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# Chinigchinich

A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN, CUSTOMS,  
AND TRADITIONS OF THE INDIANS AT THE MISSIONARY ESTABLISHMENT  
OF ST. JUAN CAPISTRANO, ALTA-CALIFORNIA

BY THE REVEREND FATHER  
**FRIAR GERONIMO BOSCAN**

Translated by  
**Alfred Robinson**

**Wiley and Putnam, New York**  
**[1846]**

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## Translator's Introduction

IN THE TRANSLATION OF THIS MANUSCRIPT, I HAVE endeavored to retain the original style of the Spanish writer, and have adhered, as closely as practicable, to a literal version of the same.

It is apparent that Father Boscana intended to confine his description of the Indians to those who were made converts at the Point called St. Juan Capistrano; but I presume the same will correspond with the character of the natives generally, of Upper California. The mission of St. Juan was first founded in 1776, and, like those which preceded it, was conducted under the administration of two Friars of the St. Franciscan Order. Its domains were large, and distributed into numerous farms, for the purpose of domesticating cattle. A guard of three or four soldiers, and a sergeant, enforced the will of the missionaries, and kept in check such unfriendly Indians, as were not inclined to avail themselves of the advantages of civilization. Under this kind of administration, the natives were taught many trades; and became, not only useful to themselves, but also to the community. Hardly any attention was paid to the improvement of their minds, beyond the forms and rules of their religious belief, so that scarcely any of them could read, and none could write. They have been careful to preserve the traditions and customs of their ancestors, and are permitted to indulge in the observance of them, on their feast days, which occur several times during the year. Thus, I have had frequent opportunities to witness many of the absurdities, and extravagances, described by Father Boscana.

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The manuscript ends rather abruptly; and it is uncertain if the holy Father ever intended it for publication. After his death, in 1831, it was found among his effects, with other writings, which came into the possession of the Syndic of the Missions, who kindly presented it to me. The reader will decide as to its merits.

A. R.



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## Introduction

The motives which have induced me to write the present history, have been, principally, to fulfil my obligations as Apostolical Missionary; to have before me the means of presenting to these poor Indians an account of the errors entertained by them during their state of heathenism, and to contrast the same with the light they now enjoy as Christians. Also, to leave to my successors such instruction, as will relieve them from the trouble and labor that I experienced, in procuring a knowledge of the belief, usages, and customs, *i.e.*, the Religion, which these natives possessed in their heathen state; persuaded as I am, that being ignorant of this, it will be difficult to remove their erroneous belief, and give them an understanding of the true Religion. It is difficult, I confess, if unacquainted with their language, to penetrate their secrets, as they do not *all* understand the signification of their usages and customs; this knowledge being confined to the chiefs of their tribes, and the old men who officiate as priests; and when they reveal any thing, to their children, it is only to such as they intend to rear for their successors, and these, are enjoined to keep fast the secrets, and not communicate them to any one, under pain of severe chastisement. A veil is cast over all their religious observances, and the mystery with which they are performed, seems to perpetuate respect for them, and preserve an ascendancy over the people. This is the reason that the ceremonies of the dances, in their grand feasts, (which are properly

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exercises of religion,) cannot be understood. They have never had the use of writings, letters, or characters of any description. All their knowledge is from tradition, which they preserve in songs for their dances, and these are introduced, by the chief, at their festivities, in a language distinct from that, in common use. Others unite with them, but without understanding the meaning of what they do, or articulate; perhaps, the songs thus introduced, are in the primitive language.

Perchance, some one may enquire, how I have obtained so much information, relative to the secrets or religion of these natives, when, up to the present time, no other Father has written on the subject.

We are to suppose it a truth, that there are many things hidden, not only, in the Divine Prophecies, but in human events, also, which cannot be comprehended, or known but by the Divine Will; and as God, almost always, makes use of the most humble instruments for his purpose, to me, he assigned three aged Indians, the youngest of whom was over seventy years of age. They knew all the secrets, for two of them were *Capitans*, and the other a *Pul*, who were well instructed in the mysteries. By gifts, endearments, and kindness, I elicited from them their secrets, with their explanations; and, by witnessing the ceremonies which they performed, I learned, by degrees, their mysteries. Thus, by devoting a portion of the nights to profound meditation, and comparing their actions with their disclosures, I was enabled, after a long time, to acquire a knowledge of their religion. There are yet, many things, which I do not understand, because they have not been disclosed to me, with that clearness that I could wish, but, always so confusedly, that I was unable to penetrate their meaning.



# Chapter I

## Of What Race of People Are These Indians?

To commence this relation, it may be proper, in the first place, to search after the origin, or lineage of these Indians of New California. But it is impossible to find any account of where they originated; as those of this mission, (St. Juan Capistrano) and indeed those of all the missions in the province, have no tradition, and are entirely ignorant of their descent. Without examining into the opinion of others, as to their being descendants of the Jews, Carthagenians or Phœnicians, I shall confine myself to the class that came to populate the Mexican Territory, and from these have doubtless descended the natives of California.

The tribes that populated the Mexican Territory at different epochs, according to the writings of Father Torquemada in his "Monarquia Indiana," were four; and as follows: "Tulticas," "Chichimecas," "Aculnas," and "Mexicanos." Of these distinct tribes, my opinion is, that the race of California proceeded from the Chichimecas, because, from the Tulticas they could not have originated, as is manifest from their characters, and inclinations; for "Tultica" signifies Art, and these Indians do not manifest the least industry or ingenuity. They are, in every respect, like the Chichimecas, according to the description given of them by Father Torquemada. "Near the northern boundary of Mexico there was a province, the principal city of which was called Amaqueme; its inhabitants, Chichimecas, were people entirely naked, fierce in appearance,

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and great warriors. Their arms the bow and arrows; their ordinary sustenance game and wild fruits, and their habitations were caves, or huts made of straw. As it was their manner of life habitually to roam about among the mountains, in search of game, they paid but little or no attention to the art of building." This is the picture given by Father Torquemada of the Chichimecas, and comparing them with the natives of California, they are found the same in every respect.

Although the habitations of the said Chichimecas formed a kind of village, still they had no police, nor acknowledged any higher power than that of "Capitan" or chief, and toward him was observed but little respect; indeed, hardly sufficient to designate him from the rest. They did not live permanently in one place, but roamed about, from spot to spot, as the scarcity of game compelled them. Of medicine they had no knowledge; consequently, no means of curing the sick, and the bodies of their dead were immediately burnt. Idolatry prevailed among them, but not a belief in a plurality of gods; neither did they sacrifice, as was the custom among the Mexican Indians.

Having thus described the Chichimecas, we see precisely the character of the Californians, with the exception, that the last mentioned lived in villages, and were governed by a chief, whom they entitled "Not," signifying lord, or master; he possessed but little influence over his subjects, and they in return entertained no respect for his authority, as we shall see hereafter. The name, *Chichimeca*, signifies a "sucker." Their principal sustenance was the flesh of animals taken in hunting excursions, and which was generally consumed in a raw state, after sucking all the blood; and from this, arose the term Chichimeca.

The Californian, often made his repast from the uncooked animal, and at the present day, flesh, very slightly cooked, is quite common among them. They also extract the blood in like manner, and I have seen many instances of their taking a rabbit, and sucking its blood with eagerness, previous to consuming the flesh in a crude state. The diversities of language, and other peculiarities, render it extremely difficult to ascertain to a certainty, if all the inhabitants of Alta California descended from the Chichimecas. Those between Monterey and the extreme northern boundary of the Mexican domain, shave their heads close; while those to the south, between Santa Barbara and towards St.





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Lucas, wear their hair long, and take pride in cultivating its length as a mark of beauty. Those between Santa Barbara and Monterey, differ considerably from these, as regards their habits; being much more industrious, and appear an entirely distinct race. They formed, from shells, a kind of money, which passed current among them, and they constructed, out of logs, very swift and excellent canoes for fishing. Their dead, they interred in places appropriated to that purpose. The diversity of language is so great, in California, that almost every 15 or 20 leagues, you find a distinct dialect; so different, that in no way does one resemble the other. It is natural to suppose, that the Chichimeca nation, would have had but one language, notwithstanding, it might have varied a little, from one place to another, as is seen in other parts of the world, where are to be met with certain provincialisms, which are not to be found in the original tongue. But here, it is not so; for the natives of St. Diego cannot understand a word of the language used in this mission, and in like manner, those in the neighborhood of St. Barbara, and farther north. If it should be suggested, that people thus separated, could have corrupted the original language, in all its phraseology, and manner of pronunciation, I would reply, that such *might* be the case; but still, there would be some connection, or similarity, so that they could understand each other. This has placed me somewhat in perplexity; and I am without means of discovering the cause of such dissimilarity in a spot, confined like California; and I shall leave the subject to some of my brother missionaries, or to those who may peruse these writings, to explain.

## Chapter II

### On the Creation of the Universe

Although this chapter has for its title, the *creation of the world*, the reader must not suppose it has any relation to the account given by Moses in the first chapter of Genesis. I do not intend any such thing; but merely to make known the belief of these Indians in their heathen state. We must not be surprised, if there be found many contradictions and extravagances; for these rude Indians were ignorant of the true God, without faith, without law, or king, and governed by their own natural ideas, or by tradition; we should, therefore, not wonder at their inconsistencies, and want of discernment to discriminate the truth from falsehood; for, deprived of the light of the Gospel, they ever walked in heathen darkness. Before I commence with their ideas of the world's origin, I must premise, that the Indians of this particular location (the mission of St. Juan Capistrano) account for the creation of the world in one way, and those of the interior (about 3 or 4 leagues distant) in another. In substance the same. One, as fabulous as the other. For this reason I will give both relations, and commence, in the first place, with the account of those in the interior.

Their belief is this: before this world was, there existed *one above*, and *another below*. These two were *brother and sister*. The one above signified the *heavens*, and the one below, represented the *earth*. But the heaven and earth here mentioned, *were not as they appear now to us*, but of another nature, which they could not explain. We may, therefore,



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consider them as imaginary. All below was dark, without sun, moon, or stars. The brother came unto the sister, and brought the light, which is the sun, saying he would take her unto him to wife; she resisted, reminding him of their affinity, and desired that he would return and leave her in peace. But in time they were wedded, and the first-fruits of their union were earth and sand. After which, were produced rocks and stones of all kinds, particularly flints, for their arrows; then, trees and shrubbery; next, herbs and grass; and again, animals, principally the kind which they eat. Finally, was born one that they called *Ouiot*. This was an animated being. The father and mother of *Ouiot* were not mortals, as we said before, but were of a nature they could not explain. This said *Ouiot* had children, and was king, or grand captain of the first family; and, as I understand it, we are to suppose them, like their parent, a species of animal, distinct from any which now inhabit the earth; or, in other words, imaginary phantoms. Upon enquiring how this grand captain could have had children, and what was the name of his partner, they could not explain; but he had children, and many, both male and female.

As Captain *Ouiot's* descendants multiplied, the first born of his mother, (the earth,) increased in size, and extended itself to the south; (it will be well to state here, that it is the general belief of the Indians that they originated in the north) and as they increased the earth continued to augment. Captain *Ouiot* having become aged, his eldest vassals formed a conspiracy to destroy him; alleging as a reason for so doing, that his years prevented his attending to their wants; and, in fact, that he was too old to govern. A consultation was held, to resolve upon what method to carry into execution their designs, and it was decided that he should be poisoned. They mixed a poisonous ingredient in his beverage, and administered it to him. After drinking of this he immediately became sick, and left the mountains where he had lived, and resorted to the place which is now occupied by the beach, or sea shore; for it is supposed, that at this time, there was no sea. His mother, hearing of the danger of her son, mixed for him a remedy, which was prepared in a large shell, and placed it in the sun to ferment. The "Coyote," attracted to the spot by its fragrance, overturned it, and thus frustrated the intention of his mother. At length the captain died; and, although

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he told them that in a short time he should return, and live with them again, they never have seen him more. I must state, that, at this time, there was no kind of grain or flesh to eat, and their food was the earth, which, according to their description, I understand to have been a kind of white clay, often used upon their heads by way of ornament. After the death of "*Ouiot*," they remained, for some time, undecided, whether to inter his remains, or to burn them; however, it was determined by the elders, that they should do the latter. The fire was prepared, the body placed upon a pile erected for the occasion, and fearing that the "*Coyote*" would come, and eat him, they sent out and burnt his retreat; but he had made his escape, and soon presented himself at the place of sacrifice, declaring he would be burnt with his captain; and, suddenly leaping upon the pile, he tore off from his stomach a large piece of flesh, and ate it. The remainder of the body was afterwards consumed by the flames.

The name of the *Coyote* was *Eyacque*, which implies second captain; and from this time they changed his name to that of *Eno*; signifying a thief and cannibal, and thieves were generally termed *Eyoton*, derived from *Eno* and *Ouiot*.

After burning the body, a general council was called, to make provision for the collecting of grain and seeds; the acorns, &c., &c., and the flesh of animals; such as deer, rabbits, hares, squirrels, rats, and all kinds which they fed upon. While consulting together, they beheld for several days, and at distinct times, a spectre, unlike themselves, who appeared and disappeared; sometimes in one direction and sometimes in another. Alarmed at its appearance, they determined to speak to it. Having summoned it to their presence, inquiries were made if he were their Captain *Ouiot*. "I am not *Ouiot*," said he, "but a captain of greater power; and my name is *Chinigchinich*. My habitation is above. On what matters are you debating, and why are you thus congregated?" he inquired. "Our captain is dead," said they "we have come to his interment, and were discussing in what manner to maintain ourselves upon the seeds of the fields, and the flesh of animals without being obliged to live upon the clay, or earth, as we have done."

Having listened to their answer, he spake unto them, and said, I create all things; I will make you another people, and from this time,



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one of you shall be endowed with the power to cause it to rain, another to influence the dews, another to produce the acorn, another to create rabbits, another ducks, another geese, another deer." In fine, each one received his particular occupation, and power to create such food as they now eat. Even now, such as claim to be descendants of this people, pretend to be endowed with the same powers, and are frequently consulted as to their harvests, and receive in return for their advice, a gift of some kind, either in money or clothing, and, in fact, the result of their harvest depends entirely upon the maintenance given to these sorcerers, and the supplying all their necessities. To offend them, would be to destroy all their productions of flesh and grain.

