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No echo is given off from the ceiling, for this is also within the limit of perceptibility, while it assists the hearing in the gallery by the reflection to that place of the oblique rays.

The architecture of this room is due to Captain Alexander, of the corps of topographical engineers. He fully appreciated all the principles of sound given by Professor Henry, as detailed in the former paper on "Acoustics applied to Public Buildings," and varied his plans until all the required conditions, as far as possible, were fulfilled.

LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF THE ODAHWAH INDIANS.

BY F. ASSIKINACK, A WARRIOR OF THE ODAHWAHS.*

Read before the Canadian Institute, December, 1857.

As it is my purpose to relate some Indian traditions, and make a few general observations concerning the Indian race of America, it may be proper to state that the Odahwah Indians are the tribe to which I myself belong. Some members of this tribe now reside on the Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron; others on the shores of Lake Michigan, in the State of the same name. The Odahwah settlement in that State is about forty miles in a south-westerly direction from the strait of Michinimakinang, which unites Lakes Michigan and Huron. That territory was wrested from the Mushkodensh tribe by the Odahwahs some two hundred and fifty years ago, and held by them until it was surrendered to the American government so recently

* Francis Assikinack, the author of this paper, is a full-blood Indian, and a son of one of the Chiefs of the Odahwahs,—or Ottawas, as they are more generally designated,—now settled on the Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron. In 1840, he was sent, at the age of sixteen, to Upper Canada College, Toronto, by the late Samuel P. Jarvis, Esq., then Superintendent-General of Indian affairs. At that time he was totally ignorant of the English language, and after being about three months at the above institution, he got one of the boys (now the Rev. G. A. Anderson of Tayendinaga,) to interpret for him, and solicit permission to return home, as he thought he could never learn the English language. Fortunately his desire was not complied with, and he remained long enough at Upper Canada College, not only to acquire such a command of the English language as is evinced by this communication on the Legends and Traditions of his Tribe, but also to obtain a familiar knowledge of Latin and Greek. F. Assikinack now fills the office of Interpreter in the Indian Department at Cobourg. So creditable and satisfactory a result of an experiment which at first seemed so hopeless, ought surely to encourage its repetition, and that on a much more extended scale.

I believe as the year 1830. A few years after this surrender many of them commenced to emigrate to and reoccupy Manitoulin Island. Why they have preferred going to this place I shall endeavour to explain in a subsequent paper, when I have occasion to speak about the name of that Island.

Before proceeding with my subject, I feel bound to solicit the readers' kind forbearance for the many faults which will naturally arise, in the course of these statements, from my imperfect acquaintance with the English language.

With such knowledge as education has placed within my reach I have been tempted, at times, to indulge in speculations relative to the origin of our own portion of the human race spread over the face of this western world; and who were found in possession of its boundless forests on its discovery by men from the other side of the Atlantic more than three hundred years ago. But, omitting much which I had designed to say, I may be permitted to remark, that wandering Asiatic tribes crossing to the north-east of the old continent would at length reach the sea at Behring straits. Having reached East Cape, they could have no great difficulty in going over to the opposite shores; the channel which runs between that part of Asia and America being only about forty miles wide, and, with the exception of the accumulation of ice, or ice mountains sailing through it occasionally, I believe the dangers to be met with are not greater than those to be encountered in other similar bodies of water. Besides, I believe, there are geological proofs of violent earthquakes having altered the features of particular localities, the encroachments of the sea upon tracts of land, elevations of islands, &c., it is not therefore altogether improbable that Asia and America were once contiguous. But a necessary purpose having been accomplished, a convulsion of nature, in course of time, might have torn and sunk the land which held the two continents together, and which had served as a bridge for the vast multitude of human beings who came to people this portion of the Globe, as well as for the innumerable quadrupeds which must have continued for year and years to invade the boundless tracts of the western hemisphere after the general deluge. Permit me further to remark that it would appear from the map of the world, besides minor ones, there were originally three most remarkable chains, if I may so speak, which united and held fast the grand divisions of the earth, two of which are still in existence, namely, the Isthmus of Panama, the Isthmus of Suez, and another across Behring Straits, which, it would

seem, was snapped and sunk for the purpose of affording greater conveniences to modern navigation and enterprize.

I think this was the principal road by which man and other creatures were brought into this continent. I do not of course mean that there were no other ways and means by which emigration into this country might have been effected; I have no doubt that America was visited from time to time long before this, by hunters and adventurers from the Asiatic coast.

