.

The station a moment's glance showed me to consist of the bridge-tender's shanty and nothing else; the bridge-tender was affable enough, and desirous to extend the hospitalities of the metropolis, in exchange, perhaps, for such information of the doings of the great world as he might hope to extract from the first visitor who had been deluded into appearing at the place for more than a month. I imposed on his good nature, however, only to the extent of leaving my grip-sack in his shanty, while I started to walk across the bridge to the California side of the river. When half over, a freight train overtook me, and as it was going very slowly, there was no trouble in jumping upon a coal-car and riding for three miles to the town of Needles, California.

This town was a small collection of pretty wooden cottages, occupied by conductors and other railroad employees, and their families. There was a very excellent hotel, providing an abundance of well-cooked food, and good, clean beds. During the winter season the climate is lovely, and one might be travel-bound in many a worse place.

I hired a Mojave Indian runner for two dollars, to carry a message twenty miles to Fort Mojave, and while awaiting a reply, amused myself as best I could by strolling about among the Indians. There were numbers of them, men, women, boys, and girls, sprawling on

the sand in all the graceful attitudes that perfect laziness and perfect freedom from care could suggest.

The Mojaves, of both sexes, are famed for beauty of form ; many of the gentler sex are lovely to look upon, in spite of tattooing, dirt, and premature decrepitude, induced by too early marriages.

At times they would arouse themselves from their listlessness, and engage with spasmodic enthusiasm in games of "shinny," the balls being of rags tightly sewed together.

The Mojaves have not the "stick" game of the Pueblos, but they show the same wonderful power in the toes, and will often, at a critical point in the game, pick up the shinny ball between the great and second toes of the right foot and hop off with it for some distance. Immorality is the general rule, and the young girls are corrupt from the earliest years.

The men bear a good reputation for industry, when hard work is offered, and have labored efficiently on the grades of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad, as well as on the engineering work for the improvement of the river channel.

They evinced much affection and tenderness for the children with them, but seemed incapable of feeling for the sufferings of the brute creation. An instance of this occurred while I was in the town. A Mojave came over to complain to some of the white people that a Chinese laundryman had killed his dog, or rather had given it poison. Pretty soon the suffering animal appeared, dragging itself across the railroad track, its hindquarters already paralyzed from the effects of nux vomica, or something of that kind.

The Mojaves gathered in great circles, watching the contortions of the dying brute ; one of the boys seized an axe ; I expressed approval, feeling certain that he was going to put an end to so much misery. The axe gleamed in the air, the youngster looked at me with a smile, I smiled in return. Bang! went the biting blade, and off went the poor dog's tail. The dog yelled in agony, and squaws and children screamed with delight. Hereupon, one of the Americans stepped to the front, drew his revolver, and blew the half-dead animal's brains out.

Several of the squaws wore beautiful necklaces of glass beads, and in the fabrication of these necklaces show themselves not a whit behind their sisters of the tribes in the Missouri drainage.

Towards evening word came that an ambulance had arrived for me at East Bridge, to which station I had to return, again crossing the Rio Colorado on the railroad bridge.

The road up the valley of the Colorado follows through a heavy growth of arrow-weed, and after some miles passes through mesquite thickets. It is very sandy until you strike the mesa, within

perfect three miles of the fort, when you get upon a gravel and hardpan. Indian villages dot the intervening distance, but a description of many of them will occur farther on in this article.

dirt, It was after midnight when we reached the post of Fort Mojave, and were cordially welcomed by Lieutenant Phister, the commanding officer; he arranged to have an Indian guide come to his quarters early the next morning, with whom could be made all arrangements for visiting the several villages of the Mojaves, or any other objects of interest in the vicinity.

As good fortune would have it, the Indian selected was Merryman, whom I had known very well in 1871 and 1872, when he was one of the scouts employed by General Crook in the operations against the then hostile Apaches. He was an exceptionally bright fellow, speaking, reading, and writing English fairly well, and not at all averse to communicating what he knew on the subject of the manners and customs of his people.

The day was passed in looking in upon the Mojaves living close to the fort, and noting what was of most interest; they were nearly all engaged in playing "shinny" or "quoits." The quoits were two round, flat stones, four inches in diameter; the side which could first throw them both into the hole, twenty paces away, won the game.

