

regular form of government, and possessing a knowledge of hieroglyphic writing, the casting of metals, and the cultivation of maize and cotton;—evincing great skill in the mechanic arts, and chiefly remarkable for the ingenious astronomical arrangement of time in use among them.¹ They held their sway over the central portion of the country for four centuries, when they would appear to have been cut off by a famine and pestilence, and most of their cities deserted. Part of the remnant emigrated to the southward, towards the isthmus; a few remained in the sacred city of Cholula.

A hundred years' desolation followed, when about 1170, a second people, emigrating also from the north, sat down upon the deserted territory. They were also subject to a monarchical government; but were far less civilized than their predecessors: and in advance in the arts of life, as well as their simple worship of the sun, they seem to be assimilated to the Natchez of Louisiana.

Other tribes, the principal of which was the Acolhuans, followed. Under all their distinct appellations, yet speaking at most, dialects of the same language, it seems probable, that all these tribes were offsets from that teeming hive of human beings, of which the unknown seat lay somewhere to the northward, in the unexplored country to the north and east of California, between the western slope

¹ See page 172, &c.

of the rocky mountains, and the great Pacific ocean.¹

The Alcolhuan monarchy lasted for several centuries, till the rise of the Mexicans or Aztecs, the last of seven tribes of the Nahuatlacs, the people who had emigrated to Anahuac before the Acolhuans, put an end to it.

It appears that these seven tribes had departed from their northern home in company; but that after three considerable halts, disagreement produced a separation of the Aztec tribe from their brethren. The six proceeded to the south, and formed their settlements; while many years elapsed before the seventh, oracle-led, came to a final pause in the valley of Mexico, where they founded their principal city on the site of the present capital, amid the waters of the lake Tezcuco. Like most of the nations whose entry in the country I have thus briefly noticed, the Mexicans adopted as much of the agriculture, arts, and demicivilization of the Toltecs as was extant, and conformed to their astronomical division of time, mythology, and probably to many of their religious observances and customs.

	A. D.
¹ Immigration of the Toltecs into Anahuac	- - 607
Termination of the Toltec monarchy	- - - 1051
Immigration of the Chechimecas	- - - 1170
Immigration of the six tribes of the Nahuatlacs	- - 1178
Then followed the Alcolhuans, with whom the Chechimecas coalesce. The Mexicans, the seventh tribe of the Nahuatlacs build Tenochtitlan in	- - - 1325
See Humboldt's Researches.	

During their period of a hundred years wandering in Anahuac, before making their final settlement, the Mexicans are stated to have succumbed to the power of the Acolhuans. They finally adopted the monarchical form of government, and gaining the ascendancy, maintained it till the arrival of the Spaniards. At that time remnants of the most of the tribes here mentioned, were to be found, here or there in the country,—mingled with small primitive tribes of quite a distinct race, some of which are supposed, with apparent reason, to have inhabited New Spain before the arrival of the Toltecs.

And now, who built the Pyramids of San Juan Teotihuacan? who laid the foundations of the colossal Teocalli of Cholula? Some say the Toltecs—others the Olmecas or the Xicalancas, people of an equally remote origin;—and all agree in attributing them to the earliest times of which traditional record exists.

There is no saying by what people, or at what epoch they were raised, nor to what forms of idol-worship they were in succession consecrated; but from the tangled thread of tradition, sufficient may be unravelled to shew the original design of these monuments, and what were the facts of which they were to be the remembrance to future ages: and tradition, while perhaps it does the wise and skilful Toltecs but justice, when it ascribes to them the elaborate sculpture strewed over the face of New Spain and central America, might do them no wrong, in attributing these vast erections, and many of the great works extant on

the Table-land, to a far higher antiquity. At what epoch of the world's history, the vast western continent became peopled by the human race, is a question which has given rise to many discussions and different hypotheses.

The idea of its early occupation, would appear to be perfectly consistent both with analogous reasoning, and with the testimony to be gathered from the traditions and customs, civil and religious, of the Aborigines themselves, throughout the continent. Is it not to be supposed, that, however brought about, the same Almighty hand which scattered the congregated descendants of Noah abroad upon the face of all the earth, would fulfil its design with regard to this portion of the habitable surface of the globe also, and that speedily? And if the countries of the north, and the south, and the west, then received these allotted portions of the human family,—and the vast face of Asia became straightway peopled by the scattered multitude,—why should it be doubted, that the varied countries of the extreme east also lay open to the millions emigrating from the common cradle of the second race of man on the plains of Shinar? It has been strongly contested, that the deeper we pry into the history and habits, languages and institutions of the American people, the less reason we discover to believe that they are descended from any particular people of the old world: at the same time that a search into their early traditions and religious superstitions, appears to prove with undoubted certainty, that a connection once existed between them and the mass of mankind, and

that, whenever and however isolated, there can be no doubt, from the great analogies existing between them, of their having a common origin and early history.

The various hypotheses started again and again, attempting to trace the origin of the American aborigines to any particular people of the old continent,¹ whether Jew or gentile, have all hitherto failed in carrying conviction to the minds of the world in general; and it must be admitted that many of the arguments made use of to bolster up these theories, have only proved the ignorance of their advocates to the true sources of the institutions of Pagan idolatry throughout the globe. Wherever you direct your attention, to the barbarous tribes of the north and south, or the demi-civilized people of the central portions of the continent on both sides of the Isthmus, you find, under all modifications of tradition, proofs of their being of a common stock with other nations of the globe, and of a long and complete

¹ How far those may be in the right who would prove that the kingdoms of Mexico and Peru were founded by the troops sent by the Khan of Tartary, towards the close of the thirteenth century, to subdue Japan:—that Mango Capac, the first Inca of Peru, was the son of Kublai, the grandson of the Mogul conqueror, Genghis Khan:—and that the ancestor of Montezuma was a Mogul grandee in his train,—I am in no wise able to determine: but it is certainly a most singular circumstance, that suddenly, about that epoch, these two great powers sprung up simultaneously in different parts of the continent, and grew, and increased, and were in the end annihilated by the Spaniards, without having had any connection, or being known of one another, as far as can be ascertained.

separation—intermingled with great and striking analogies in their dogmas, customs, and mythological systems; which it is now admitted that all the great nations of antiquity,—Egypt, Chaldea, China, and Hindoostan, all drew from one common source, and probably learned in one common school, between the epoch of the Deluge, and the time of the Dispersion. Beyond these it has been asserted by many, that no affinity whatsoever with any particular people can be traced, except such as might be supposed to be the natural fruit of the human mind, its passions, and its necessities in its fallen state, devoid of the light of revelation, however isolated, and wherever placed.

The most benighted of the American tribes have retained the impression of the existence of a supreme Being, who was the 'Master of Life,' and the absolute Governor of the world. This is indisputable, at the same time that among most of them, the principal adoration or worship was reserved for a host of minor deities and idols.

All concurred in asserting the existence of an evil spirit or principle, whose works and suggestions were calculated to injure them, although the depravity and blindness of their nature led them to seek to propitiate him.

All seem to have forebodings of the immortality of the soul, admitting or implying that after the death of the body, their *thinking part* would still exist. They have generally professed belief in future rewards and punishments; each people picturing their heaven and

hell, according to the notions of felicity and misery imbibed from their early education and habits.

But this is not all.—Among whatever division of these Aborigines tradition is found to exist; you discover wrapped up in allegory, or distorted by perverted fancy, distinct testimony of the origin of all from common parents;—the idea that mankind had forfeited their original state of happiness; coupled with faint glimpses of the coming of One, who should work a regeneration, and should restore the golden age; and a distinct record of the destruction of the world by water, and of the preservation of one family, from whom, of course, each in his own fashion, derived its own progeniture. In all, in a greater or less degree, you detect that craving after something beyond human reason, which may serve as a guide; a craving, which at the same time that it is the most fertile source of credulous and superstitious belief, is sufficient to prove the absolute necessity of a divine revelation, and the impracticability of man dwelling in content upon earth without one. Further,—by the traditional histories of the people inhabiting central America, you are carried forward in a most extraordinary manner to the events attending the building of the tower of Babel, and the subsequent scattering of the human race.¹

¹ The people of Mechoachan preserved a tradition, that Coxcox, whom they call *Tezpi*, embarked in a spacious vessel with his wife, children, various animals and vegetables, whose use was important to man. After the waters began to decrease, *Tezpi* sent out from his ark a vulture, to ascertain the state of the waters,

But here, it has generally been considered, that all consistent analogies cease; and it would certainly appear that as, after the deluge, the human race lived together for five hundred years as one great family, subject to the same practices and superstitions, cultivating the same arts and sciences, and having one common tradition and history,—so, after the Dispersion, they spread in different bands over the face of the globe; carrying with them the knowledge, science, and so forth, which, till then, had been common to all, and which was certainly the base upon which the founders of nations in the old world, afterwards built their several systems, civil and religious.

It is perfectly comprehensible for the rest, that the principal features in the traditions of the Americans, whether barbarous or demi-civilized, should be continual emigration and removal from place to place; and also that the dim record of the great events I have alluded to, should be intertwined with others, referring to events of a far more recent date;—that the personages and characters of the earliest time should be strangely mingled with the history of such as may have existed ages after; and, that the seat which a people actually occupied, should be in their records, the very

but this bird, which feeds on carrion, did not return to him, in consequence of the number of dead bodies which were to be found every where strewed on the earth. *Tezpi* sent out other birds, of which the humming-bird alone returned, holding in its beak a branch covered with leaves. *Tezpi* seeing that the earth had begun to produce vegetation, left his vessel near the mountain of Colhuacan.—Humboldt, Res. II. 65.

theatre upon which the great events pictured by their traditions should have taken place.

The origin of the huge pyramidal monuments of Asia, in the traditional record remaining among the nations of antiquity, of the building of the tower of Babel,—which was itself but a symbolic representation of the mountain on which the ark rested after the deluge,—has been fully established by the pens of many able writers, and the resemblance between the latter, as described by the ancients, and the teocallis or temples of the ancient people of Anahuac, is too glaring to be overlooked or denied, by the most sceptically disposed.

There can be no reasonable doubt as to the strict analogy; and if there were, the traditions attached to the great pyramid of Cholula, among the rest, would remove it.

It is too interesting not to merit transcription.

‘ Before the great inundation,’ runs the tradition, ‘ which took place four thousand eight hundred years after the creation of the world, the country of Anahuac, was inhabited by giants; all of whom either perished in the inundation, or were transformed into fishes, save seven, who fled into caverns. When the waters subsided, one of the giants called Xelhua, surnamed the architect, went to Cholula, where as a memorial of the mountain Tlaloc, which had served for an asylum to himself and his six brethren, he built an artificial hill in form of a Pyramid. He ordered bricks to be made in the province of Tlanamalco, at the foot of the

Sierra of Cocotl: and to convey them to Cholula, he placed a file of men who passed them from hand to hand. The gods beheld with wrath this edifice, the top of which was to reach the clouds. Irritated at the daring attempt of Xelhua, they hurled fire on the Pyramid. Numbers of the workmen perished; the work was discontinued, and the monument was dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air.’¹

I have said, that up to the present time none of the arguments employed to prove the descent of the American aborigines, or of any part and distinct portion of them, from particular people of the ancient world, have seemingly gained universal belief. Nevertheless, it must be admitted, that the light thrown by late researches, and the collection of evidence from various quarters in favour of the plausibility of the theory, that the nations of central America at least, are of Hebrew origin, is of a character calculated to make the unprejudiced pause, in hazarding too positive an opinion. As to myself, all I can say is, that when I knew less of the subject, I felt inclined to throw more ridicule upon the idea than I dare do now; at the same time that I would not deem the question decided, despite the opinion of many laborious and enthusiastic writers, from the time of Las Casas, Sahagun, Boturini, and their cotemporaries and successors, down to those of Ethan Smith, Mrs. Simon, and Lord Kingsbury,—till it be clearly demonstrated that

¹ See Humboldt's Res. i. 96.