It would appear then, according to the opinion which I have taken the liberty to offer, that my ancestors entered America on the north-western point, commonly known at the present day as "Russian America."

The reader will now be pleased to bear in mind, that the few simple statements which I am about to lay before him, are not taken from information obtained by reading, but entirely from what I have learned casually from the Indians themselves in my younger days, when, I regret to say, I was in no way particularly anxious to obtain information. Neither had I the least idea of what use could be made of the old "Ahsokah nayahk," or legends. In the following narrative I shall confine myself to the traditions of my own people, viz.: the Odahwah Indians. It would appear, that in the earliest times to which it is possible to reach by tradition, this vast territory was inhabited by a race of men, said to be descended from one common stock, who were divided into tribes, each being independent and ruling over its own particular district. Living by the chase and on the spontaneous productions of the soil: we may nevertheless suppose, from their mentioning wooden hoes and corn cakes, that they also cultivated the soil to some extent. To give an idea how numerous the tribes were I shall name here a few, viz.: The Wahbahnahkiang, Nodoweg, Odushkwahguhmig, Assigahnayak, Obahnongoog, Omissahgig, Ojahwahnoog, Omahmeeg, Odahgahmeeg, Odahwahg, Ojibwag, Mushkodenshug, Omahnominceg, Wimibigoog, Osahgeeg, Podawahdahmeeg, Kigahboog, Nahdowassiwahg, Nabahgindibag, Oshushug, Kahshkahshkiang, Ahkewawigiwashmahg, Mahkahdaonahsahdahyang, Tchiboyahmug, and others, which I think it would require an extra sheet to enumerate. Each of these tribes had to maintain a small sovereignty of its own and for its own use. The members of the neighbouring tribes had no right to go beyond the limits of their respective districts on their hunting excursions, and encroach upon that belonging to others. Any hunter that was caught trespassing upon the rights of other tribes, or taking beaver in the rivers running through their lands,

was in danger of forfeiting his life on the spot for his rashness, and had much to do to elude his pursuers, if he was fortunate enough to escape their deadly weapons in the first hostile encounter. Things went on in this manner until the several states were obliged to declare open hostilities against each other in order to protect their rights the better. From this time they were engaged in constant warfare, more particularly against their immediate neighbours. The Indians say, this warlike attitude among the various tribes in the old times was occasioned rather by the force of circumstances than by the mere love of slaughter or warlike enterprise; that it was not altogether a war of extermination or conquest, and it would appear from their statements that the practice of carrying on cruel exterminating wars was adopted after the discovery of America by the Europeans. In fact, it was introduced by them, and great care was taken in their treaties with the Indians to induce them to adopt this sanguinary policy as a punishment to be inflicted upon any offending tribe. The Omahmee Indians in the vicinity of Omahmee River, on the coast of Lake Erie, were subjected to this severity, because they had ill-treated some traders, and at the instigation of the French they were attacked by several tribes. Although single handed the poor brave fellows held out for three months; yet, being then reduced to great straits by famine and by overwhelming numbers, the few survivors of that once powerful tribe came out and begged the besiegers not to devour the whole of the Omahmee nation. It is said, that out of the whole tribe only five families escaped this indiscriminate slaughter. The warfare then in which the Indian tribes were constantly engaged previous to the discovery of America in the fifteenth century, was begun and carried on for the sake of self-preservation. For such a state of things was considered necessary, inasmuch as a universal peace would have given too much liberty to the hunters, who would have overrun the country and in a short time killed off the animals, upon which the whole population depended for their chief subsistence and clothing. But the keeping up of hostilities by the various tribes against one another had the desired effect of preventing trespass upon their rights respectively, and causing their respective members to avoid as much as possible the frontiers for fear of meeting an enemy. The borders being thus left unmolested by the restless hunter, they were looked upon as neutral grounds, where the animals might resort and breed freely, whence the neighbouring districts might be supplied with game in abundance for the use of the inhabitants.

These are the reasons assigned by tradition for the continual wars

carried on among the Indian tribes in the early times. By the way, it is curious to notice, that tribes whose territories were far separated from one another were, in many instances, upon the best possible terms.

Generally speaking it may be said that the inhabitants dwelt in villages, and their favorite seats appear to have been eminences on the borders of lakes, and along the banks of rivers, so that in case of a hostile invasion they would have only one side of their village to defend and not be cut off from the supply of water. The villages of contending tribes were often within sight of each other. Notwithstanding the precaution to prevent their being surrounded, the villagers were often obliged to meet the enemy on the water in their canoes, made of elm bark or hide; and they thought as much of their naval engagements and victories as the navy of England of their achievements at the present day. It was customary to give a new name to the warrior who had distinguished himself most in their naval battles, as an honor and reward for his daring deeds, and to commemorate the event.