What surprised me most was to receive corroboration of the statements made to me by Indians at the San Carlos agency, to the effect that the Mojaves did have customs strikingly suggestive of the Couvade, of which so much has been written in other parts of the world. Reference has been made to the fact that the Mojaves are tender parents, fond of their exceedingly bright children. Doctor Ord, the post surgeon, told me that Jim, a Mojave of considerable prominence, would not eat any salt in his bread last week because the medicine-men had warned him that if he did his child, sick at the time with the whooping-cough, would die. Another Mojave would not eat for four days, fearing bad results to his child; but the medicine-men allowed this man to drink coffee. Previous to this, I had been informed from other sources that when a Mojave youth has led one of the young girls astray, and she finds that she is about to become a mother, he will betake himself to a secluded spot and fast and wail until the child is born. While I do not doubt the accuracy of this information in the least, I am of the opinion that it relates to the primitive life of the tribe, and must be falling into disuse at the present time, when so large a percentage of the women lead lives of immorality.

We had been at the post twenty-four hours before Merryman had made his boat ready to take Phister and myself down the river on a visit to the spot where the gods "made the world."

Merryman pulled slowly on his oars, while the boat was propelled by the swift current of the turbid river, Phister and I, meanwhile, languidly reclining in the stern, listening to the flow of talk with which we began to be favored. We let our guide's words come unchecked, only asking a question now and then to prompt him to fresh topics. It was a red-letter day for an ethnological student. There was absolutely nothing to do but write down what Merryman said, and occasionally to help him get the boat off a sand-bar.

The scenery was sullen and impressive; the treacherous channel wound its way among islets of bleak sand, sometimes collecting its forces to make a rush against the bank, from which it bit off every few minutes great slices of rich soil. The mountains closing in upon each side of the valley were lofty, rugged, and naked. "That sharp peak, over in Nevada, above the fort," Merryman pointed out as "Spirit Mountain; the gods live there." (It was the Mojave Olympus.) "That other sharp, high mountain, down there near the Needles, in Arizona, was also a spirit mountain; that was where the Mojaves went when they died." (It was the Mojave Elysium.)

Mojave doctors are born, not trained. Their gifts are supernatural, not acquired. They can talk to the spirits before they have left their mother's womb. There are spirit doctors who are clairvoyants and exorcists; they talk to the spirits. There are snake doctors who cure snake bites; sometimes by suction, sometimes by rubbing something on the wound, but generally by singing. They can find rattlesnakes any time they wish. They can pick them up unharmed, and can talk to them. They have no Snake Dances, such as I described to Merryman as having seen among the Moquis, but, he asserted, "the Mojave doctors can do all that."

The Maricopas have eagle doctors; Merryman could not say why, except because the Maricopas are afraid of eagles.

The Mojave doctors can cure the Hoop-me-kof (whooping-cough). The Mojaves have no phallic dances; the Pi-Utes and Hualpais, their next-door neighbors, have them at rare intervals.

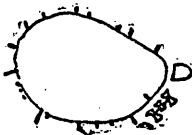
Merryman rowed and talked in this delightfully interesting way as we drifted down the river, passing the iron column marking the boundary between California and Nevada, and pulling up to the shore at a plantation of ky-ssa, a plant which the Mojaves sow broadcast on wet sand-bars while the waters are receding. The tender, lanceolate leaves are boiled in water while green to remove bitterness, and then boiled again and eaten. The red twigs, looking like those of the rhubarb and sumach, are hollowed out for pipes. The grain is gathered in March, dried, ground, and eaten.

On the gravel mesa, overlooking this field, was an insignificant stone-pile, which Merryman said had been placed there by Mus-

Mustam-ho, otherwise called Pa-o-chash, the god, son of Maty-a-vela. The Colorado River was then very high, and came up to the crest of this bluff. Mustam-ho was the god of water. He ordered that every man and animal should swim, diving into the river from this point. This was no doubt the place where formerly dances and games had been held by the Mojaves to celebrate the recession of some abnormal spring flood of the Colorado. The lustration described was possibly a kind of sacrifice to propitiate the angry god of waters, Mustam-ho, who, Merryman said, "made all the waters." The stone-pile was exactly like the Apache sacred stone-heaps, the *Tze-na-a-chie*. I am pretty sure my conjecture is correct because Merryman said that before engaging in these games every Mojave had to purify himself in the sweat-bath. Those who now dived into the water as an exhibition of skill, were, perhaps, in pre-historic days, thrown into the seething flood as a living sacrifice to the angry deity. Herein may be found a suggestion as to the generic basis of all sacred games. Originally, beyond a doubt, the slowest runner was immolated; later on, he was only beaten; and, as civilization had made greater strides, simply ridiculed and derided; the old expression, "The Lord for us all, and the Devil for the hindmost," may have more significance to the student than that of a mere vulgarism.