Chinigchinich, after having conferred the power, as we have said, upon the descendants of Ouiot, about the time of "dixet et factum est," created man, forming him of clay found upon the borders of a lake. Both male and female he created, and the Indians of the present day are descendants of these. He then said unto them these words—"Him who obeyeth me not, or believeth not in my teachings, I will chastise—to him I will send bears to bite, serpents to sting, misfortunes, infirmities, and death." He taught them the laws they were to observe for the future, as well as their rites and ceremonies.

His first commandment was to build a temple, where they might pay to him adoration, offer up sacrifices, and have religious worship. The plan of this building was regulated by himself. From this time they looked upon Chinigchinich as God. The Indians say, he had neither father nor mother, and they are entirely ignorant of his origin. The name Chinigchinich signifies "all-powerful" or "almighty," and it is believed by the Indians, that he was ever present, and in all places: he saw every thing, although it might be in the darkest night, but no one could see him. He was a friend to the good, but the wicked he chastised.

Chinigchinich was known under three distinct names, as follows: *Saor*, *Quaguar*, and *Tobet*. Each one possessing its particular signification, denoting diversity or a difference of times. *Saor*, signifies or means, that period in which Chinigchinich could not dance; *Quaguar*, when enabled to dance; and *Tobet*, when he danced enrobed in a dress composed of feathers, with a crown of the same upon his head, and his face painted black and red. They say that once, while dancing in this costume,

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he was taken up into heaven, where are located the stars. His order was, that they should use this mode of dress in their grand feasts—an observance regarded to this day.

Let us now return to the children of *Ouiot*, to know what became of them, and their descendants. It is said by some, that the God Chinigchinich, after he had formed the Indians out of the clay of the lake, transformed *them* into men like the others. To this opinion I am inclined, as being the most reasonable, for the power which they received from Chinigchinich, to create animals and grain, has been claimed, as has been seen, by those who pretend to be their descendants; and if he had not transformed them into Indians, no one would have remained with the power, for, the children of *Ouiot* were not Indians, or rational beings. It is affirmed by others, that when they saw the Indians that were created by Chinigchinich, they disappeared, and went off, no one knows where; and, consequently, that there are no descendants of *Ouiot* in existence. Nevertheless, they all consult alike relative to their harvests, and pay for the advice given to them. This is the belief that these Indians of the interior had respecting the creation of the world, and its origin.



## Chapter III

### Of the Creation of the World According to Those Residing on the Sea-Coast

In the preceding chapter, we have been amused by the belief of the Indians, *Serranos*, relative to the creation of the world. Now, let us compare the same with that of the *Playanos*—that is, those who came to settle in the valley of St. Juan Capistrano. An invisible and all-powerful being called *Nocuma* made the world, the sea, and all that is therein contained, such as animals, trees, plants and fishes. In its form it was spherical, and rested upon his hands; but, being continually in motion, he resolved to secure the same by placing in its centre a black rock, called *Tosaut*, and it remained firm, and secure as at the present time. This black rock, the Indians say, is from a small island near the beach, and the fragments which they often collect, serve as trowels, with which they smooth their mud walls.

The sea, at that time, was no more than a small stream of water, running from the south to the north, encircling the world: so filled with fish, that they were literally piled one on top of another, in such a state of inconvenience, that they held a consultation, and some were for landing upon the earth; others were of opinion that it would be impossible, for they would perish when exposed to the air and the heat of the sun, and besides they had no legs and feet as other animals have. While conferring upon this matter, there came a large fish, bringing with him the rock *Tosaut*, which, having broken, they found in its centre a ball formed like a bladder, filled with gall. This they emptied into the water, and from its fresh state it was converted into a bitter

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condition. The water then immediately swelled, and overflowed upon the earth, covering the space which it does now, and the fishes were rejoiced to find themselves so amply supplied with room, and at the change effected in the taste.

*Nocumo* having created all the things contained in the world, and secured it with the rock *Tosaut*, as before remarked, created man, or the first Indian, out of the earth, and called him *Ejoni*. Afterwards he created woman, and gave her the name of *Aé*. It is not known of what she was made, but the supposition is that she was created from the earth, like the man. Many years after the creation of *Ejoni* and *Aé*, one of their descendants, called *Sirout*, (which signifies a handful of tobacco) and his wife called *Ycaicut*, (which signifies above) had a son, and they gave him the name of *Ouiot*. This name, according to the explanation given by the Indians, signifies something which has taken root, denoting that in like manner, he would, in course of time, extend his power and dominion over the earth, as the largest trees spread their roots in every direction. I have not been enabled to ascertain if the name *Ouiot*, properly implying dominator, was given to him at the time of his birth, or at the time of his celebrity as the great Captain. Be it as it may, let us examine his history, or life.

Out of the confines of a Rancheria, called *Pubuna*, distant from St. Juan Capistrano N.E. about eight leagues, came the monster *Ouiot*, and the Indians, at the present time, preserve the account in their annals. At that time, all the inhabitants were at peace, and quietly following their domestic pursuits; but *Ouiot*, being of a fierce disposition, a warrior, ambitious, and haughty, soon managed to gain a supremacy over many of the towns adjoining that where he originated. During the commencement of his reign, he was pacific, kind and generous to such a degree, that every one appeared happy, and contented with their chief; but after the lapse of a few years, he gradually exposed his ferocity, and persecuted many of his vassals; cruelly treating them, and some he put to death. In fact, he soon became the detestation of all his subjects.

Having suffered so much from *Ouiot*, they determined to rid themselves of the tyrant, and release themselves from the oppression in which they had lived for so long a period. A consultation was held by the elders, and it was decided that he should receive his death by means





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of poison. The rock *Tosaut* was procured, and whilst in the act of pulverizing the ingredient, they were perceived by one called *Cucumel*, who immediately gave information to *Ouiot*, that they wished to destroy him by poison. Said *Cucumel* was a small animal inhabiting holes in the ground, from which, in the daytime, he issued to obtain his sustenance. The said *Ouiot*, believing he was hated and despised, and fearful of the death revealed to him by *Cucumel*, despatched messengers in every direction to ascertain the truth; threatening, at the same time, those who might have been concerned in the conspiracy; but, obtaining no information, he rather looked upon it as a jest. In the meantime, his enemies had secretly prepared the mixture, and were consulting how to administer the same, saying that it was so active and effective, that the mere application of it to the flesh, would cause almost instantaneous death. One of them was entrusted with its execution, and at night, finding *Ouiot* asleep, he placed a small quantity upon his breast. On waking, he experienced a sickness and weakness in his limbs, and fearing very much that he should die, he immediately called in, all the intelligent from the different towns. But the more they administered for his relief, the worse he became, until, at length, he died.

After his death they sent off couriers to all the towns, and settlements, which *Ouiot* had governed, summoning the people to the interment of their Grand Captain; and in a few days, so great a collection had assembled, that the City or Town of Pubuna could not contain them, and they were obliged to encamp in the outskirts. They consulted together as to the propriety of burning or interring the body, and they decided upon the former. The funeral pile was made, the deceased placed upon it, the pile was fired, and during the time of its burning, they danced and sang songs of rejoicing.

These ceremonies concluded, and before the return of the people to their different places of abode, a council was called to regulate the collecting of grain or seeds of the fields, and flesh, to eat; for up to this time they had fed upon a kind of clay. While conferring upon this subject, there appeared to them one, called "*Attajen*," which name implies man, or rational being; but they knew not from whence he came. To his enquiry, "Why they were thus congregated?" they answered "that their Grand Captain was dead, and that they had met together to assist at the

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funeral ceremonies; and now, previous to their retirement, the elders were consulting as to the manner they should subsist for the future, without the necessity of living upon clay as they had heretofore." *Attajen* was much pleased with the relation that he had heard, and said unto them, "Ye are not capable, nor can ye do what ye think, or wish to do. I am the only one that has power, and I will give it to ye, that ye may have an abundance to eat, in your habitations." And, accordingly, he selected from the multitude a few of the elders, and endowed them with the power to cause the rain to fall, to make grain, and others to make animals, such as rabbits, hares, deer, &c., &c. And it was understood that such power was to descend to their successors.

Many years, and perhaps ages, having expired since the death of *Ouiot*, there appeared in the same town of Pubuna, one called *Ouiamot*," son of *Tacu* and *Auzar*. I imagine that this new character was not, or, at least, his parents were not inhabitants of the place, but had originated in some distant land. The said *Ouiamot* did not appear like *Ouiot*, as a warrior, but as a God. To him they were to offer presents. And this was the *God Chinigchinich*, so feared, venerated, and respected by the Indians, who taught first in the town of Pubuna, and afterwards in all the neighboring parts, explaining the laws, and establishing the rites and ceremonies necessary to the preservation of life.

The manner in which he commenced to dogmatise, manifesting his extravagances, was as follows. One day, at a very large congregation of the people, he danced before them, adorned in the robes which have been already described; his flesh painted black and red, and calling himself *Tobet*. He said that he had come from the stars to teach them those things of which they were ignorant. After dancing a considerable time, he separated the chiefs and elders from among them, and directed that they alone should wear the kind of dress which had adorned his person, and then taught them how to dance. To these Indians was given the name of *puplem*, who would know all things, and relieve the infirm and diseased. In other words, they would become the sorcerers or soothsayers, to whom the Indians might invariably apply for advice, and relief from their necessities. In the event of a scarcity of food, or any infirmity, they were told to appear, dressed like unto *Tobet*; that is, after the manner in which he appeared to them, dancing; to supplicate him, not in



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the name of *Ouiamot*, but of Chinigchinich, and their wants would be relieved. The sick would be cured, and the hungry receive food. In all cases they were to return thanks, and even now, to this day, whenever they chance to secure an animal of any kind, they say, "guic Chinigchinich," that is, "thanks to Chinigchinich, who has given me this."

This Chinigchinich, as we shall style him hereafter, taught them how to build the *Vanquech*, which means temple, or church, and how they were to conduct themselves therein—forbidding any others than the chief and puplem entering its sanctuary. Here they were to teach only the laws and ceremonies, and those who entered, would be called *Tobet*, and the remainder of the people *Saorem*, which signifies, persons who do not know how to dance; that is, more properly, those who could not make use of the vestments of Chinigchinich. The name of *Quaguar*, was given to him when he died and ascended above, among the stars. This is the explanation of the three terms which is given in the preceding relation relative to Chinigchinich.

Chinigchinich having become seriously indisposed, and while instructing the elders how to rear the young, as well as in the rules they were to observe for the future, they enquired of him where, or to which one of his rancherias he wished to go when he died? He answered, "to neither, for they were inhabited by people, and he should go where he would be alone, and could see the inhabitants of all the pueblos and rancherias." They offered to bury him, placing him under the earth, but he said "no," that they would walk upon him, and he would have to chastise them. "No!" said Chinigchinich, "when I die, I shall ascend above, to the stars, and from thence, I shall always see you; and to those who have kept my commandments, I shall give all they ask of me; but those who obey not my teachings, nor believe them, I shall punish severely. I will send unto them bears to bite, and serpents to sting them; they shall be without food, and have diseases that they may die." Chinigchinich, at length, died. His memory was so revered among the Indians, that they ever besought him in all their undertakings, and regarded him with fear and respect.

We have thus seen the belief of these Indians, respecting the creation of the world, and their God, and from its narration, we comprehend their religion, usages and customs. I do not understand why it is, that in

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neither of the two narrations, is there any mention made of the heavens, and that all their ideas of things appear to be confined to the earth, with the exception of the stars. What I should like to know, is, from whence they received such accounts? for, notwithstanding their imperfect, as well as fabulous description, they have some allusion to the truth. We have the six productions of the mother of *Ouiot*, corresponding to the six days of the creation of the world—The Indian formed of the earth or clay, like our first parent—and *Ouiot*, analogous to Nimrod of the Holy Scripture. I do not know to whom we may compare *Ouiamot*, unless it be to Simon Magus, as his teachings were idolatrous.



# Chapter IV

## Description of the Vanquech or Temple

Although god needs not a material temple, to be adored, praised and venerated, to fill all the world with his essence, presence, and power: nevertheless, he has always desired that there should be sacrifices, and prayers offered unto him, to obtain his mercy and forgiveness, in places determined upon by him; as may be seen in Deuteronomy in the Holy Scriptures. He ordered the patriarch, Abraham, to sacrifice on a mount of his own selection. Moses was ordered to build a tabernacle, and 440 years afterwards, Solomon, was commanded to build the magnificent temple of Jerusalem.

Satan, jealous of the honor due to the true God, wishes that man should also adore him, and offer up sacrifices in temples, by him ordained, thus endeavoring to draw him from the knowledge of the true God, one in essence, and three in person. He has taught man a diversity of Gods, and a variety of forms for his temples. I will therefore explain, in this chapter, the location and form of the temple, called Vanquech. The name of temple, or church, we know is derived from *contemplatione*, a place dedicated to prayer. If the Vanquech of these Indians can be thus termed, the reader will best decide.

The temples erected by command of the God Chinigchinich, or the celebrated idolater Ouiamot, were invariably erected in the centre of their towns, and contiguous to the dwelling-place of the, captain, or chief; notwithstanding their houses were scattered about without any

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particular regard to order, still, they managed to have the location of his house as near the middle as possible. They formed an enclosure of about four or five yards in circumference, not exactly round, but inclining to an oval. This they divided, by drawing a line through the centre, and built another, consisting of the branches of trees, and mats to the height of about six feet, outside of which, in the other division, they formed another, of small stakes of wood driven into the ground. This was called the gate, or entrance, to the Vanquech. Inside of this, and close to the larger stakes, was placed a figure of their God Chinigchinich, elevated upon a kind of hurdle. This is the edifice of the Vanquech.

Not being acquainted with the art of drawing, I cannot give a true picture of the figure adored by them, but will explain the same as well as I am able. In the first place, of the skin of a *coyote*, or *gato montes*, which was taken off with great care, including the head and feet, they formed a species of sack. This they dressed quite smooth, like deer skin, but without taking off the hair. Inside of this, were placed the feathers of particular kinds of birds, horns of deer, lions' claws, beaks and talons of the hawk and crow, and other things of this class; particularly the beak and talons of a species of hawk, called *pame*, that we shall describe hereafter, from the feathers of which they formed a kind of petticoat, to dress their Chinigchinich, such as was used by the captain and chiefs, and called *paelt*. Inside of this sack, they placed some arrows, and upon the outside, a few more, with a bow. It resembled in appearance, a live animal, and projecting from its mouth might be seen the feathers of the arrows.

When the Captain sent out orders by the crier of the general council, for the Indians to go out in search of game, or seeds, one of the puplem, (signifying one who knows all things) sketched upon the ground in front of Chinigchinich, a very ridiculous figure, and the crier called upon all to go and worship it. Having congregated together, according to their custom on such occasions, (male and female) the men armed with their bows and arrows, and well painted—the chief and the puplem dressed in their appropriate costumes, resembling devils more than human beings—they went in succession, running one behind the other, led by their captain, until they arrived. opposite Chinigchinich, and the figure upon the earth. The leader then gave a jump, springing



## Description of the Vanquech or Temple



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very high from the ground, accompanied by a loud yell, and with his bow and arrow, prepared as if to shoot at something in the air. Each one in his turn performed the same evolution.

The ceremony being concluded on the part of the men, the females followed, headed by their *Capitana* in like manner as the men, differing only in this respect, that instead of running, they moved along in slow procession, and when in front of the Vanquech, they inclined the head, presenting at the same time their *bateas*, or instruments collected for the occasion. This ceremony concluded, they all dispersed to the mountains. The object of this performance, was to implore protection from all danger and sickness while in their pursuit of game.

Very great was their veneration for the Vanquech, or temple, and they were extremely careful not to commit the most trivial act of irreverence within. No one was permitted to enter it on their feast days, but the chief, the Puplem, and elders. The remainder of the people remained outside of the stakes. The younger class did not dare to approach even the entrance. Profound silence was observed generally throughout the assembly, interrupted occasionally by a whisper. Of those inside, sometimes the chief, or one of the Puplem, danced, making all kinds of grotesque figures; after which they partook of an entertainment, when all ate from the same vessel.

It has always appeared to me extremely ridiculous that his Satanic Majesty, desirous of the honors and veneration due to God alone, should have adopted so ludicrous a form of worship, as that which was observed toward Chinigchinich. When in his presence, the Indians were entirely naked, and remained for hours in a posture equally awkward and fatiguing—a sort of squat; resting their heads, generally, upon their right hands, without moving during the ceremony of adoration.

Extraordinary as was the veneration observed for their Vanquech, no less so were the privileges allowed to those who sought its protection. Whatever criminal, guilty of the highest misdemeanor—of homicide, adultery, or theft, escaping from justice, should be enabled to reach its sanctuary, unknown to his accusers, from that moment he would become free, and at liberty to go abroad without any fear of molestation, on the part of those aggrieved. No mention would be made of the crime of which he might be guilty, yet, it might be said, in derision of





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his having sought refuge in the Vanquech, "you went to the protection of Chinigchinich, if you had not, we should have killed you; but, nevertheless, he will chastise you for your wickedness."

They believed, that, as their God was friendly to the good, and punished the wicked, he also would not permit any one to be molested, who sought his protection; thus, the criminal escaped punishment at the time. Yet it must be understood, that although the delinquent went free, the crime did not remain exempt from punishment; for vengeance was wrought upon the children, grandchildren, or some near relative, whenever opportunity to the aggrieved offered; and the tradition was handed down, from father, to son, until the same was accomplished. In like manner, the captain could preserve his life when charged with squandering the grain, which was deposited with him. If he, by good luck, achieved a refuge in the *Vanquech*, no one could harm him, nor enter therein, particularly if he were adorned in the robes of the "*Capitanejas*." Should any one enter in defiance of this custom, he would be immediately despatched by his companions, for death was the penalty. The captain would be deposed, however, but they would suffer him to go at large, deprived of his title and supremacy, and the puplem would elect as his successor, one of his children; charging him to hold in recollection, the fate of his father; to be faithful, or the same punishment would attend him.

# Chapter V

## Obedience and Subjection to Their Captain

Their form of government was monarchical, acknowledging but one head, and the *Puplem*, or general council. This body served as a kind of check to the will of the captain, and without its sanction he could do nothing of importance. Before treating upon the obedience observed towards their ruler, and his advisers, I will first explain the forms and ceremonies adopted in their elevation to office. In the event of the decease of their captain, or his inability to govern, from extreme age,—or of his desire to elevate a son to the command, a general feast was prepared, and all the neighboring chiefs and friends were invited to attend. (I must note here, that each town or Rancheria, had its chief, or captain.) Upon their arrival, after all were collected together, the object of the invitation was made known to them, and the cause of the old chief's relinquishing the command to his son, was explained. If this were satisfactory, their consent was given, and a day specified for the event, which was generally the succeeding one. A crier was despatched to give notice of the election to the inhabitants, and they were invited to take part in the feast of the new captain.

Every thing being prepared, they placed the crown upon his head, and he was enrobed with the imperial vestments. Anciently, the diadem of kings and emperors consisted of a kind of bandage, wound around the head, as we may infer from the account of Alexander Magnus, who upon beholding a valiant soldier, wounded, took from his head the

## Obedience and Subjection to Their Captain

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*diadem*, to bind up the wound of his vassal. Of *this* class was the diadem used by the captain. His hair was tied close to the neck, plaited, or rather twisted, and instead of a bandage, he wore a species of cord made from the hair, which was passed three or four times around his head. A thin piece of wood, about half a yard in length, sometimes, of a shape similar to the blade of a sword, and often rounded like a wire, they secured to the cord, which they adorned with feathers of the hawk, the crow, and other birds. Lastly, they put upon him a kind of petticoat, formed also from the feathers of birds, reaching down almost to the knees, while the remainder of his body was painted black. This was called the dress of the "*Capitaneja*," and was the *Tobet*, so termed by Chinigchinich.

His toilet being concluded, as above described, he went into the Vanquech to dance before Chinigchinich, and the instruments, used upon such occasions, were not very musical, nor of any great variety; being composed mostly of the shells of turtles, with small stones inside, which they rattled continually, as an accompaniment to their voices. After dancing until he felt somewhat fatigued, the other captains entered, dressed with their several insignia, and placed him in their centre. After dancing around him a short time, the ceremony was concluded, and he was acknowledged as their captain.

The feast, generally, lasted three or four days and nights, and the old captain procured for the occasion, an abundance of their choicest kinds of food, which he presented to the guests, and to all the inhabitants of his dominion.

The new captain did not assume the reins of government, until his father died or resigned them to him, and then, the only ceremony necessary in taking the command, was, to make known the fact to the neighboring chiefs. In the right of succession to the command, having no male descendant, the females also participated; and were permitted to marry with whomsoever they pleased, even one not descended from the true line of captains. In such a case, the husband was not acknowledged as chief, nor was the wife allowed to govern; but always the nearest male relation assumed the power. The first male child, as soon as born, they proclaimed captain, and from that time he was known as such, although the relative governed during his minority. On the day of transferring the

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government, all the neighboring chiefs were invited, and a grand feast given on the occasion. It was the custom among these Indians, in all their feasts, to carry presents to the person who gave the invitation, and he in return, was obliged when invited, to give one of equal value.

As it regards obedience and subjection to their captains, what I have been enabled to ascertain, is, that the conduct of the people was in no wise influenced by their authority, but that they lived a life of insubordination, without laws or government. The malefactor went unpunished, and the meritorious unrewarded. In fact, each one lived as he pleased, and no one interfered, do what he would. Notwithstanding this, the Indians say, that in the days of their gentilism, they had but very few quarrels and disturbances. The reason of this, I presume, was, the fact of their being nearly all related to each other, and the frequent exhortation of the fathers to their children, to be good. When one committed a fault against another, if the aggrieved could avenge himself, he did so; death, generally, was the result, and no one interfered or spoke of it.

Although the Captains did not exercise any power, whatever, in the administration of justice, or in any other way, still the people possessed great respect and veneration for their persons, particularly the youthful part of the community, who were early instructed to look upon them, as well as upon the Puplem and elders, with fear and trembling. This was, as before stated, their daily instruction, and on this account no one dared to treat them with disrespect, or to injure them by word or action, for death would have been the consequence, and its execution carried into effect as follows:—The case having been declared in the council, an elder was appointed to make public the crime, which he did by crying most bitterly throughout the rancheria, saying, that "so and so, has said or done this or that, to our captain,"—that "Chinigchinich is very angry, and wishes to chastise us, by sending upon us a plague, of which we may all die. Arm yourselves, then, both old and young, to kill the offender, so that by presenting him dead to Chinigchinich, he may be appeased, and not kill us." This was repeated several times throughout the town. As the Indians were easily influenced, they immediately went out, armed, in search of the delinquent, and when they fell in with him, they despatched him, and, together with the arrows with which they killed him, he was borne to the presence of Chinigchinich. The parents



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of the deceased were permitted afterwards to take possession of the body, and perform the accustomed ceremony of burning it.

The captain was authorized to decide upon all differences, occurring between his rancheria and the neighboring towns, to declare war, to make peace, and to appoint the days on which they were to celebrate their feasts, as well as those for the hunting of game, and the collecting of grain. This was about the extent of his authority. In case of a declaration of war, he convoked the Puplem, and explained his intentions; a consultation was held, to decide whether they alone, could carry on the warfare, without the assistance of the neighboring tribes; but no reflection was made as to the justice or injustice of their intentions. Immediately a crier was sent forth, to order the preparation of arms and men. The women were compelled to make an abundance of *pinole*, and to get ready the provisions necessary; and on the day determined upon for their march, the crier called them together, and they set forward, headed by the captain, who acted as general-in-chief, every one strictly obeying his orders.

They had a *pul*, (a kind of astrologer), who knew by the moon's appearance, the time to celebrate the feasts, and from his information, the captain made them public; and this was generally done by sending round a crier, on the evenings previous to their celebration. In the same manner, was made known the time to collect grain, and to hunt: but he, who advised the captain, was the one originally endowed with the power of providing their game, herbs, &c., &c. On such occasions, all turned out in quest of food, both men and women, boys and girls; and on returning to their rancheria, the greater part was deposited with the captain, who took care of the same for the feast. In their ordinary excursions for game, &c., the captain was obliged to hunt for his own subsistence, and although he frequently received a portion, still it was not considered obligatory on the part of the giver.

Some of them had two or more wives, that they might be more plentifully supplied with seeds, and vegetables, and thus have it in their power to make provision for the poor and feeble.

# Chapter VI

## The Instructions Given to Their Children

One of the difficulties most perplexing to the Indians, was, the rearing and educating their children. They were unacquainted with the arts, excepting those most necessary for their maintenance, and ignorant of all useful knowledge to keep them from idleness; so that their only education consisted in the construction of the bow and arrow, with their peculiar uses, in procuring game and defending themselves from their enemies.

Although, ignorant as they were of the knowledge of the true God, the moral instruction given by parents to their children, was contained in the precepts of Chinigchinich, which were strongly impressed upon their minds, that they might become good, and avoid the fate of the evil. The perverse child, invariably, was destroyed, and the parents of such remained dishonored. At the age of six, or seven years, they gave them a kind of god, as protector; an animal, in whom they were to place entire confidence, who would defend them from all dangers, particularly those in war against their enemies. They, however, were not to consider this animal as the *real* God, for he was invisible, and inhabited the mountains and bowels of the earth; and if he did appear to them at any time, it was in the shape of an animal of the most terrific description. This was not Chinigchinich, but another called *Touch*, signifying a Devil. That they might know the class of animal, which the God, Chinigchinich, had selected for their particular veneration, a kind of drink was administered

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to them, made from a plant called *Pibat*, which was reduced to a powder, and mixed with other intoxicating ingredients. Soon after taking this preparation, they became insensible, and for three days were deprived of any sustenance whatever. During this period they were attended by some old men or women, who were continually exhorting them to be on the alert, not to sleep for fear the *coyote*, the bear, the crow, or the rattlesnake might come; to observe if it were furious or gentle, and to inquire of the first that should come, what were its desires. The poor Indian thus intoxicated, without food or drink, suffering under delirium, beheld all kinds of visions; and when he made known that he had seen any particular being who explained the observances required of him, then they gave him to eat and drink, and made a grand feast; at the same time advising him to be particular in obeying the commands of the mysterious apparition.

They did not *all* partake of the drink, and those who did not, were adorned with feathers, and were painted with a mixture of black and red. They were thus taken to the Vanquech in fantastical procession, and placed at the side of Chinigchinich. On the ground, and directly before them, the Puplem sketched a most uncouth and ridiculous figure, of an animal, and prohibited them from leaving the Vanquech during the time of penance, (generally three days) and in case of hunger or thirst, they were advised to suffer with patience. Should they partake of any thing, the figure before them would inform to that effect, and Chinigchinich would chastise them severely, by sending them sickness that would take away their lives. These and many other ludicrous stories were told to them, and the poor Indians placed the most implicit confidence in them.

The following circumstance was related to me, which transpired during the time of their heathenism. A young man, who had been taken to the Vanquech to perform the accustomed penance of fasting, the second day feeling somewhat afflicted with hunger and thirst, secretly retired from the temple, and entered a house that was near by, whose inhabitants were absent; and having found food, he ate and drank sufficiently, and returned without any one having seen him. After the accomplishment of the time, being one day in company with many of his friends, he related the circumstance, and gave out, as his opinion, that all that

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was told them by the Puplem, regarding the figure upon the ground, *was a mere story*,—for he had eaten, and drank, and even injured with his foot a portion of the figure, and no bad result had happened to him; therefore they ought not to believe the Puplem. But his companions, instead of profiting by the information, immediately dispatched him with their arrows, so furious were they, on hearing of the sacrilege offered to their religious observances. He was the son of a captain, that is a prince, for only such could do penance in the Vanquech; others drank of the intoxicating mixture.

Having undergone the ceremonies described, they placed upon the poor Indians a brand, which was done in this manner. A kind of herb was pounded until it became sponge like; this, they placed, according to the figure required, upon the spot intended to be burnt, which was generally upon the right arm, and sometimes upon the thick part of the leg also. They then set fire to it, and let it remain until all that was combustible, was consumed. Consequently, a large blister immediately formed, and although painful, they used no remedy to cure it, but left it to heal itself; and thus, a large and perpetual scar remained. The reason alleged for this ceremony, was, that it added greater strength to the nerves, and gave a better pulse for the management of the bow. Besides, Chinigchinich required it of them, that they might be more formidable in war, and be enabled to conquer their enemies. Those who were not marked in this way, which was called "*potense*," were ever unfortunate, easily conquered, and men of feeble capacities.

They also were obliged to undergo still greater martyrdom to be called men, and to be admitted among the already initiated; for, after the ceremony of the "*potense*," they were whipped with nettles, and covered with ants, that they might become robust, and the infliction was always performed in summer, during the months of July and August, when the nettle was in its most fiery state. They gathered small bunches, which they fastened together, and the poor deluded Indian was chastised, by inflicting blows with them upon his naked limbs, until unable to walk; and then he was carried to the nest of the nearest, and most furious species of ants, and laid down among them, while some of his friends, with sticks, kept annoying the insects to make them still more violent. What torments did they not undergo! what pain! what hellish





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infections! yet, their faith gave them power to endure all without a murmur, and they remained as if dead. Having undergone these dreadful ordeals, they were considered as invulnerable, and believed that the arrows of their enemies could no longer harm them.

The young were not allowed to approach the fire to warm themselves, that they might learn to suffer, and become connaturalized with the changes of temperature—a severe deprivation, indeed, to the Indian! whose greatest luxury was to lie basking in the sun, or to enjoy the comforts of a blazing fire. They were forbidden also to eat certain kinds of seeds, and meats, until arrived at the age of manhood, and were even parents of two or three children. Should they eat of such, clandestinely, "*El Touch*" would know it, and chastise them in various ways; and Chinigchinich, also, would be very angry. Their faith and belief in these instructions were such, and the fear and terror produced therefrom, so infused among them, that, rather than violate them, they would suffer death.

Thus far, I have explained the education given to the boys. Now I will proceed to that instilled into the minds of the females. Besides the general instructions given to the males, to observe the commandments of Chinigchinich, the girls were taught to remain at home, and not to roam about in idleness; to be always employed in some domestic duty, so that, when they were older, they might know how to work, and attend to their household duties; such as procuring seeds, and cleaning them,—making "*atole*" and "*pinole*," which are kinds of gruel, and their daily food. When quite young, they have a small, shallow basket, called, by the natives, "*tucmel*," with which they learn the way to clean the seeds, and they are also instructed in grinding, and preparing the same, for consumption. Those who are industrious in their youth, are flattered with promises of many admirers when they grow up to be women—that they will be generally beloved, and receive many presents. In this neighborhood, and as I have been informed, as far south as Cape St. Lucas, the girls were tat-toed in their infancy, from their eyebrows, down to their breasts; and some from the chin only-covering the arms entirely, in both cases—but, the execution of this was not generally complied with, until they reached their tenth year; and varied in the application and style. The usual method of effecting the same, was by pricking the

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parts with the thorn of the cactus plant, until they bled, and then they were rubbed with a kind of charcoal produced from mescal, so that a permanent blue color remained.

The particular reason for thus tat-tooing their females, was, that it added to their beauty, and when well executed, would insure them many admirers—but I think, besides this motive, it signified something more, and was a necessary kind of distinction. As the devil invented the branding of the males, so he may have ordered the painting of the females, and *Chinigchinich* required its performance; so that both might have their particular mark. Who was the inventor of the singular ceremony, I could not ascertain, but presume it must have been the famous *Ouimot*, who instituted the burning, or branding of the males.

A very novel, and rare custom, that these Indians had, was one that the parents invariably advised them to adhere to, after arriving at the state of womanhood, and it is this. In their excursions for the collecting of seeds, or for other purposes, should they unfortunately meet with one of the sorcerers, or eaters of human flesh, they were to comply with any desire which he might express, without manifesting the least reluctance on their part; not even if in company with their mothers, or if married, and attended by their husbands, should they command their protection. Both mothers and husbands were obliged to submit to his requests, through fear of the many inflictions, which they believed would be the result of their refusal; so, that whenever they discovered any of this detested race, if possible, they concealed themselves, so as not to be seen by them.

On arriving at the state of womanhood, a grand feast was made, and conducted with much ceremony and witchcraft. They made a large hole in the ground, in shape resembling a grave, about two feet deep: this they filled with stones and burning coals, and when sufficiently heated, the latter were taken out, and upon the former they laid branches of the "*estafiarte*" (a kind of perennial plant), so as to form a bed, which the natives called "*Pacsil*." Upon this, they placed the young girl, and for two or three days she was permitted to eat but very little; thus continuing until the accustomed term for purification had expired. In the meantime the outside of the hole was adorned with feathers of different birds, beads, and many other baubles. Several old women with their faces



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Painted like devils, were employed in singing songs in a tone so disagreeable, that one could hardly tell whether they were crying or laughing; and the young women danced around her, at intervals, every day.

# Chapter VII

## On Matrimony

The usual custom of these Indians in selecting and obtaining their wives, was as follows:—When one of them was inclined to marry, and having seen one with whom he was particularly pleased, he kept loitering about her place of residence, until opportunity offered to communicate, in secret, the wish of his heart: generally after this style: "I wish to wed with you," or, "We are to be married;" and the reply of the fair one, invariably, was, "It is well." "I will inform my parents, and you shall know." The girl then gave the information to her father and mother, and if the proposal were agreeable, the suitor was admitted to the house as a visitor.

Others proceeded after this manner:—They employed a third person to ascertain from the girl, if the proposal would be agreeable to her, and if so, the assent of the parents was solicited. In many cases the old men or women of the town made up the marriages, and after communicating with the parents of the girl, she was summoned to their presence and addressed as follows—"You are to marry so and so: you will be happy, because he is an excellent young man, and will have plenty to eat, and other things, for he knows how to kill the deer, rabbits, and other game." Others went direct to the parents of the girl to solicit their consent, and, if obtained, they were presented with some trifling gift as a token of the

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fact, and the daughter was informed as follows—"My child, you are to marry such a one; for we have given you away to him"—and the poor girl was obliged to submit, although, often-times, contrary to her wishes and feelings.

On the suitor's first visit to the house, he carried with him a present, either of some kind of fur skin, or of seeds or beads, or whatever else he had that was valuable; and from that day he considered it as his home, and the task of providing maintenance for the family, in part, fell upon him. During the time of their matrimonial promise, his obligations were to supply the house with fuel and game, and the girl attended to the domestic affairs—ever rising at the dawn of day, bathing herself, and supplying the house with water; after which, she put every thing in order, with the utmost precision, and prepared their customary repast. This task she was obliged to perform without any assistance whatever; thus, the wooer had an opportunity of witnessing the qualities of the girl, in regard to her acquirements in domestic duties, and for this reason, he was admitted to the house as a member of the family.

When the day was fixed upon for the celebration of the nuptials, the friends and relatives of each family were invited to attend, and every one in the town was expected to take part in the feast, which continued, always, for three or four days. In front of the house belonging to the lover, was erected a temporary shelter covered with the branches and leaves of trees, sufficiently large to accommodate a great number of people. The ceremony commenced by his sending one or two of the *Puplem* and a few of the old women, to bring the bride. In the meantime, he awaited her arrival, seated upon a mat or upon the ground. As soon as she appeared, adorned and dressed for the occasion, in all her gayest apparel, and before she entered the place prepared, already described, she was seized upon by the old women, disrobed, and thus, she was placed by the side of her husband. The dress and ornaments were never returned to her, but were considered by the women as "spoils," and each one present, secured as much as she could. This practice was universal, excepting at the marriages of the chiefs, who, while seated upon the mat, received the bride adorned with feathers only—her dress and trinkets having been previously removed. The *Puplem* then took her, and placed upon her person the dress of the "Capitanejas." While

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the feast lasted, the guests were employed in singing, dancing, and other diversions. It was usual on such occasions, before the separation took place between the parents and the bride, for the father to explain to her, her obligations and duties as a wife, and the instructions were as follows: "Reflect that you are the daughter of respectable parents—do nothing to offend them—obey and serve your husband, that has been given to you by *Chinigchinich*; be faithful to him, for if you are not, you will not only lose your life, but we shall be disgraced; and if your husband does not treat you as he ought, tell us, and you shall come back and live with us." This was the general custom among the Indians; and without any other ceremony, than the one here described, they were considered man and wife. Some parents, even, when their children were in infancy, by mutual agreement, would promise them in marriage, and the same was ever adhered to, and when the parties were of sufficient age, they were united with the customary ceremonies. During the period of their childhood, they were always together and the house of either was a home to both.

In the year 1821, in the Mission of St. Juan Capistrano, I married, in "facie ecclesia," a couple who were thus betrothed. The girl was eight or nine months old, and the boy two years, when their parents contracted them.

There are other marriages, or modes, of taking a wife. For instance, whenever a captain, or a son of his, or a *pul* became enamored of one in another town, a messenger was despatched to solicit the *fair one*—if she declined, or if her parents were not pleased with the alliance, three or four armed men were sent to demand her in marriage, and to use any measures to secure her person. Others, when in the woods in search of game or seeds, if they met with one that pleased them, carried her off. These kinds of marriages, generally, were the cause of war, and severe conflicts between the neighboring towns.

Whether these Indians were lawfully and truly married, is a question. Apparently they were, excepting those who were united against their will and desire; and consequently, the contracts should be binding. Nevertheless, they did not consider the ceremony as binding, and they were at liberty to throw off the alliance, whenever they deemed it proper, or conducive to their convenience.



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### VERSES SUNG TO THE BETROTHED

Quic noit noivam	"I go to my home,
Quic secat peleblich.	That is shaded with willow."
Ybicnun majaar vesagnec,	"These five they have placed,
Ibi panal, ibi urusar,	This argave, this stone pot,
Ibi ecbal, ibi seja, ibi calcel.	This sand, this honey," &c., &c.

The first time the wife became enceinte, it was the custom to give a grand feast to all in the town, and they passed the whole of one night in dancing and singing. This rejoicing was on account of the looked—for increase, and in their songs they asked of Chinigchinich, his clemency towards the unborn, for the female was good—having, in a short time, arrived to a state that gave hopes of her becoming a mother. They looked upon a sterile woman as being unfortunate—one who would ever meet with calamities. On the day of the birth of the child, they made no particular demonstration of satisfaction, except to exhibit the infant to the people. If it were a male, the grandfather named it, saying A. B., thus shall he be named. If it were a female, then the grandmother named it, and generally gave it her own name, or, that of the mother, unless some event occurred about the time of the birth, and then it was given a name which would serve to commemorate that event. Notwithstanding no observance was made of the birth-day, yet the day, on which the umbilical cord was removed, was noticed with many ceremonies. All the relatives and friends of the family were invited to assist in the superstitious performances, and they were conducted as follows. At the hour appointed, all the guests being present, several old women who were skilled in the operation, removed the superabundant particles from the child, and the same were interred, with many ceremonies, in a hole prepared either within, or outside of the house. Then immediately commenced dancing and singing; and even now, among some of the Indians, the same observances are retained.

The most ludicrous custom among these Indians, was that of observing the most rigid diet from the day of their wives' confinement. They could not leave the house, unless to procure fuel and water—were prohibited the use of all kinds of fish and meat—smoking and diversions; and this observance lasted generally from fifteen to twenty days.

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One of the many singularities that prevailed among these Indians was that of marrying males with males, which has been spoken of by Father Torquemada. It was publicly done, but without the forms, and ceremonies already described in their marriage contracts with the females. Whilst yet in infancy they were selected, and instructed as they increased in years, in all the duties of the women—in their mode of dress—of walking, and dancing; so that in almost every particular, they resembled females. Being more robust than the women, they were better able to perform the arduous duties required of the wife, and for this reason, they were often selected by the chiefs and others, and on the day of the wedding a grand feast was given. To distinguish this detested race at this mission, they were called "*Cuit*," in the mountains, "*Uluqui*," and in other parts, they were known by the name of "*Coias*." At the present time, this horrible custom is entirely unknown among them. I was told by a missionary from the Mission of St. Domingo, in Lower California, that he once enquired of several Indians, from the plains of the river Colorado, if in their confines, were to be found any of the *Coias*? he replied that they were once very numerous, but a serious plague visited them, many years back, which destroyed them all—unfortunately the time when this great event transpired, they could not tell, as they possessed no idea, whatever, of chronology.





## Chapter VIII

### On Their Mode of Life and Occupation

Among the natural inclinations with which man is endowed, is that of defending, and preserving his own individual person. For this reason, he feels it his duty to consider how, and in what manner, he is to live, and how to procure the necessary means of sustenance. Necessity, "the mother of invention," has therefore revealed to him how to arrange the rustic implements, used for securing his food. No doubt these Indians passed a miserable life, ever idle, and more like the brutes, than rational beings. They neither cultivated the ground, nor planted any kind of grain; but lived upon the wild seeds of the field, the fruits of the forest, and upon the abundance of game. It is really surprising, that during a lapse of many ages, with their reason and experience, they had not advanced one iota in improving the things that would have been useful and convenient for them; for instance, in agriculture; in planting and cultivating those seeds which were most appreciated—also trees around their dwellings, bearing such fruit as they were obliged to bring from a great distance. But no! nothing of the kind; and in no part of the province was to be found aught but the common, spontaneous, productions of the earth.

It cannot be denied, that these Indians, like all the human race, are the descendants of Adam; endowed with reason, or in other words, with a soul. When we read of the ancients—of their having transplanted trees which were wild, thus increasing their abundance, and quality, and of

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their planting seeds, which improved by cultivation, we cannot but wonder that a knowledge so important was unknown here until the missionary fathers came amongst them, and introduced the planting of wheat, corn, beans, and other grains, that are now so abundant every where. I consider these Indians, in their endowments, like the soul of an infant, which is merely a will, accompanied with passions—an understanding not exercised, or without use; and for this reason, they did not comprehend the virtue of prudence, which is the result of time and reason—of the former, by experience, and the latter, by dissertation. Although ripe in years, they had no more experience than when in childhood—no reasoning powers, and therefore followed blindly in the footsteps of their predecessors.

Their occupation consisted in the construction of the bow and arrow, in hunting for deer, rabbits, squirrels, rats, &c., which not only provided them with food, but *clothing*, if so it can be called. Their usual style of dress, was a small skin thrown over the shoulders, leaving the remaining portion of their person unprotected; but the females formed a kind of cloak out of the skins of rabbits, which were put together after this manner. They twisted them into a kind of rope, that was sewed together, so as to conform to the size of the person, for whom it was intended, and the front was adorned with a kind of fringe, composed of grass, which reached down to the knees; around the collar it was adorned with beads, and other ornaments, prized by the Indians.

They passed their time in plays, and roaming about from house to house, dancing and sleeping; and this was their only occupation, and the mode of life most common amongst them from day to day. The old men, and the poorer class, devoted a portion of the day to constructing house utensils, their bows and arrows, and the several instruments used in making their baskets; also nets of various dimensions, which were used for sundry purposes, such as for catching fish and wild fowl, and for carrying heavy burdens on their backs, fastened by a strap passed across the forehead. In like manner, the females used them for carrying their infants.

The women were obliged to gather seeds in the fields, prepare them for cooking, and to perform all the meanest offices, as well as the most laborious. It was painful in the extreme, to behold them, with their



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infants hanging upon their shoulders, groping about in search of herbs or seed, and exposed as they frequently were to the inclemency of the weather. Often it was the case that they returned home severely fatigued, and hungry, to cook the fruits of their toil, but, perhaps, there would be no wood, the fire extinguished, and their lazy husband either at play or sleeping, so that again they would be obliged to go out into the cold for fuel. When the brutal husband came home, or awoke from his sluggishness, he expected his meal, and if not prepared at the moment, invectives and ill treatment were the universal consequence. Poor creatures! more unfortunate than slaves! They were in such subjection, that for the most trifling offence, punishment was the result, and oftentimes death; but, thank Heaven! since the introduction of the Christian religion among this unhappy race, the females have received more liberty and better treatment. The most wonderful of God's blessings enjoyed among them, was the great facility with which they underwent their accouchement, when it would seem as if they endured no suffering.

# Chapter IX

## On Their Principal Feasts and Dances

As on all their feast days, dancing was the principal ceremony, I will endeavor to describe many of the ludicrous customs attending it. Such was the delight with which they took part in their festivities, that they often continued dancing day and night, and sometimes entire weeks. Their whole heart and soul were wrapt up in the amusement, and hardly a day passed, without some portion of it being devoted to this insipid and monotonous ceremony. Chinigchinich gave to them as a religious precept, that they should adhere strictly to this custom, and once, previous to his death, whilst dancing, he was carried up among the stars. So this accounts for the enthusiasm universally observed among them on such occasions, and whoever did not take an active part in the festival, they believed would be chastised, and hated by him.

The costume used by them, called the *tobet*, has been already mentioned in a previous chapter, when describing the dress of the "capitans" or "puplem;" but perhaps, it would not be out of place to repeat the same, and in addition, to give a description of that generally worn by the females. In the first place, they fixed upon the head a kind of wig, called "*emetch*," that was made secure, by a braid of hair passed around the head, into which, they inserted various kinds of feathers, forming a crown, or as they termed it, an "*eneat*;" then, their covering for the body,

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was also prepared from the feathers of different kinds of birds, which were sewed together, and like a sort of petticoat reached down to their knees—this they called a "*paelt*." The parts exposed, were generally painted red and black, and not unfrequently, white.

The females painted their faces, breasts and arms, with a sort of brown varnish, imparting a glossy, and rather a disgusting appearance to their persons. From their necks, was suspended a variety of ornaments, such as beads, and pieces of shells. They never danced with the males, but each sex by itself, notwithstanding all danced at the same time, and after this manner. The males formed a file by themselves, and directly behind them, say two or three yards distant, the women were placed in like manner, and the musicians seated themselves upon the ground in front of all.

Many of their dances were very modest and diversified by a number of grotesque movements, so that for a short time one could look on, and witness their performances with some degree of pleasure; but they had no variety of figures, or songs, and kept on in the same monotonous movement. There were persons selected from both sexes to conduct the music, and for this purpose they had a kind of instrument, which they called "*paail*."

The most celebrated of all their feasts, and which was observed yearly, was the one they called the "*Panes*," signifying a bird feast. Particular adoration was observed by them, for a bird resembling much in appearance the common buzzard, or vulture, but of larger dimensions. The day selected for the feast, was made known to the public on the evening previous to its celebration, and preparations were made immediately for the erection of their Vanquech, into which, when completed, and on the opening of the festival, they carried the Panes in solemn procession, and placed it upon the altar erected for the purpose. Then, immediately, all the young, married and unmarried females, commenced running to and fro, with great rapidity; some in one direction, and some in another, more like distracted, than rational beings; continuing thus racing, as it were, whilst the elder class of both sexes remained silent spectators of the scene. The "*Puplem*," painted as has been heretofore described, looking like so many devils, in the meantime dancing around their adored "*Panes*."

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These ceremonies being concluded, they seized upon the bird, and carried it in procession to the principal Vanquech, or temple, all the assembly uniting in the grand display—the Puplem preceding the same, dancing and singing. Arriving there, they killed the bird without losing a particle of its blood. The skin was removed entire, and preserved with the feathers, as a relic, or for the purpose of making their festival garment, "*Paelt*." The carcass they interred within the temple, in a hole prepared previously, around which, all the old women soon collected, who, while weeping and moaning most bitterly, kept throwing upon it various kinds of seeds, or particles of food, and exclaiming at the same time, "Why did you run away? would you not have been better with us? you would have made pinole as we do, and if you had noit run away, you would not have become a 'Panés!'" Other expressions equal in simplicity, were made use of, and as the ceremony was concluding, the dancing commenced again, and continued for three days and nights, accompanied with all the brutalities to which they were subject.

The Indians state that said "Panés" was once a female, who ran off and retired to the mountains, when accidentally meeting with "Chinigchinich," he changed her into a bird, and their belief is, that notwithstanding they sacrificed it every year, she became again animated, and returned to her home among the mountains. But the ridiculous fable does not end here; for they believed, as often as the bird was killed, it became multiplied; because, every year, all the different Capitanes celebrated the same feast of *Panes*, and were firm in the opinion that the birds sacrificed, were but one, and the same female. They had no evidence, however, of where she lived, or where she originated, and neither were the names of her parents known. The commemoration of the festival, was in compliance with the commands given to them by Chinigchinich.

The kind of dance common among these natives, was introduced by first preparing a large bonfire, around, and into which, the men promiscuously jumped, until all the fire was extinguished. The females stood a short distance from the scene, keeping up a continual screaming, and moaning, during the ceremony, and not until every particle of the fire was destroyed did the crying cease—then dancing commenced. Should it so happen, that they were not successful in extinguishing the flames, or if there should remain, and be discovered afterwards, any



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sparks, the dancing did not take place immediately; but they remained silent and discontented. It was a bad omen, and signified the approach of some calamity. This dance was generally performed at night, but when introduced in their large feasts, and danced during the day, then, in addition to the ceremonies already described, they despatched one of the most active of the tribe in quest of water, which, invariably, was brought from a great distance, and from a place designated. When obtained, they emptied the same into a hole previously prepared within the Vanquech. Then all went up into the temple, each one in his turn, blowing with his mouth upon the water, and uttering expressions which were apparently designed to curse and not to bless; however, the latter was the interpretation given to me, and when this was done, they went up again in the same order to sprinkle their faces with the dirty water. The women remained some distance off, and on no account were they allowed to touch it.

Another dance equally ludicrous among these natives, was conducted as follows. The males commenced, first dancing alone, and continued to do so for a short time, when they formed themselves in a line, and one of the females came forward in front of them, with her arms folded upon her breast, and danced up and down the file with many graceful turns, and movements, which were several times repeated, when she retired, and the males resumed their part of the performances—and so they continued dancing, the males and females alternately, until it was time to change the monotony. They had another dance, very similar, with this exception—that the female was entirely exposed, and whilst she was singing and displaying her person in many disgusting attitudes, the spectators, men, women and children, all formed a circle around her. This immodest exhibition was also one of the teachings of Chinigchinich, but was introduced twice, only, during the year, and then outside of the town.

They had another, which was introduced on the occasion of the son of the puplem, or chief's first appearing in public, adorned with the *Tobet*. Not only every one in the place was invited to attend on that day, but also many from the neighboring towns, and the arrangements were as follows. When all were congregated together, the youth was brought forward, and they put upon him the paelt, or robe of feathers, such as

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was used by Chinigchinich, afterwards the crown, and then the exposed parts of his person, they painted black and red. Thus arrayed, he commenced dancing, with the *paail* in his right hand, keeping time to the music of the singers, that did not cease until the lad was completely exhausted. If he were unable to dance, then, one of the Puplem was dressed in like manner, who, placing him upon his shoulder, danced before the assembly. After this was accomplished, one of the women rose up; a sister, an aunt, or some one nearly related to the youth, in all cases, however, a young person, who immediately disrobing herself, danced in presence of the multitude.





# Chapter X

## Of Many of Their Extravagances

Superstitions of a ridiculous, and most extravagant nature, were found associated with these Indians, and even now, in almost every town, or hamlet, the child's first education is a belief in their authenticity; and they grow up from infancy familiar with all their fabulous traditions. The effect tends to enervate their physical faculties, and weaken their mental, so that they naturally become a pusillanimous race of people, liable to be deceived, imposed upon, and of course easily influenced by the puplem, and old men, who are their sole instructors.

There are men, and also females, who are believed to possess the power of enchantment, to such a degree, that no one can withstand their powers; so that without resistance, all immediately acquiesce in their demands. The incantation is performed thus: Beneath the left arm, in a small leather bag, they carry a black ball, called by them "*aguet*," composed of a plaster of *mescal*, and wild honey, or, as they term it, "quijotes," or "sejat." When they wish to make use of the same, to exercise its virtues upon any one, the right hand is placed upon the leather bag, and without any other ceremony, the sorcery is effected. Should the person appear indifferent to the presence of the enchanter, then a companion immediately announces the fact, that he bears the sacred charm, and their demands are complied with, without reply or opposition. The

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said "aguet," is a composition unknown to all but the sorcerers, and of course, only used by them. How it possesses so much virtue, I have never been enabled to discover. Nevertheless, they give up whatever is asked of them, under the impression that more calamities will attend them, if they do not.

They have an idea, that if the shadow of the aura, in his flying through the air, should fall upon them with their heads uncovered, they would become afflicted with sores and diseases, and on this account, whenever it so happens that a bird of this class approaches, they immediately cover their persons.

They believed when the *pelican* visited the inland population, that it was an omen of death to some one, and consequently, they persecuted the bird until it left their neighborhood. Another ridiculous belief among them was, that the deer hunters could never partake of venison which they, themselves, procured, and only of such as was taken by others, for the reason, that if they did, they would not get any more. And the fishermen, also, possessed the same idea with regard to their fish. More singular, however, than this, was the custom among the young men, when starting for the woods in search of rabbits, squirrels, rats, or other animals. They were obliged to take a companion for the reason, that he who killed the game, could not eat thereof—if he did, in a few days he complained of pains in his limbs, and gradually became emaciated. On this account, two went together, in order to exchange with each other the result of their excursion. This infliction did not extend to every one who partook of the game of his own taking, but only to such as were guilty of consuming it secretly. Neither was it incurable, for they had among them certain sorcerers possessing the power to reinstate them in their former health and contentment.

When the sun, or moon, was eclipsed, they appeared much frightened; and the men, women, and children, were heard crying and shouting, whilst throwing sand into the air, and beating with sticks upon dry hides, or upon the ground. This was done, as they said, to scare away a large and ferocious monster, who would devour the sun and moon, and if he were permitted to accomplish the entire consumption of either, that is, if there should be a *total eclipse*, all would immediately die, and the world would come to an end.



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At the time of new moon, and on the first day of its appearance, it was usual amongst them to call together all the young men for the purpose of its celebration. A "correr la luna!" shouted one of the old men. Come, my boys, the moon! the moon! Immediately, racing commenced, and without order they ran about as if they were distracted, whilst the old men danced in a circle, saying the following words—"As the moon dieth, and cometh to life again, so we also having to die, will again live,"—thus manifesting clearly the resurrection of the flesh. How this was understood by them, I did not ascertain, for they could not explain it, and they merely observed the ceremony, on account of its having been practised by their ancestors.

Another belief, current with the younger part of the females of the community, was, that the meteoric appearances often beheld in the evening, were the *Tacuieh*, or children of the moon, and whenever they beheld them, they fell upon the ground, and covered their heads, fearing if seen by them, that their faces would become ugly, and diseased. They had amongst them certain individuals who pretended to be descendants of the "Coyote" eaters of human flesh—not as the cannibals and Mexicans—but their manner of proceeding was after the following disgusting custom. Whenever a Captain, or one of the Puplem, died, they sent for the *Eno*, who was thus called before he officiated in his duties, and afterwards "*Tacue*," signifying "an eater." Having arrived at the place, where they had placed the dead body, he immediately cut off a large piece from the neck, and the back, near the shoulder, and consumed the flesh in its raw state, in presence of the multitude assembled to witness the performance. This was always done in commemoration of the feat performed by the "Coyote" upon the body of the great Captain *Ouiot*, as has been already recounted in a previous chapter. For this, *Eno* was well remunerated, and every one contributed for the purpose. The young of both sexes, were very much afraid of this *Tacue*, and looked upon him as a sorcerer.

These Indians were not entirely destitute of a knowledge of the universal deluge, but how, or from whence, they received the same, I could never understand. Some of their songs refer to it; and they have a tradition that, at a time very remote, the sea began to swell and roll in upon the plains, and fill the valleys, until it had covered the mountains; and

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thus nearly all the human race and animals were destroyed, excepting a few, who had resorted to a very high mountain which the waters did not reach. But the songs give a more distinct relation of the same, and they state that the descendants of Captain *Ouiot* asked of Chinigchinich vengeance upon their chief—that he appeared unto them, and said to those endowed with the power, "Ye are the ones to achieve vengeance—ye who cause it to rain! Do this, and so inundate the earth, that every living being will be destroyed." The rains commenced, the sea was troubled, and swelled in upon the earth, covering the plains, and rising until it had overspread the highest land, excepting a high mountain, where, the few had gone with the one who had caused it to rain, and thus every other animal was destroyed upon the face of the earth. These songs were supplications to Chinigchinich to drown their enemies. If their opponents heard them, they sang others in opposition, which in substance ran thus: "We are not afraid, because Chinigchinich does not wish to, neither will he destroy the world by another inundation." Without doubt this account has reference to the universal deluge, and the promise God made, that there should not be another.



# Chapter XI

## Their Calendar

We cannot but believe that the calendar is one of the most important and the most necessary of inventions. But theirs, if we may call it such, differed but very little from the natural instinct of the brute creation, which possessed a knowledge of time, and the seasons for their sustenance and procreation. We see that many animals change their places, and even climates, at a time prefixed; either on account of the temperature or want of food; and at the proper time for their return they visit again the same locations. The Indians had the same custom, as regards the changing from place to place; for in the winter they resided in one place, and in summer in another. This was general amongst them, excepting with those located on the sea-coast, who seldom removed, because their maintenance was derived from the sea; unlike the others who subsisted entirely upon fruits and seeds of the fields. Their calendar contained merely the names of the months, directing the times or seasons for the collecting of their different seeds, and produce of the earth. Not all of them possessed this knowledge; it being confined to the *Puplem* who were the criers that informed them when to cultivate their fields, and observe other requisitions. In the first place, they were destitute of chronology, by which to calculate the period of time transpired; hence, the difficulty in giving any account of their antiquities, as they had neither figures nor signs to preserve them; and possessing no idea of the past, their thoughts were limited solely to

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the present. On this account their calendar was confined to the months of the year, but as they reckoned these by the number of moons, they differed from the "sun's reckoning," having almost every year a less number of days—for at the conclusion of the moon in December, that is, at the conjunction, they calculated the return of the sun from the Tropic of Capricorn; and another year commenced, the Indian saying "the sun has arrived at his home." When the new year begun, no thought was given to the past; and on this account, even amongst the most intelligent, they could not tell the number of years which had transpired, when desirous of giving an idea of any remote event.

They observed with greater attention and celebrated with more pomp, the sun's arrival at the tropic of Capricorn, than they did his reaching the tropic of Cancer, for the reason, that, as they were situated ten degrees from the latter, they were pleased at the sun's approach towards them; for it returned to ripen their fruits and seeds, to give warmth to the atmosphere, and enliven again the fields with beauty and increase.

The names of the months were as follows:

Aapcomil,	December and January.
Peret,	February.
Yarmar,	March.
Alasoguil,	April.
Tocoboaich,	May.
Sintecar,	June and July.
Cucuat,	August.
Lalavaich,	September.
Aguitscomel,	October.
Aaguit,	November.

In order to comprehend the manner in which they counted the months, it is necessary to know that their year commenced always on the 21st day of December, and upon the sun's arrival at the tropic—consequently, the days which transpired between the last conjunction and the 21st were not noticed—or, in their mode of explanation, "There was no day." The month "Aapcomil" always begun on the 21st, without any regard to the moon's age, and not only continued during the remainder



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of its term, but throughout the one following; thus including nearly two moons. Sometimes it so happened that the moon's conjunction occurred on the 21st or afterwards, in which case two entire moons were counted in the first month. Nearly the same occurrence took place in "Sintecar," with this difference only, that if the sun's arrival at the tropic of Cancer fell upon the day of the moon's full, then the month began; but the days previous to this were made use of, and annexed to the antecedent "Tocoboach,"—that is, the month did not expire with the conjunction, but at the full; when the other began, and continued throughout the following moon. All the other months of the year commenced with the conjunction, therefore, they seldom agreed with ours.

Their calendar contained no more; and served, principally, to denote when to harvest the grain, celebrate their feasts, and commemorate the death of their friends. But of the number of days contained in their months, they had no knowledge whatever, and much less of those composing the year—so that the phases of the moon were their only guide, and these informed them when they were to observe their feastings, which never fell upon the same day in any other year. The way they ascertained when to celebrate them, was as follows. When the month arrived, one of the Puplem (to whom belonged the privilege of holding the feast) observed with attention the moon's aspect; and when its appearance denoted the time, he made known the fact to the public by sending a crier through the town.

In like manner, they proceeded, in regard to the anniversaries of the dead, although they were never celebrated on the same day in any other year, as that on which the person died. At the time of the decease of a captain, or of one of the Puplem, (for they paid no attention to others) a *Pul* observed the moon's aspect, also the month in which the death occurred; and in the following year, in the same month, when the moon's aspect was the same, they celebrated the anniversary.

# Chapter XII

## The Indian Wars

War was invented by men, and for the purpose of taking from each other, their estates and other property, or for carrying into effect their revengeful dispositions. Thus it was with these Indians, whose battles were frequent, and often declared from the most trivial causes. A consultation was not necessary to decide if the war were just or unjust, but to ascertain if their force were sufficient, and to provide measures whereby they might take advantage of, and surprise their adversaries. War was never waged by them for conquest, but for revenge; and in many cases for some affront given to their ancestors, which had remained unavenged. Their quarrels and disputes arose from trivial motives, for their wealth was trifling, and consisted merely of seeds, skins, or beads, which were universally esteemed amongst them as money. Also, when a chief neglected to return the customary present at their festivities, of which I have before treated, war was declared, and without even giving him notice. Again, if an Indian of one place stole anything from one of another place, although it might be so trifling a thing as a rabbit, a squirrel, or, ornament of some kind, it was sufficient among them to cause a war.

Whenever a captain determined to make war upon another chief, he called together the puple, and revealed to them his desire to make war upon such a town, for reasons which he explained, and it was discussed by the body, whether they were sufficient of themselves to conquer. If



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sensible of their inferiority, some other friendly tribes were invited to join with them, to whom they sent presents of as costly a kind as their treasury would admit; and if they acquiesced, then the day was fixed upon to assemble for battle. All this was conducted secretly, but, nevertheless, the parties to be attacked were generally warned of their danger, and of course prepared for the conflict. The war being determined upon, a crier was sent around during the evening, exhorting all the people to repair on the following day, at an early hour, to the residence of the chief, and when there congregated, he ordered them to prepare their arms of bows and arrows; and to the females, he delivered grain, for them to grind into flour, which they called *pinole*. But the reason for such measures was not revealed. However, when the day was decided upon for the marching of the expedition, then the crier went around a second time, and commanded them to repair as before, to the residence of the chief; and all went—the men with their bows and arrows, and the women with their *pinoles*. Having assembled before the *vanquech*, where the captain and *puplem* had resorted, according to the custom, the crier explained to the people why such preparations were made—why war was declared, and the young men were urged to combat and revenge. Immediately commenced the necessary preparations—each put on his dress, and uniform, corresponding to his rank. The women, in like manner, adorned themselves for the occasion, and thus they started off for the battle ground, old and young—the females carrying the provisions, and upon their backs their infant children. Their order of march was as follows:—The captain, or one appointed by him, took the lead at the head of the young men—in succession followed the older ones, and the women closed up the rear, it being their duty to gather up the arrows of the opposing force which were scattered around them, and distribute the same among their own warriors. Should one of their own party be killed or wounded, they were obliged to remove him to a place of security, so that the enemy could not get at him. No quarter was ever given, and consequently, no prisoners were ever made among the men, excepting of such as were killed, or mortally wounded. These were immediately decapitated by some old men appointed for the purpose, and the hair taken from the heads, together with the scalps, which were dried and cured, after the manner of dressing their skins, and preserved

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as trophies of victory. The women and children taken prisoners, were either disposed of, by sale, or detained by the captain as slaves.

When celebrating their grand feasts, it was customary to expose in public the scalps taken in war; and for this purpose they were suspended from a high pole, erected near the vanquech. Sometimes scalps were redeemed by paying largely; but the women and children were never released,—ever remaining as slaves to their enemies, unless fortunate enough to escape to the protection of their own nation.



## Chapter XIII

### Their Funeral Ceremonies

Before treating upon the subject of their manner of interment, I will just refer to the remedies used for their diseases. They possessed some knowledge of the virtues of certain medicinal herbs, and the external application of them to cutaneous disorders; but for internal diseases, such as fevers, &c., they always resorted to cold baths. For pains in the head, immediate application of cold water was the remedy. For external diseases, such as tumors, swellings, sores and rheumatic pains, they made use of various herbs, known to us, and called sage, rosemary, and nettle-plant—which were applied in a plaster. They made use of a kind of black rosin also, which was very oily, and manufactured from certain seeds. When attacked with pain in the stomach they inhaled the smoke of these plants, and if afflicted with any ordinary pain, a whipping, with nettles, was applied to the part affected, and frequently large ants.

For disease of the liver, fevers, and all malignant complaints, I have not discovered that they made use of any remedies but the cold water baths, before mentioned. Sometimes the patient, entirely exposed, was laid upon a quantity of dry ashes or sand, and at his feet blazed a scorching fire, without regard to the season. At his head stood a small vessel of water, and sometimes gruel, that he might partake of them, if he chose, but no persuasions were ever used on the part of his friends to induce him to do so, if he did not feel inclined. He was never left alone, being

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attended by many of his friends, both day and night; and thus he remained until either nature, or the disease, conquered.

As soon as any one fell ill, they immediately sent for the physician, who was one of the *puplem*, or soothsayers before spoken of. It must be understood that not all of the *puplem* possessed the necessary qualifications, but only those who received them by succession. When they appeared before the patient, it was always with an air of great mystery. A strict examination into the state of the patient, was the commencement of their performances, and divers infirmities were explained, and their causes—all originating from the introduction of certain particles into the body of the patient, such as the hairs of various animals, bones, stones, briars, sticks, &c., which produced the pain or infirmity. Before prescribing anything, they made use of many superstitious ceremonies. In the first place, the patient was examined from head to foot, and no part of his body remained untouched. Then the painful parts became the topic of discussion, and were represented as having within them something of a hard substance, such as a stone, splinter, or bone, and of course, their success in removing the disease was ever a matter of great uncertainty; but still, they would use all their skill, and endeavor to restore him to health. They placed feathers upon his head, and encircled him entirely with these, and other articles, such as horse-hair, grass, beads, and hairs of the head; blowing at the same time with their mouths towards the four cardinal points, and muttering to themselves certain low sounds—certain mysterious words—accompanied with antic gesticulations, of which no one knew the meaning. After this, one of them applied his lips to the part affected, and pretended to draw from it, by suction, the particles, which they had stated as being within, and exposed them to all present. The spectators, as well as the patient, placed strict confidence in the fact, and were satisfied, whether he recovered or died. When the patient did not recover from his disease, the *puplem* would say, it was because Chinigchinich had sent him the infirmity, as a chastisement for some act of disobedience, and that he must reconcile himself to death.

There were many of these impostors spread about the country, who, after being well fed and paid for their *services*, made all manner of ridicule of their too credulous companions. Wonderful as it may appear,



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oftentimes they performed cures, when the patients were apparently fast verging into eternity, and in the space of twenty-four hours, by their extravagances and witchcraft, they have enabled them to rise from a bed of sickness, and unite with their companions in their domestic employments. I will relate a case which happened in the mission of "La Purissima," A.D. 1809, which will serve to confirm the truth of the preceding statement. A young woman of eighteen years of age, had been sick for nearly a year, suffering from the effects of dysentery and fever, so that she had wasted away almost to a skeleton, and was to all appearances dying; having received the holy sacrament preparatory to her supposed departure. One morning, whilst walking in the garden of the mission, I saw her sitting with other females performing the task of clearing the grass; surprised at beholding her there, when I supposed her dying, I asked her how she felt? Her mother, who was at her side, replied to the question, and said that she was well, because such a one (naming one of the sorcerers) had taken from her some bear's hairs, which were the cause of her illness, and, immediately, she was restored. I inquired how they were introduced into her stomach, and how long she had had them? She replied, that when in childhood, and about eight or nine years old, one night, whilst asleep with other children in a room by themselves, a bear came and placed some of his hairs on her stomach. How he came there, or how the hairs got into her stomach, she could not explain; for all that she knew about it, had been stated to her by the sorcerer. This was all deception, of course, but still it happened from that day, that the girl improved in health, and, in a short time, was as robust and hearty as any one!

When the patient died under the attendance of these physicians, then preparations were made for his sepulture, or the burning of his body, according to a custom observed here, in commemoration of the last ceremonies rendered to the remains of their grand chieftain *Ouiot*. They did not put into immediate execution the solemn duties and funeral performances, but suffered several hours to elapse, that they might be assured of his death. In the meantime the pile was prepared, and the person summoned, who officiated on such occasions in applying the torch; for it was usual, in this neighborhood, to employ certain characters, who made their livelihood by it, and who, generally, were confined

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to particular families. As soon as every thing was prepared, and the time had arrived for the ceremony, they bore the corpse to the place of sacrifice, where it was laid upon the faggots. Then the friends of the deceased retired, and the burner (so called) set fire to the pile, and remained near the spot until all was consumed to ashes. The ceremony being concluded on his part, he was paid for his services, and withdrew. Every thing of use, belonging to the deceased, such as his bow and arrows, feathers, be-ads, skins, &c., were consumed with him, whilst his relatives and friends added, also, other articles of value to the sacrifice, but during the scene of burning they did not observe any particular ceremony, nor had they any; for as soon as the burner gave notice that he had performed his task, they all retired outside of the town to mourn the decease of their friend. The *puplem* sang songs, while the relatives wept; and the substance of their canticles was merely a relation of the cause of the infirmity—the location of the disease—when it first commenced, and its course throughout the body, until it attacked the heart, when he died, thus naming over all the parts of the human frame. These songs were generally repeated over and over for three days and nights, and then they returned to their homes.

The mode of testifying their grief by outward appearance, was by shortening the hair of their heads; and in conformity to the kin of the deceased, so they regulated the custom. For the loss of a parent, wife or child, the head was completely shorn; for a distant relative, they cut off merely one half of the length, and for a friend, only the extremity; but in all cases, however, they were governed entirely by the love and attachment for the deceased. The same custom is now in use, and not only applied to deaths, but to their disappointments and adversities in life, thus making public demonstration of their sorrow.



## Chapter XIV

### The Immortality of the Soul

This chapter may cause some perplexity, from circumstance of its treating of that which is imperceptible to the senses; of a substance incorporeal and spiritual. Still, I can in a very few words make known the belief of these Indians, relative to the rational soul, and what they understood concerning its immortality. There are arguments pro and con, which are of particular interest, inasmuch as they involve the future destiny of man; I will be more explicit in my remarks here, than in the preceding chapter, and recount all that I have been enabled to acquire relative to the subject.

In their gentilism, they were undoubtedly materialists, for they believed that the soul was the "*espiritu vital*," received from the air, which they breathed, and which they called "*piuts*," signifying "*to live*." They possessed no knowledge, nor did they believe in the existence of any other substance than the material body. On this account they said, (and many believe it at the present time,) that man was composed of bones, flesh and blood only; for "*piuts*," which is the breath, is another thing, like wind, that goes and comes. The body they called "*petacan*," a term applied, to the brute creation as well as man, or rather, to all living or animated beings. To designate the soul belonging to the body from the "*espiritu vital*," they possessed no term but "*pusuni*," which is general in its meaning, and signifies a "substance within," applied to things

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animate and inanimate, and to the heart, on account of its location, and particular importance to the body.

They penetrated no farther than was perceptible to the sense, for the reason that the spirituality of the soul was incomprehensible to them; they only understanding the materials of the body. Thus they were materialists, for they said that when the body died, and was burnt, naught remained, for all was consumed. Death, they believed was an entity, real and invisible, who, when in anger with any one, took away by degrees his breath, until all was removed, and then the person died. I have observed, in a previous chapter, that the punishments they so much feared from Chinigchinich, were all corporeal, such as falling over stones, and upon the earth—the bite of the serpent, bears, &c.; and lastly, death—the termination, without reference to pain, punishment, or glory afterwards. I think this sufficient to prove that they were materialists, but as they relate a thousand novel accounts, relative to the immortality of the soul, which have proceeded from dreams or delirium, I will recount some of them, as they were related to me.

Materialists, as I have supposed them, (without adding other convincing reasons, such as the great insensibility manifested at the hour of their death—the little inclination for divine things, and desire for the unholy, which go far to show plainly their want of knowledge of the rational soul, and consequently of its immortality;) still, the words or expressions, made use of in the tenth chapter relative to the moon, are of opposing force—viz., "that as the moon dieth and cometh to life again, so we, having to die, will again live." But, as I observed in the chapter cited, I can not comprehend how they understood it—nor can I think that their ancestors believed in the resurrection of the flesh. They may have had such belief many ages back, and the tradition may have been preserved in songs. Other verses are used in opposition, and are frequently sung at their festivals—viz., "Let us eat, for we shall die, and then all will be finished,"—words similar in sense to the passage in the Holy Scriptures, referring to the expressions of the foolish young men.

Let us refer now to some of the accounts respecting the soul's immortality. It is affirmed by some, that "when an Indian died, he went to the abode of his God Chinigchinich, a sort of earthly paradise, called, '*tolmec*,' applicable, more properly, to *hell*; for it implies a location below





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the earth, and since their conversion, the same word is made use of in the catechism, to denote the abode of Satan. They believed that Chinigchinich "resided in that region—that there was plenty to eat and drink, and to wear—that there was constant dancing and festivity—that no one labored—no one was sorrowful; but on the contrary, all were contented and happy—every one did as they pleased, and selected the number of wives they wished." The reader will compare this belief with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It was taught by the moderns, undoubtedly, and since their conversion to Christianity; for the old men at the time of their gentilism, had no such idea; to confirm which, I will relate the following account, as it was given to me by a female, who had been many years a convert to Christianity.

In the year 1817, in the mission of St. Juan Capistrano, I visited this woman, who was recovering from a severe attack of malignant fever. When in the worst stage of the disease, and in a state of paroxysm, she said, that she died, and the Indians, her relatives, carried her to Chinigchinich, where she beheld a great number of men and women. Some were dancing, some playing, and others were bathing in a stream of pure, transparent water. The "rancheria" was large and beautiful, and the houses were of different construction from those in modern use. Having arrived at the house of Chinigchinich, she was informed that she could not enter, to reside with them yet; that she must return to her home. Food was given to her, of delicious quality, such as she had never eaten before, soon after which, she returned without having beheld Chinigchinich; but she could not recollect if she came alone, or if she were accompanied by others. It is evident that this account was the result of delirium, for I visited her during the paroxysm, when she partook of a glass of warm water, sweetened, that I administered myself, and of which she drank the whole. This water may have been the repast which she referred to, as having been given to her in the house of Chinigchinich; it caused her to perspire profusely, and broke the fever, so that in a few days she recovered.

The ancients said, that when an Indian died, though the body was burnt, still the heart did not consume—(which must be the *spirit* or soul, for the heart of flesh, of course, would perish with the body)—that it went to a place destined by Chinigchinich. If a chief, or one of the

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puplem, it went to dwell among the stars, and like them throw its light upon the earth. For this reason, they said that the planets, and most luminous bodies, were their hearts, or in other words, they were themselves, in reality.

In the year 1821, there appeared in the N.E. a comet. The Indians believed, with undoubted faith, that it was a chief of a *rancheria*, who had died; and who, previous to his departure, had told them, that he should in time behold them again from the heavens. This idea they received from their ancient traditions, because, according to *Seutonio*, the gentiles believed, that at the hour of the death of any illustrious personage (as was seen at the death of Julius Caesar), there appeared in the heavens some notable meteor, which was translated to the stars, and arranged among the Gods. The reason given why the chiefs and puplem, alone, went to the heaven of stars, and that the other people did not, is this: because "*Tacue*," "the eater of human flesh," had eaten of them previous to their being burnt; and if it happened that he did not eat of them, in consequence of their dying in the power of their enemies, or on account of their being drowned, then they did not go to the stars, but to another place, to which they were destined by Chinigchinich. Others, who were not of noble rank, were doomed to the borders of the sea, or to the hills, mountains, valleys, or forests; and there they remained an indefinite time, while Chinigchinich held them doing penance for the faults they had committed, in not obeying his precepts, but after the performance of said penance, whether they returned to their former shape, or removed to any other location, they could not tell.

The Indians, when they saw any strange thing, or imagined that they beheld any extraordinary figure, said, that it was a ghost, and considered it a bad omen—the forerunner of misfortune. They believed, that if the dead appeared to any one, it was for the purpose of injury, and particularly so, if appearing to females, whom, weak and timid as they were, it required but little to terrify. On this account, there were villains, who personated such figures to effect their brutal purposes. This custom was not confined to the Indians in their heathen state, but prevailed also among those who had become christianized. I will relate an occurrence of the kind, which took place in this neighborhood.

On a certain occasion, two females, mother and daughter-in-law,



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went out in search of wild fruits, which they called "*naut*." When in the vicinity of a grove, they heard loud groans and lamentations—a breaking of the shrubbery, and limbs of trees—then followed a voice, calling upon the daughter, by her proper name, to come to the place, or she would be murdered. The poor girl, filled with terror, and believing it an apparition, went into the grove, where she beheld one, who appeared, dressed in feathers from head to foot, with his face covered. She was told that he was such a one, who died at such a time, and that Chinighchinich confined him there. He told her to inform his widow, that she must resort to a certain place at night. On her return home' she gave the message to the woman, who immediately went to the spot directed, to behold her departed husband, and to ascertain his wishes. At first, she could find no one; but in a little while, she heard a voice, which said to her that she must remain until night. Supposing that in reality it was the voice of her deceased husband, she rejoiced greatly, for, they had loved each other much in their youth. She remained with him three nights—during which time, he spoke to her but very little, and then in a low and disguised voice. She went about in the daytime in search of fruits, and he, on return of evening, would bring her meat, that she might eat. On the third day, in the morning, after separating, she went out upon a hill, and beheld the same person in conversation with another; she knew them both, and returned immediately to the Mission, where she gave information, and many of her friends went out to the place, and discovered them in a cave with three hostile Indians.

Others remained about the houses of widows, and the houses of their relatives, terrifying them and doing them injury; and on this account, it was the custom whenever the deceased were burnt, to burn also the houses, and rebuild in another direction, so that when the husbands returned in search of them, there would be nothing remaining to denote their existence, and thus they would escape their persecutions. The converted Indians of the present day, have the same idea.

There is another case which I witnessed in the Mission of St. Luis Rey, in the year 1813—a Christian died, and the Indians said that he was poisoned or bewitched, by another Christian of the same mission—that his death was the result of witchcraft. The deceased in his lifetime possessed a small garden, where he was accustomed to sow yearly, certain

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grain and seeds. This he left to a relative at a time when the plants were in blossom; but immediately everything dried up and was destroyed, so that nothing was harvested of either grain or fruit. The plants whilst young were fresh and fruitful, like the plants in the surrounding gardens, but the moment the blossoms appeared as if ready to produce seed, they died; so that, in the course of one night, nearly all were destroyed as if consumed by fire. The Indians said that the deceased was seen moving about at night in every direction of the garden, and that whatever he touched, perished. This was revealed to them by an old woman who owned the adjoining garden, and who related the story to me, also, so that I was induced to go to the place in order to witness the same, and found, as she had stated, the greater part of the plants dead, or in a perishing state; some, however, were still flourishing. These I took particular notice of, and on the following day I returned, and found seven of them, consisting of corn, pumpkins, and watermelons, dried up, and consumed to their roots. In this way the whole was destroyed. Said Indian died of *dysentery*, and not by witchcraft, nor poison as believed. They were superstitious in their belief that whoever died in this way, died of poison, and this accounts for the tradition of the death of their grand captain Quiot. We have seen that the story of the garden was given by an old woman, and for this reason is entitled to but little credit, but that which has caused me some difficulty to explain is, why the plants were thus decayed. It was not from want of care, or from disease received from insects, or animals either, because, if so, there would have appeared spots about them, and they would not have been diseased to their very roots. This may excite wonder in the reader, and I have used every diligence possible, to ascertain the cause, but without success. What I conjecture is this—that the Devil did all this, that but few should escape from his hands, and the motive, I have for believing so is, that at this time, there were many gentiles in the mission, principally sorcerers, (some were catechumens, and others not) who night after night performed their heathen ceremonies.

What has been said, I think is sufficient to prove, that these accounts and stories relative to the immortality of the soul, are mere fables, frauds and inventions to deceive the simple: that the first, and original settlers in this region, had a knowledge of the spirituality of the soul, and, consequently,

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of its immortality; that by tradition, they have preserved the same without believing it, and perhaps ages before, they had a totally different account. We often perceive that a history, by numerous editions and revisals, loses much of its originality; how much more liable to corruption, tradition must be, among an ignorant race like the Indians. But little respect is attached to their belief of the spiritual substance with which we are adorned, not only by the rule, and ignorant of the present day, but, by the wisest, and best instructed in our Holy Religion. To remove all doubt from the reader, that he may not think my ideas extravagant, I will relate two events which happened in places where I have resided.

In the year 1808, I was a missionary in the mission of "La Purissima," when a young man of the establishment became seriously indisposed. His age was 23 years, he had been reared from infancy by the fathers, and was instructed in every thing appertaining to religion; often serving as interpreter for them, and was almost always with them. When first attacked, he refused to take medicine, nor could he be persuaded to do so, by any advice of the fathers; but he went off in search of one of the quack physicians, who practised upon him all his diabolical art. The fathers, seeing that he became worse, daily exhorted him to confess, and prepare for death like a Christian; but he declined, with the excuse that he was weak, he required examination, and (as was the opinion of the quack,) he did not think he should die. But, alas! he was deceived; for when the *doctor* saw that his chicanery and witchcraft, had no effect for the better, he forsook him, saying, "that as he had always believed the teachings of the priests, his God, (or more properly his devil), was angered and sent him death as a punishment." Hearing this, the poor invalid concluded to confess—he did so, but not with that satisfaction to the fathers which they had desired, and very soon after, death followed.

In the year 1817, in the mission of St. Juan Capistrano, an Indian 35 years of age, who, like the one just mentioned, was well instructed, became afflicted with a dangerous disease, and died. No persuasion on the part of his friends, or exhortations of the priests, could prevail upon him to confess, and partake of the holy sacrament; at the bare proposal, he became frantic, and uttered expressions, which were contemptuous and blasphemous. A short time previous to his death, I called to see him, to

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give him that consolation, which the promises of our holy religion impart to the penitent soul, and I urged him, since he could do no more, to receive the extreme unction, to ask pardon for his sins, for God was infinite in his mercy to the repentant sinner. But all in vain! my words were ineffectual, and they were spurned with disgust. His limbs were extended—the froth came from his mouth—his eyes rolled back into his head, presenting a true picture of the appearance of one condemned to the torments of hell; and three persons were insufficient to confine him. These demonstrations seemed to me, the effects of the violence of the malady, but after a while his tranquillity returned, and some one exclaimed, "Why do you not confess?" "Because I will not," he replied, with anger. "If I have been deceived whilst living, I do not wish to die in the delusion!" These were his last words; for soon after, he expired, and there remained a corpse, truly horrible and revolting to the sight. Consider, what must have been my feelings! Such a spectacle before me, revealing to the letter the words of David, "*Pecator videbit et irascetur, dentibus suis fremet et tabescet, desiderium peccatorum peribit.*"

I presume there may be some persons who will say, notwithstanding these accounts, that they are not satisfactory evidences of a total want of faith and belief; for rare occurrences happen every where, and God has permitted them to take place for his own inexplicable purposes, and for advantages resulting to others. To this I concede, but exceptions are few. These accounts generally conform to each other in substance, and he, who has perused them with attention, or is familiar with the character of these Indians, knowing that when they appear the most intelligent, and entitled to the greatest confidence, they are the least to be trusted; he will, I say, agree with me, generally, regarding their belief; as all their operations are accompanied by stratagems and dissimulation, they easily gain our confidence, and at every pass we are deluded.



## Chapter XV

### Origin of the Population of the Mission of St. Juan Capistrano

Having thus far dwelt upon the usages, belief, and customs of these Indians, it may not be uninteresting to know the origin of those who first settled in the neighborhood of St. Juan, the account of which, will contain many absurdities, and some equally extravagant as those already related. The first, or earliest people, who populated this section of the country, emigrated from a place called "*Sejat*," distant N.E. from the mission, seven or eight leagues, and in the middle of a valley, now known by the name of "el Rancho de los Nietos." Originally, the inhabitants were numerous, but the success, and influence of a holy conquest gradually eradicated their attachment to "*Sejat*," and all, finally, became subject to the spiritual, as well as temporal, administration of the ecclesiastical missions. Their chief, named "*Oyaison*," which name implies "wisdom" or "intelligence," and his wife, called "*Sirorum*," signifying that which is noisy, (probably alluding to the noise made by the shells and beads attached to her dress), had three children, called *Coronne*, "*Vuiragram*," and *Uiniojum*. *Oyaison*, after the death of *Sirorum*, separated from among the people many families, who accompanied him and his daughter *Coronne*, in a colonial enterprise; for, in consequence of the rapid increase of population, the annual production of seeds on his lands, were insufficient to maintain so great a number, and, accordingly, the colonists commenced their march. After travelling southwardly seven or eight

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leagues, or more, they arrived at a place called "*Niguiti*," which is situated half a league only, N.E. from the mission. Here, they discovered a spring of fresh water, and from the favorable appearance of the neighboring country, they concluded that it was a place well adapted to the founding of a new colony. As soon as the erecting of their habitations was completed, and order had been established, the chief returned to "*Sejat*," leaving behind, his daughter "*Coronne*."

Twenty summers had passed away, and still no feelings of love, or wish to marry, had ever been known to exist in the heart of *Coronne*. The Indians said that she was very coarse and fat—that they never had seen, or in fact, that there never was another of such proportions. The name given to the new establishment was "*Putuidem*," which means "umbilicus projectura;" for *Coronne* was afflicted with an enlargement of that organ, and this was their notion for so naming the settlement. In course of time, owing to the scarcity of grain, many of the inhabitants separated; and, by permission of *Coronne*, located themselves about in different parts of the Valley of St. Juan; and in this way originated the many small villages, or towns, which were to be met with, in the route to *Putuidem*.

A custom was observed in all their new settlements, to appoint as chief or captain, the eldest of the families, and to him was given the name of *Nu*, and to the second in power, that of "*Eyacque*." Their wives were named also; the first "*Coronne*," and the second "*Tepi*." These same appellations were given to a small insect, or fly, which was abundant in the fields and gardens, called by us the lady bug. The red ones were *Coronnes*, and the yellow, *Tepis*! The first was given to the wife of the chief, in commemoration of the *Capitana of Putuidem*, and that of *Tepi* to the wife of *Eyacque*, for the reason that the two names implied equality, as demonstrated in the character of the insects who varied only in their colors. These names are the principal distinctions of rank, known among the Indians, and there are many of the present day, who, on account of their appellations, are considered and respected as descendants of *Eyacque*.

A grand feast was given by *Coronne*, of several days' continuance, and all the neighboring tribes were invited to attend, and take part in the amusements and rejoicings. The feast commenced with dancing,





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playing and singing, and all their accustomed games and usages followed; but as in this world there cannot be complete happiness, or joy unadulterated, it happened that after she had retired for the night, whilst asleep, her body swelled up prodigiously, and in an instant became a mound of earth; thereupon the people retired to their respective rancherias. In the place where the town was located, and where they celebrated the feast, there is a small rising ground, which was probably formed by the course of the water in a freshet; but the Indians say, and religiously believe, that it is the body of *Coronne*.

After having taken leave of their friends, who remained sorrowful, and disconsolate for the loss of their *Capitana*, the Indians on returning home, arrived and put up for the night at a place called "*Acagchemem*," distant, from where the mission now stands, only about sixty yards; and from this time the new colony assumed the name corresponding to the place. "*Acagchemem*," signifies a pyramidal form of any thing that moves, such as, an anthill, or place of resort for other insects. Others apply the term to things inanimate; such as a pile of stones, &c.; but, the most correct signification of the word is understood as having relation to a heap of animated things.

The motive alleged by the Indians, for having dropped the name of their nation, and substituted that of "*Acagchemem*," is that they passed the night before mentioned, literally piled upon each other; men, women, and children; and when rising on the following morning, they vociferated "*Acagchemem*," implying, that they had slept in a heap; and from that time the appellation remained as if to commemorate forever the event.

When the Indians came to settle in the valley of St. Juan Capistrano, they spoke a language somewhat distinct from the one now in use, and in a dialect, not dissimilar to the one used in St. Gabriel. They say the cause of the variation, originated with their chief "*Oyaison*," who told them that as they were to change their place of residence, they were necessarily obliged to alter their mode of speech, as well as their customs, in order to become a distinct nation.

The name, "*Sejat*," signifies a place of wild bees, and "*Sejar pepau*," the honey. In this region there were to be found many hives, located in holes formed in the earth. The Indians search for them at all times, to

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extract the honey, and it is made use of in their food. The color is black, and it is rather bitter, but I have been informed that there are places, where it is to be found, of a kind, equally as good, as that which is extracted from the hives of the domestic species.



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# Chapter XVI

## The Character of the Indian

To complete this history, and to give a relation of all my observations during a period of more than twenty years' residence in the province, it will be important to delineate the character of the Indians, as I have been enabled to learn it. The undertaking will be arduous, I know, and a curate of forty years' residence among them, once told his bishop, "they were incomprehensible"—to which I agree; but nevertheless, I will make the attempt. My idea is that the natural, or Divine precepts implanted in the heart of man by his Creator, are by the Indians observed in a retrograde manner, or in the opposite sense—that is, the affirmative with them, is negative, and the negative, the affirmative; and this opposition appears innate among all classes of them. An Indian curate of the Indians, appears to be of the same opinion, if we may judge from his description. "The Indians," he said, lead a life of indolence, rather than devote themselves to the enlightening of their souls with ideas of civilization and catholicism; it is repugnant to their feelings, which have become vitiated by the unrestricted customs among them. Their inclinations, to possess themselves of the property of others, are unbounded. Their hypocrisy, when they pray, is as much to be feared, as their insolence, when in tumultuous disorder. They are never grateful for any benefit, nor do they pardon an injury, and they never proffer civilities, unless to accomplish some interested motive. They are

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ready to expose themselves to the greatest danger, to satisfy their predominant passions. The future from them, is ever veiled by the present. Their inconstancy and want of confidence deprive them of friends, and he, who, by deception, holds them in subjection, may reduce them to almost abject slavery." Such is the picture of them drawn by this Indian curate, who was of Mexico, and I think, although referring to the Mexicans, it is sufficient to comprehend the general character of the Indian. Those of California are less curious, and in no wise so industrious; for the Mexicans, when in their gentilism, sowed and prepared the *maize*, as well as other grain for eating, and the females spun and wove a covering for the body, out of cotton, which they also cultivated.

The Indians of California may be compared to a species of monkey; for in naught do they express interest, except in imitating the actions of others, and, particularly in copying the ways of the "*razon*," or white men, whom they respect as beings much superior to themselves; but in so doing, they are careful to select vice, in preference to virtue. This is the result, undoubtedly, of their corrupt, and natural disposition.

The Indian, in his grave, humble and retired manner, conceals a hypocritical and treacherous disposition. He will deceive the most minute observer, as has been the case with many, or with all, who have endeavored to learn his character, until time has revealed to them his true qualities. He never looks at any one, while in conversation, but has a wandering and malicious gaze. For benefits received, he is never grateful; and instead of looking upon that which is given, he beholds only that which is withheld. His eyes are never uplifted, but like those of the swine, are cast to the earth. Truth is not in him, unless to the injury of another, and he is exceedingly false.

## MYTHOLOGY

These Indians had the same belief as the Ancients, regarding the course of the sun, and believed that when he set, he went to repose in the arms of Thetis. He had twelve Palaces, which were placed at equal distances around the earth; in each of which, he was accustomed to pass a month. These twelve palaces were marked by a circle, called the zodiac, but with signs, which alluded to certain passages in the fable.



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### Characteristic Anecdotes

A chief of a rancheria, or village, not far distant from the Presidio of St. Diego, who had observed, with much attention, the manner and authority with which the "*Comandante*" governed his officers and soldiers, as well as the inhabitants of the place, had heard, also, that the King of Spain was their grand chief, to whom, they all owed allegiance, and in case of disobedience were liable to severe punishment, and even death.

Desirous of imitating the domination of his royal master, he commenced a tyrannical use of his power, which gained him many enemies. However, it was of short duration. In 1822, when D. Augustin Yturvide was proclaimed Emperor of Mexico, and when his government was recognized, in due form, at St. Diego, there were many Indians present, who listened attentively, to the declaration that Mexico no longer acknowledged the Spanish authority. The king (or viceroy) had been deposed, and another placed in his stead, with the new title of Emperor. A few months afterwards, a grand feast was observed in the Indian village, to which all the neighboring Indians were invited.

To commence the ceremonies, they burned their chief alive! and elected another. The feast continued eight days, when the Indians dispersed and returned to their several homes. Those who lived in the Presidio, were censured for such inhumanity, which produced the following remarks:-"Have you not done in Mexico the same with the

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King of Spain?" (meaning the Viceroy). "You say he was not good, and you killed him! Well, our captain was not good, and we have burned him. Should the new one be bad, we will burn him also!"

How little is the faith of these Indians in the teachings of the Catholic truths! A missionary, of the mission of St. Luis Rey, who had baptized several adults, the youngest of whom had reached his fiftieth year, attempted to explain, after the ceremony was concluded, the sort of life which they were to observe for the future; and he told them what they were to do to avoid the influence of Satan. By invoking the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, he said, and by the sign of the holy cross, well performed, we destroy the power of the devil, and drive out all unholy thoughts. A *satrap*, or governor, of one of the rancherias, smilingly observed to the others, "See how this pádre cheats us! Who believes that the devil will leave us, by the sign of the cross? If it were to be done by dancing, as authorized by Chinigchinich, he would depart; but that he will do so, by the means which he says, I do not believe!" The others united with him in laughter, and appeared unimpressed with the efficacy of such ceremony.

About the middle of December, 1823, a comet appeared in the north, which was visible until the latter part of January, of the ensuing year; and in September, 1825, another was seen. The latter appeared in the south-east, with its direction to the north-west, and was visible, though faintly, till the first of November.

The Indians, who had observed them, believing they were their deceased chiefs, consulted together, as to the cause of their appearance, and were all of one opinion, that they denoted some important change in their destiny; but how, or in what manner, it would be, they were ignorant. Some thought that they would return to their primitive mode of life; that it was "*Sirout*," whom they had seen, he, who was the father of their grand captain *Ouiot*; and when he came, he ever brought good things, for their profit and happiness. Others said no! that it denoted that they were to live free, and do whatever they pleased, without being under subjection to any one; yet they would still remain occupants of the mission. The elder ones said, *Sirout* foretold, that another people



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would come, who would treat them as slaves, and abuse them—that they would suffer much hunger and misery, and that the chief thus appeared, to call them away from the impending calamity. Others said, that the comet was "*Tacu*," the father of "*Ouiamot*" or "*Chinigchinich*," which was generally assented to. These ideas have, undoubtedly, arisen from the fact, that when the declaration of independence was proclaimed in Mexico, the Indians were made to believe, that they would no longer be subject to the regulations of the missions; that each family, or person, would live separate, as colonists. But the government, considering them unfit for such a condition, has not made any innovation, up to the present time of November, 1825.

An Indian "*vaquero*," of the mission of San Luis Obispo, who had been despatched on business, to some place not far distant, did not make his appearance until the day following, and then so pallid and trembling, that he could hardly speak. Upon inquiring as to what ailed him, he replied, "that being in a certain place, a phantom appeared before him, which prevented his progress; and his horse, though vigorous, remained immovable at the sight. The phantom commanded him to tell his people not to travel in that direction, for if they did, he should molest them! Immediately, three of us, *pádras*, went out, with "*vaqueros*," and other Indians, and remained all that day about the same spot, but nothing was seen of the phantom.

In a certain "*rancho*," or farm, were several *Pima* Indians, and some *Sagues*, who were employed in erecting a building; he who directed them, was one of the *razon*, or native Spaniards. One day, whilst superintending the work, he discovered, concealed, in one of the apartments, a small wooden ball, which had around it, an unfinished crown of thorns. He enquired of a "*Sagui*," what it was for. "Ah! Sir," he replied, "you have really escaped; with this ball you would have been destroyed. You were to be killed for having chastised the *Pima* Indian, and only two days more were required; that is, until the completion of the crown of thorns around the ball; then, immediately, you would have been attacked with pains in the head and heart, and would have died.

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