We have already noticed how the inhabitants were divided into tribes; and I may here state that a tribe was again subdivided into sections or families according to their "Ododams;" that is their devices, signs, or what may be called according to the usage of civilized communities, "Coats of Arms." The members of a particular family kept themselves distinct, at least nominally, from the other members of the tribe; and in their large villages, all people claiming to belong to the same Ododam or sign, were required to dwell in that section of the village set apart for them specially, which, from the mention of gates, we may suppose, was enclosed by pickets or some sort of fence. At the principal entrance into this enclosure, there was the figure of an animal or some other sign, set up on the top of one of the posts. By means of this sign every body might know to what particular family the inhabitants of that quarter claimed to belong. For instance, those whose Ododam was the bear would set up the figure of that animal at their principal gate. Some of the families were called after their Ododam. For example: those who had the gull for their ododam, were called the gull family, or simply the Gulls; they would of course put up the figure of that bird at their gate. Others did not adopt this custom; for instance, the family who set up the bear were called the "Big feet." Many of the village gates must have been adorned with very curious carvings, in consequence of parts only of different animals being frequently joined together to make up the ensigns armorial of a

family. For instance, the ododam of one particular section consisted of the wing of a small hawk and the fins of a sturgeon.

Some of the families were more influential than others, and it was necessary to obtain their consent before a council could be convened in which matters of importance were to be discussed. Others again were distinguished for their bravery or eloquence, and not a few for their filibustering propensities. There was one head chief recognized by the whole tribe, but his authority was merely nominal, the several families being placed under the authority and supervision of their respective chiefs. It was expected of a chief, that in order to maintain the dignity of his office and secure the respect and confidence of his people, he should be generous, brave, able to speak well, and avoid foolish talking; but above all, to have no feelings for himself—people might abuse him and say many things against him, but it was thought beneath his dignity to take any notice of what they said. This is the substance of the instructions given by an old chief when he resigned in favor of his son or some younger relative of his. There were two sorts of chiefs, namely, the war chiefs, and what may be called the civil chiefs, the former possessed a greater influence than the latter, and were really brave men, judiciously selected from the different families. In ordinary times the civil chiefs were left to manage the affairs of the tribe, but on extraordinary occasions the war chiefs were required to assist the other chiefs and exercise their influence. For instance, in matters of dispute with another tribe, which were likely to end in breaking off the friendly relations between the two tribes, if not satisfactorily arranged, it was, in the first place, the duty of the civil chiefs to use their best endeavors to settle the matter in dispute amicably, but if the other tribe persisted in refusing to listen to any reasonable terms, the matter was handed over to the war chiefs for decision, who at once met in council, selected a few of their number and sent them to the obstinate tribe to demand peace or war. If the deputation returned with words of peace, all was right; but if otherwise, all friendly intercourse ceased, and each prepared for war; and, if I recollect right, it was customary to permit the women, in cases of intermarriage, to return to their own tribe, if they wished to do so.

Having said this much about the social conditions of the Indian tribes and their relations one towards another in the early times, I shall now endeavor to give a brief account of their notions concerning the supernatural world, or what may be called their mythology, and relate some fragments of old legends, in which, I think, there are a few grains of truth to be found relating to the great events recorded

in sacred history. Here I would take the liberty to remark that, historians seem to think that the old legends of a nation, however fanciful and absurd they may appear to us, are by no means devoid of truth and that we ought not to throw them aside as useless fictions, without examining them closely first, to see if we cannot discover some historical truth therein, as it is only by means of traditions and legends that the early history of a nation can be divined.

Notwithstanding the belief of the Indians of America in the existence of many gods, they acknowledge but one Supreme Being. They believe this Supreme God to be all powerful, all knowing, infinitely perfect and invisible. So far as it is possible to ascertain by verbal information as furnished by the Indians themselves in this part of America, this Supreme Being was never represented under any corporeal figure. The idea that he was subject to any imperfection appears never to have entered into their heads; and He was supposed to preside over the whole world, nothing escaping his eye. From this it is evident that their notion of the Supreme Being was far superior to that of the ancient Romans and Greeks, respecting their Jupiter and Zeus, whom their poets did not hesitate to represent as beings subject to all the passions and frailties of human nature.