A hundred yards or so from this point was a flat-topped, rocky mesa, known as Mat-ho-ko-sabbi, or "the place or land of holes in the nose," because here once all created life met to engage in games of running, jumping, swimming, and walking. All the birds had holes bored in their beaks. The duck came last. "Your nose is too flat," said Pa-o-chash, called the Judge, because he is the judge of all actions of men or animals, here or hereafter. "I can't help that," said the duck, "I was born so; I must have a hole in my nose like the rest; I would n't look pretty without it." The Judge consented and the hole was bored. Then men came up. The Judge said: "I don't bore holes in flat noses: No flat-nosed creature, except the duck, can have a hole in his nose. A flat-nosed man would n't look pretty." After that, the animals ran round in a circle. The duck and dove both ran and flew and so came in ahead; the horned toad ran until out of breath, and then stopped.

(This was evidently the site chosen by the Mojaves for the celebration of their Creation Dance, or dramatic representation of their myth of the creation. Here was an irregular, elliptical curve, marked with small heaps of rock (see diagram), at distances of from five to twelve paces, each designating the point where, according to Merryman, some animal (or rather a medicine-man dressed up to represent one), had broken down in the course which was



run with the Sun, from left to right. Where the big medicine-man representing the Judge was to stand was marked thus: \triangle and near this on the ground was traced a hieroglyph, the meaning of which Merryman was unable to give, but which bore some slight resemblance to the figures of a man, a woman, and a child, or of three grown persons tied together, ($\times\text{---}\times$.)

When Mustam-ho first created men and animals they were very much alike in appearance, and Mustam-ho did not really know what any particular kind was good for. That's the reason why he assembled them here, Merryman said, and made them run to see which could best live on its legs; swim and dive, to see which could best live in water; fly, to learn which were qualified to abide in the air. He also asked them many questions: "Which of you is anxious to live without work and eat such food as man may throw to him?" "I," said one. "All right, then you shall be the dog," said Mustam-ho. And so with the others. He and man went among them and Mustam-ho separated them, and some he called fishes, and made them to live in the water, and some were snakes and crawled on the ground. All animals received their names that day. The dog was made the same time that man was. The Mojaves used to eat dogs, and most of them do so yet.

The bear and the coyote were not made until some time afterwards.

"After death, we follow the shadows of our great, great, grandfathers, those relations whom we have never seen. When we come to where they have been, they have gone on. We don't catch up with them: they have died again and changed into something else. Maybe so, bimeby, long-time, we'll catch up and be the same as they are, but I don't think so, I don't know." "When a Mojave dies, he goes to another country, just like his own; it is the shadow of his own country, the shadows of its rivers, mountains, valleys, and springs in which his own shadow is to stay."

"When you dream of your dead friends five or six times, that's a sign you are soon to die." "When a man dies, his friends consult the spirit doctor, who falls into a trance, and then visits the spirit land, which is at the mouth of Bill Williams Fork; if the dead man be not there, the doctor who attended him has been guilty of malpractice and has killed him and put his spirit in some mountain known only to the doctor. (A sort of Hades or Limbo; see farther on.) This doctor, thus proved to be a wizard or a quack, must be killed at once, so that he may be made to go and keep the dead man company."

It is an insult to speak of the dead to the widow or other survivors.

It is to the interest of quack doctors and witches to kill a number of people, because the dead take with them to the spirit land the

shadow of all their possessions, and the doctor or witch becomes the chief of a rich and powerful band.

Doctors and witches keep in a sort of Limbo or Hades, known only to themselves, all the victims who fall a prey to their nefarious arts. "It is," said Merryman, "the nature of these doctors to kill people in this way, just as it is the nature of hawks to kill little birds for a living."

"Once a witch was paid seventeen dollars by a Mojave to kill another Indian whom he disliked. She watched and followed in the trail of the victim, stepping carefully in his foot-prints. — 'T is well,' she said, 'say nothing: he dies in four days: say nothing. I don't want to be killed just yet. I've killed only two, and when I die, I want to rule a bigger band than that.'

"But the spirit doctors consulted the spirits and knew that the victim had been murdered.

"'We can't tell who killed him,' they said to the relatives, 'but watch near the spot where his body was burned. The poison which the witch put in his body must come out from the ashes in four days, and if the witch don't be on hand to gather it up, it will do her great harm.' So they watched, and, sure enough, they saw tracks and they caught the witch, and they killed her with rocks and then burnt her, and I was a very small boy at the time and saw them do it over there on that spit of land next the sand-bar." (This idea that power can be obtained over a person by walking in his foot-prints, or by cutting out a sod upon which he has stood, prevails in Europe and other parts of the world.)

"What I tell you, I have learned from the old men. The Mojaves sometimes have meetings, when the old men lecture the young men on the history of the tribe and of the world: they never get through." (Merryman was perfectly aware of the meaning of the term he used, "meetings," as connected with religious services, conventions, etc.) "The Mojaves have women doctors, who are born with the gift, just as the men are; they are regarded by the male doctors as their equals and treated with every consideration."

The rocks near this spot were scratched with various figures:

