

nature, attached them the more strongly to these institutions, from their peculiarity. Thus, by degrees, and without violence, arose the great fabric of the Peruvian empire, composed of numerous independent and even hostile tribes, yet, under the influence of a common religion, common language, and common government, knit together as one nation, animated by a spirit of love for its institutions and devoted loyalty to its sovereign. What a contrast to the condition of the Aztec monarchy, on the neighboring continent, which, composed of the like heterogeneous materials, without any internal principle of cohesion, was only held together by the stern pressure, from without, of physical force! Why the Peruvian monarchy should have fared no better than its rival, in its conflict with European civilization, will appear in the following pages.



## CHAPTER III.

PERUVIAN RELIGION.—DEITIES.—GORGEOUS TEMPLES.—  
FESTIVALS.—VIRGINS OF THE SUN.—MARRIAGE.

It is a remarkable fact, that many, if not most, of the rude tribes inhabiting the vast American continent, however disfigured their creeds may have been in other respects by a childish superstition, had attained to the sublime conception of one Great Spirit, the Creator of the Universe, who, immaterial in his own nature, was not to be dishonored by an attempt at visible representation, and who, pervading all space, was not to be circumscribed within the walls of a temple. Yet these elevated ideas, so far beyond the ordinary range of the untutored intellect, do not seem to have led to the practical consequences that might have been expected; and few of the American nations have shown much solicitude for the maintenance of a religious worship, or found in their faith a powerful spring of action.

But, with progress in civilization, ideas more akin to those of civilized communities were gradually unfolded; a liberal provision was made, and a separate order instituted, for the services of religion, which were conducted with a minute and magnificent ceremonial, that challenged comparison, in some respects, with that of the most polished nations of Christendom. This was the case with the nations inhabiting the table-land of North America, and with the natives of Bogotá, Quito, Peru, and the other elevated regions on the great Southern continent. It was, above all, the case with the Peruvians, who claimed a divine original for the founders of their empire, whose laws all rested on a divine sanction, and whose domestic institutions and for-



eign wars were alike directed to preserve and propagate their faith. Religion was the basis of their polity, the very condition, as it were, of their social existence. The government of the Incas, in its essential principles, was a theocracy.

Yet, though religion entered so largely into the fabric and conduct of the political institutions of the people, their mythology, that is, the traditionary legends by which they affected to unfold the mysteries of the universe, was exceedingly mean and puerile. Scarce one of their traditions—except the beautiful one respecting the founders of their royal dynasty—is worthy of note, or throws much light on their own antiquities, or the primitive history of man. Among the traditions of importance is one of the deluge, which they held in common with so many of the nations in all parts of the globe, and which they related with some particulars that bear resemblance to a Mexican legend.<sup>1</sup>

Their ideas in respect to a future state of being deserve more attention. They admitted the existence of the soul hereafter, and connected with this a belief in the resurrection of the body. They assigned two distinct places for the residence of the good and of the wicked, the latter of which they fixed in the centre of the earth. The good they supposed were to pass a luxurious life of tranquillity and ease, which comprehended their highest notions of happiness. The wicked were to expiate their crimes by ages of wearisome labor. They associated with these ideas a belief in an evil principle or spirit, bearing the name of

<sup>1</sup> They related, that, after the deluge, seven persons issued from a cave where they had saved themselves, and by them the earth was re-peopled. One of the traditions of the Mexicans deduced their descent, and that of the kindred tribes, in like manner, from seven persons who came from as many caves in Aztlan. (Conf. Acosta, lib. 6, cap. 19; lib. 7, cap. 2.—Ondegardo, Rel. Prim., MS.) The story of the deluge is told by different writers with many variations, in some of which it is not difficult to detect the plastic hand of the Christian convert.

Cupay, whom they did not attempt to propitiate by sacrifices, and who seems to have been only a shadowy personification of sin, that exercised little influence over their conduct.<sup>2</sup>

It was this belief in the resurrection of the body, which led them to preserve the body with so much solicitude,—by a simple process, however, that, unlike the elaborate embalming of the Egyptians, consisted in exposing it to the action of the cold, exceedingly dry, and highly rarefied atmosphere of the mountains.<sup>3</sup> As they believed that the occupations in the future world would have great resemblance to those of the present, they buried with the deceased noble some of his apparel, his utensils, and, frequently, his treasures; and completed the gloomy ceremony by sacrificing his wives and favorite domestics, to bear him company and do him service in the happy regions beyond the clouds.<sup>4</sup> Vast mounds of an irregular, or, more frequently, oblong shape, penetrated by galleries running at right angles to each other, were raised over the dead, whose

<sup>2</sup> Ondegardo, Rel. Seg., MS.—Gomara, Hist. de las Ind., cap. 123.—Garcilasso, Com. Real., Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 2, 7.

