

THE ORIGIN OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN.

As a well grounded premise, it may be assumed that the ancestors of the present Indian were the aboriginal inhabitants of America. This contention is fairly well supported by the evidence of unearthened skulls, bones, paleolithic instruments, and petrified or dried human bodies. All these archaeological relics lead to the conclusion that there has been but one race of natives in America, despite the peculiarities of the various Indian and Aztec tribes; this is well attested by the school begun by Lewis H. Morgan, and set forth in his masterly essay called "Montezuma's Dinner."

If we accept the hypothesis that all the Indians came from a single root, the next step is to discover that root. Obviously, the only way to find it is by deduction from the present evidences. Many theories have grown up about the Indian, some as plausible as the others are absurd.

They could not have come from Africa, because we find no lingering similarity either in physique or character. Further than this, there existed no means by which the primeval African could cross the stormy Atlantic. Schools of European scientists have tried to trace the origin of the Indian to the Welsh, the Norse, the French, and even to the Italians. These are but vague theories, which are unsupported by even the most elastic facts. If there were any race connection, it seems probable that there would be some physical similarity. Another class, infatuated with Biblical teachings, hunt in America for the lost tribes of Israel. As far as absolute facts are concerned, this theory is a product of the imagination, without the slightest foundation. A pretty example of evolution, from Tubal to Sitting Bull! That the Indians are the remnants of lost Atlantis is picturesque, fanciful and romantic, but highly improbable.

The closest physical resemblance to the present Indian is found in the natives of northern China, and eastern Siberia. The high cheek bones, and, in fact, nearly all the physical and mental traits in one, find a faint counterpart in the other. The flexibility of the human body under climatic changes easily accounts for this difference. If a Caucasian, dwelling for a few weeks under the tropical rays of a southern sun, becomes darkened, it is not strange that a Mongolian race, living for centuries in the wilds of America, should repress some of their old characteristics and develop others more suited to their new manner of living. The probability of such a change is explained by the theory of evolution. According to the slight resemblance between the Indian and the Mongolian,—which is closer than the resemblance between the In-

dian and any other race,—it is not fanciful to assume some distant blood connection.

Manifestly, all theories which argue that the originators of the Indian race came here in vessels must be incorrect, because the preponderance of evidence points to the conclusion that they came here long before the era of boat-building. It is hardly plausible to say that a people using unpolished stone implements were advanced enough to construct sea-going vessels. Equally impossible is it to maintain that a horde of savages could sail for days and days across a rough ocean on a crude raft. In proof of the length of time that the Indians have been here, we point to the fact that an enormous period must have elapsed for the Indians to have changed as radically from all known races as they have done. The ancient paleolithic instruments hidden beneath an undisturbed glacial debris at Trenton, New Jersey, prove that the Indians, or their ancestors, were here long before any means of navigation were known. The difference in the Indian mode of living, as shown by the tribal distinctions and by the Aztec civilization, argue a long residence in America.

If, as is most probable to believe, the ancestors of the Indians were Mongolians, they evidently dwelt first on the Pacific slope, and then spread about the country. For the argument that Mongolians were early inhabitants of America there are many theories. One theory, accounting for their arrival, that a disabled junk would be carried by the Pacific currents to the Californian coast, is supported by about one hundred actual instances. This speculation, however, is open to two vital objections: first, a small body, unprepared for colonization, would have gone wild and eventually become extinct, rather than multiplied to a great people. Secondly, this theory furnishes no explanation for the marked similitude of flora of western America and eastern Asia.

The theory which is least vulnerable is the supposition that during an interglacial period, band after band of Mongolians crossed to America at Behring's Sea. Geologists furnish proof that the sea bed probably emerged at that time, thus forming a connecting isthmus between Asia and America. At present Behring's Sea is very shallow at Behring's Straits, averaging only about one hundred and fifty feet in depth. This supposition is the only plausible plan which can account for the continental connection which must have existed to allow the plants of Asia to migrate to America. Plants cannot swim or fly, they must migrate by land. Only by this theory could enough men come here to form a race, and the number of bands, which probably came, may partly explain the tribal differences among

the Indians. A small body in a low state of culture would breed, interbreed and eventually become extinct.

During the inter-glacial period, when we suppose that the bed of Behring's Sea was elevated, the climate was warm enough to allow free emigration. As proof of this we have the tropical shells found in Alaska which must have been carried there by the Japanese Stream. The presence of a warm ocean current would greatly modify the rigorous climate of Alaska. Still further, the fossils of tropical palms and ferns found in that region are absolute proof that there was no climatic reason to prevent the Mongolians from coming here.

Hence by these bare facts it seems most probable that America and Asia were at one time united at Behring's Straits, and that successive migrations of wandering Tartars invaded America and formed the germ for a new race. This swarming back and forth was apparently stopped by the formation of a glacier, and the submersion of the connecting land, thus cutting off further immigration. The immigrants were then left to wander as they pleased, and to live as best they could. This lack of intercourse with native Mongolians and the necessity of adapting themselves to the country, in countless centuries, gradually changed the Tartar into a distinctive type which is now known as the American Indian.

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BIRDS AND FASHIONS.

We do not doubt that this dead bird question will settle itself in time, in the simplest way in the world. Birds will simply go out of fashion. All the lawmakers and ornithologists can roar themselves blind, and not a sparrow will fall from a woman's hat; but let a still, small whisper be heard—"Birds are no longer worn"—and you will as soon see a woman wear blue overalls as a lid with a fowl on it. We hope, for the birds' sake, the day may come soon. And it is as likely to happen one day as another. Nobody knows who makes the laws for the women. How long is it since they all had holes in their ears, with gold and precious stones dangling from them? Yet you could look a long time now without finding a woman with pierced ears, and the young girls, bless them, have never heard of that savage custom. But when did their mothers forsake it, and why, and how did the idea strike them all over the world at once, after they had been boring their ears for thousands of years?

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