One might suppose that the educated Peruvians—if I may so speak—imagined the common people had no souls, so little is said of their opinions as to the condition of these latter in a future life, while they are diffuse on the prospects of the higher orders, which they fondly believed were to keep pace with their condition here.

<sup>3</sup> Such, indeed, seems to be the opinion of Garcilasso, though some writers speak of resinous and other applications for embalming the body. The appearance of the royal mummies found at Cuzco, as reported both by Ondegardo and Garcilasso, makes it probable that no foreign substance was employed for their preservation.

<sup>4</sup> Ondegardo, Rel. Seg., MS.

The Licentiate says that this usage continued even after the Conquest; and that he had saved the life of more than one favorite domestic, who had fled to him for protection, as they were about to be sacrificed to the Manes of their deceased lords. *Ibid.*, ubi supra.



dried bodies or mummies have been found in considerable numbers, sometimes erect, but more often in the sitting posture, common to the Indian tribes of both continents. Treasures of great value have also been occasionally drawn from these monumental deposits, and have stimulated speculators to repeated excavations with the hope of similar good-fortune. It was a lottery like that of searching after mines, but where the chances have proved still more against the adventurers.<sup>5</sup>

The Peruvians, like so many other of the Indian races, acknowledged a Supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, whom they adored under the different names of Pachacamac and Viracocha.<sup>6</sup> No temple was raised to this invisible Being, save one only in the valley which took its name from the deity himself, not far from the Spanish city of Lima. Even this temple had existed there before the country came under the sway of the Incas, and was the great resort of Indian pilgrims from remote parts of the land; a circumstance which suggests the idea, that the worship of this Great Spirit, though countenanced, per-

<sup>5</sup> Yet these sepulchral mines have sometimes proved worth the digging. Sarmiento speaks of gold to the value of 100,000 *castellanos*, as occasionally buried with the Indian lords; (Relacion, MS., cap. 57;) and Las Casas—not the best authority in numerical estimates—says that treasures worth more than half a million of ducats had been found, within twenty years after the Conquest, in the tombs near Truxillo. (Œuvres, ed. par Llorente, (Paris, 1822,) tom. II. p. 192.) Baron Humboldt visited the sepulchre of a Peruvian prince in the same quarter of the country, whence a Spaniard in 1576 drew forth a mass of gold worth a million of dollars! Vues des Cordillères, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup> *Pachacamac* signifies "He who sustains or gives life to the universe." The name of the great deity is sometimes expressed by both Pachacamac and Viracocha combined. (See Balboa, Hist. du Pérou, chap. 6.—Acosta, lib. 6, cap. 21.) An old Spaniard finds in the popular meaning of *Viracocha*, "foam of the sea," an argument for deriving the Peruvian civilization from some voyager from the Old World. Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.

haps, by their accommodating policy, did not originate with the Peruvian princes.<sup>7</sup>

The deity whose worship they especially inculcated, and which they never failed to establish wherever their banners were known to penetrate, was the Sun. It was he, who, in a particular manner, presided over the destinies of man; gave light and warmth to the nations, and life to the vegetable world; whom they revered as the father of their royal dynasty, the founder of their empire; and whose temples rose in every city and almost every village throughout the land, while his altars smoked with burnt offerings,—a form of sacrifice peculiar to the Peruvians among the semi-civilized nations of the New World.<sup>8</sup>

Besides the Sun, the Incas acknowledged various objects of worship in some way or other connected with this principal deity. Such was the Moon, his sister-wife; the Stars, revered as part of her heavenly train,—though the fairest of them, Venus, known to the Peruvians by the name of Chasca, or the "youth with the long and curling locks," was adored as the page of the Sun, whom he attends so closely in his rising and in his setting. They dedicated temples also to the Thunder and Lightning,<sup>9</sup> in whom they

<sup>7</sup> Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.—Sarmiento, Relacion, MS., cap. 27.

Ulloa notices the extensive ruins of brick, which mark the probable site of the temple of Pachacamac, attesting by their present appearance its ancient magnificence and strength. Mémoires Philosophiques, Historiques, Physiques, (Paris, 1787,) trad. Fr., p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> At least, so says Dr. McCulloh; and no better authority can be required on American antiquities. (Researches, p. 392.) Might he not have added *barbarous* nations, also?

<sup>9</sup> Thunder, Lightning, and Thunderbolt, could be all expressed by the Peruvians in one word, *Illapa*. Hence some Spaniards have inferred a knowledge of the Trinity in the natives! "The Devil stole all he could," exclaims Herrera, with righteous indignation. (Hist. General, dec. 5, lib. 4, cap. 5.) These, and even rasher conclusions, (see Acosta, lib. 5, cap. 28,) are scouted by Garcilasso, as inventions



recognized the Sun's dread ministers, and to the Rainbow, whom they worshipped as a beautiful emanation of their glorious deity.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to these, the subjects of the Incas enrolled among their inferior deities many objects in nature, as the elements, the winds, the earth, the air, great mountains and rivers, which impressed them with ideas of sublimity and power, or were supposed in some way or other to exercise a mysterious influence over the destinies of man.<sup>11</sup> They adopted also a notion, not unlike that professed by

of Indian converts, willing to please the imaginations of their Christian teachers. (Com. Real., Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 5, 6; lib. 3, cap. 21.) Imposture, on the one hand, and credulity on the other, have furnished a plentiful harvest of absurdities, which has been diligently gathered in by the pious antiquary of a later generation.

<sup>10</sup> Garcilasso's assertion, that these heavenly bodies were objects of reverence as holy things, but not of worship, (Com. Real., Parte 1, lib. 2, cap. 1, 23,) is contradicted by Ondegardo, Rel. Seg., MS.,—Dec. de la Aud. Real., MS.,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 5, lib. 4, cap. 4,—Gomara, Hist. de las Ind., cap. 121,—and, I might add, by almost every writer of authority whom I have consulted. It is contradicted, in a manner, by the admission of Garcilasso himself, that these several objects were all personified by the Indians as living beings, and had temples dedicated to them as such, with their effigies delineated in the same manner as was that of the Sun in his dwelling. Indeed, the effort of the historian to reduce the worship of the Incas to that of the Sun alone is not very reconcilable with what he elsewhere says of the homage paid to Pachacamac, above all, and to Rimac, the great oracle of the common people. The Peruvian mythology was, probably, not unlike that of Hindostan, where, under two, or at most three, principal deities, were assembled a host of inferior ones, to whom the nation paid religious homage, as personifications of the different objects in nature.

<sup>11</sup> Ondegardo, Rel. Seg., MS.

These consecrated objects were termed *huacas*,—a word of most prolific import; since it signified a temple, a tomb, any natural object remarkable for its size or shape, in short, a cloud of meanings, which by their contradictory sense have thrown incalculable confusion over the writings of historians and travellers.

some of the schools of ancient philosophy, that everything on earth had its archetype or idea, its *mother*, as they emphatically styled it, which they held sacred, as, in some sort, its spiritual essence.<sup>12</sup> But their system, far from being limited even to these multiplied objects of devotion, embraced within its ample folds the numerous deities of the conquered nations, whose images were transported to the capital, where the burdensome charges of their worship were defrayed by their respective provinces. It was a rare stroke of policy in the Incas, who could thus accommodate their religion to their interests.<sup>13</sup>

But the worship of the Sun constituted the peculiar care of the Incas, and was the object of their lavish expenditure. The most ancient of the many temples dedicated to this divinity was in the Island of Titicaca, whence the royal founders of the Peruvian line were said to have proceeded. From this circumstance, this sanctuary was held in peculiar veneration. Everything which belonged to it, even the broad fields of maize, which surrounded the tem-

<sup>12</sup> "La orden por donde fundavan sus huacas que ellos llamavan á las Idolatrias hera porque decian que todas criava el sol i que les dava madre por madre que mostravan á la tierra, porque decian que tenia madre, i tenian lé echo su vulto i sus adoratorios, i al fuego decian que tambien tenia madre i al mais i á las otras sementeras i á las ovejas iganado decian que tenian madre, i a la chocha ques el brevaje que ellos usan decian que el vinagre della hera la madre i lo reverenciavan i llamavan mama agua madre del vinagre, i á cada cosa adoravan destas de su manera." Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.

<sup>13</sup> Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.

So it seems to have been regarded by the Licentiate Ondegardo. "E los Idolos estaban en aq<sup>1</sup> galpon grande de la casa del Sol, y cada Idolo destes tenia su servicio y gastos y mugeres, y en la casa del Sol le iban á hacer reverencia los que venian de su provincia, para lo qual é sacrificios que se hacian proveian de su misma tierra ordinaria é muy abundantemente por la misma orden que lo hacian quando estaba en la misma provincia, que daba gran autoridad á mi parecer é aun fuerza á estos Ingas que cierto me causó gran admiracion." Rel. Seg., MS.



ple, and formed part of its domain, imbibed a portion of its sanctity. The yearly produce was distributed among the different public magazines, in small quantities to each, as something that would sanctify the remainder of the store. Happy was the man who could secure even an ear of the blessed harvest for his own granary!<sup>14</sup>

But the most renowned of the Peruvian temples, the pride of the capital, and the wonder of the empire, was at Cuzco, where, under the munificence of successive sovereigns, it had become so enriched, that it received the name of *Coricancha*, or "the Place of Gold." It consisted of a principal building and several chapels and inferior edifices, covering a large extent of ground in the heart of the city, and completely encompassed by a wall, which, with the edifices, was all constructed of stone. The work was of the kind already described in the other public buildings of the country, and was so finely executed, that a Spaniard, who saw it in its glory, assures us, he could call to mind only two edifices in Spain, which, for their workmanship, were at all to be compared with it!<sup>15</sup> Yet this substantial, and, in some respects, magnificent structure, was thatched with straw!

The interior of the temple was the most worthy of admiration. It was literally a mine of gold. On the western wall was emblazoned a representation of the deity, consist-

<sup>14</sup> Garcilasso, Com. Real., Parte 1, lib. 3, cap. 25.

<sup>15</sup> "Tenia este Templo en circuito mas de quarto cientos pasos, todo cercado de una muralla fuerte, labrado todo el edificio de cantera muy excelente de fina piedra, muy bien puesta y asentada, y algunas piedras eran muy grandes y soberbias, no tenian mezcla de tierra ni cal, sino con el betun que ellos suelen hacer sus edificios, y estan tan bien labradas estas piedras que no se les parece mezcla ni juntura ninguna. En toda España no he visto cosa que pueda comparar á estas paredes y postura de piedra, sino a la torre que llaman la Calahorra que está junto con la puente de Cordoba, y á una obra que vi en Toledo, quando fui a presentar la primera parte de mi Cronica al Príncipe D<sup>n</sup> Felipe." Sarmiento, Relacion, MS., cap. 24.

ing of a human countenance, looking forth from amidst innumerable rays of light, which emanated from it in every direction, in the same manner as the sun is often personified with us. The figure was engraved on a massive plate of gold of enormous dimensions, thickly powdered with emeralds and precious stones.<sup>16</sup> It was so situated in front of the great eastern portal, that the rays of the morning sun fell directly upon it at its rising, lighting up the whole apartment with an effulgence that seemed more than natural, and which was reflected back from the golden ornaments with which the walls and ceiling were everywhere incrustated. Gold, in the figurative language of the people, was "the tears wept by the sun,"<sup>17</sup> and every part of the interior of the temple glowed with burnished plates and studs of the precious metal. The cornices, which surrounded the walls of the sanctuary, were of the same costly material; and a broad belt or frieze of gold, let into the stone-work, encompassed the whole exterior of the edifice.<sup>18</sup>

Adjoining the principal structure were several chapels of smaller dimensions. One of them was consecrated to the Moon, the deity held next in reverence, as the mother of the Incas. Her effigy was delineated in the same manner as that of the Sun, on a vast plate that nearly covered one

<sup>16</sup> Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.—Cieza de Leon, Cronica, cap. 44, 92.

"La figura del Sol, muy grande, hecha de oro obrada muy primamente engastada en muchas piedras ricas." Sarmiento, Relacion, MS., cap. 24.

<sup>17</sup> "I al oro acimismo decian que era lagrimas que el Sol llorava." Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.

<sup>18</sup> Sarmiento, Relacion, MS., cap. 24.—Antig. y Monumentos del Peru, MS.

"Cercada junto á la techumbre de una plancha de oro de palmo i medio de ancho i lo mismo tenian por de dentro en cada bohío ó casa i aposento." (Conq. i Pob. del Piru, MS.) "Tenia una cinta de planchas de oro de anchor de mas de un palmo enlazadas en las piedras." Pedro Pizarro, Descub. y Conq., MS.



side of the apartment. But this plate, as well as all the decorations of the building, was of silver, as suited to the pale, silvery light of the beautiful planet. There were three other chapels, one of which was dedicated to the host of Stars, who formed the bright court of the Sister of the Sun; another was consecrated to his dread ministers of vengeance, the Thunder and the Lightning; and a third, to the Rainbow, whose many-colored arch spanned the walls of the edifice with hues almost as radiant as its own. There were besides several other buildings, or insulated apartments, for the accommodation of the numerous priests who officiated in the services of the temple.<sup>19</sup>

All the plate, the ornaments, the utensils of every description, appropriated to the uses of religion, were of gold or silver. Twelve immense vases of the latter metal stood on the floor of the great saloon, filled with grain of the Indian corn;<sup>20</sup> the censers for the perfumes, the ewers which held the water for sacrifice, the pipes which conducted it through subterraneous channels into the buildings, the reservoirs that received it, even the agricultural implements used in the gardens of the temple, were all of the same rich materials. The gardens, like those described, belonging to the royal palaces, sparkled with flowers of gold and silver, and various imitations of the vegetable kingdom. Animals, also, were to be found there,—among

<sup>19</sup> Sarmiento, *Relacion*, MS., cap. 24.—Garcilasso, *Com. Real.*, Parte 1, lib. 3, cap. 21.—Pedro Pizarro, *Descub. y Conq.*, MS.

<sup>20</sup> "El bulto del Sol tenian mui grande de oro, i todo el servicio desta casa era de plata i oro, i tenian doze horones de plata blanca que dos hombres no abrazarian cada uno quadrados, i eran mas altos que una buena pica donde hechavan el maiz que havian de dar al Sol, segun ellos decian que comiese." *Conq. i Pob. del Piru*, MS.

The original, as the Spanish reader perceives, says each of these silver vases or bins was as high as a good lance, and so large that two men with outspread arms could barely encompass them. As this might, perhaps, embarrass even the most accommodating faith, I have preferred not to become responsible for any particular dimensions.

which the llama, with its golden fleece, was most conspicuous,—executed in the same style, and with a degree of skill, which, in this instance, probably, did not surpass the excellence of the material.<sup>21</sup>

If the reader sees in this fairy picture only the romantic coloring of some fabulous *El Dorado*, he must recall what has been said before in reference to the palaces of the Incas, and consider that these "Houses of the Sun," as they were styled, were the common reservoir into which flowed all the streams of public and private benefaction throughout the empire. Some of the statements, through credulity, and others, in the desire of exciting admiration, may be greatly exaggerated; but, in the coincidence of contemporary testimony, it is not easy to determine the exact line which should mark the measure of our skepticism. Certain it is, that the glowing picture I have given is warranted by those who saw these buildings in their pride, or shortly after they had been despoiled by the cupidity of their countrymen. Many of the costly articles were buried by the natives, or thrown into the waters of the rivers and the lakes; but enough remained to attest the unprecedented opulence of these religious establishments. Such things as were in their nature portable were speedily removed, to gratify the craving of the Conquerors, who

<sup>21</sup> Levinus Apollonius, fol. 38.—Garcilasso, *Com. Real.*, Parte 1, lib. 3, cap. 24.—Pedro Pizarro, *Descub. y Conq.*, MS.

"Tenian un Jardin que los Terrones eran pedazos de oro fino y estaban artificiosamente sembrado de maizales los cuales eran oro asi las Cañas de ello como las ojas y mazorcas, y estaban tambien plantados que aunque hiciesen recios bientos no se arrancaban. Sin todo esto tenian hechas mas de veinte obejas de oro con sus Corderos y los Pastores con sus ondas y cayados que las guardaban hecho de este metal; havia mucha cantedad de Tinajas de oro y de Plata y esmeraldas, vasos, ollas y todo genero de vasijas todo de oro fino; por otras Paredes tenian esculpidas y pintadas otras mayores cosas, en fin era uno de los ricos Templos que hubo en el mundo." Sarmiento, *Relacion*, MS., cap. 24.