It is true that the Indians sometimes introduced the name of the Lord of the Universe into their war songs. They did so, not with levity, but in a solemn manner and in token of their submission to His will, whatever might happen to them in the warlike enterprise in which they were about to engage.

I think they had a pretty correct idea of the doctrine of Omnipresence, for they were careful to impress upon the minds of their children that the Great Spirit was above their heads, watching over them continually; and in order to have them properly instructed in their duties towards their parents and neighbors, a certain number of discreet aged people were selected to exhort the children in the evening. To the residences of these instructors the children repaired after their work was done, where they received good counsel and caution against doing evil. They were made to understand that however careful they might be to avoid suspicion or detection when doing injury to a neighbor, the Great Spirit would see all their actions, who was always near them. That if they incurred his displeasure, they had no right to expect any favors from him, as He withheld his good gifts from those who took delight in creating discord by calumny, and in tormenting others by means of jugglery and poisonous weeds. That they were to respect and obey their parents, that they might put to shame the evil spirit

who was always at hand tempting children to disobey and vex their parents, and who, whenever he succeeded in his wicked endeavors made all sorts of faces to them, though they did not see him, rejoicing for having gained victory over them; but as often as they resisted him successfully, he went away skulking, covered with shame and confusion, whilst the Great Spirit was pleased.

The children were also taught to show respect to old people; that as it was not in the power of man to prolong his life, it was by special favor that some people lived longer than others; that if such cursed those who despised and illtreated them in their old age, their petition would be heard by the Absolute Master of life; on the contrary their good wishes would be attended with happy results.

As regards the inferior divinities: some were supposed to dwell in the sky and clouds, some in mountains, and others in lakes, rivers, and in the subterranean passages which were said to lead from the deep parts of lakes into the bowels of the earth. Some of these inhabiting the watery caverns were supposed to be extremely malicious, always seeking to destroy the human beings who might happen to be on the water in the time of storms, instead of protecting them.

The Thunders, conscious of their irresistible strength, were considered to be generous, always ready to afford their strong protection to mankind; consequently the dreadful water monsters, and the terrible gods in the clouds were represented to be at perpetual enmity. The Thunders, of course, by fiery darts, always vanquished their opponents in the water, but they had to slay them eight times before they could finally kill them. If any person was killed by lightning it was said to be merely accidental, seeing that when the hideous monsters in the earth and water were routed and hotly pursued, they usually took refuge and hid themselves in the subterranean passages directly under the spot inhabited by men, and in their endeavors to dislodge them, the Thunders missed sometimes their aim and thus struck their own friends. When overtaken by a hurricane in the water, the Indians invoked some sea god to interfere in their behalf, throwing a piece of tobacco into the water at the same time, or a little dog with a stone tied to its neck. In dry seasons they called upon the Thunders to bring down rain; also when they were surrounded and reduced to great straits in war, that the rain might slacken the bow strings and render them useless, when of course both parties would be obliged to cease fighting.

To the Thunders and other inferior deities they occasionally offered sacrifices, but instead of consuming the victim by fire or otherwise

wasting it, they cooked or roasted and devoured the animal themselves, singing, dancing, and beating the drum during the feast.

The following are a few fragments of Indian legends. Although they do not appear to have had any distinct notion of the creation, still their idea of the dignity of human nature seems to have been higher than that entertained by those ancient and modern philosophers who would have us believe that the lowest state of barbarism was the primitive condition of man; that the first human beings sprung, in the condition of mere animals, from the earth, going about upon their hands and feet: mute, filthy, acorn-eating savages, until from constant fighting, scratching and what not, they learned to stand erect, and walked upon their feet. So far from there having been any such notion among the Odahwahs, Ojibways and their neighbors, tradition told them that the first human beings came from above, which is certainly not altogether at variance with the Bible doctrine regarding the origin of man.

As regards the flood, the story runs as follows: A celebrated demi-god came to reside with men for some time. He is styled Nanah-boozho, and possessed the power of doing wonders. In the course of his stay with men, he one time fixed his winter-quarters near a certain lake; but he was not long there before he became aware that malignant monsters dwelt in the lake. He therefore carefully cautioned his favorite son, Wolf, not to go upon the ice lest some misfortune happen to him; but told him always to come by land when returning from his hunting rounds. The young Wolf acted for some time upon the advice of his sire, until one evening as he was returning from the chase, he reached the margin of the fatal lake, directly opposite his father's camp; and being much fatigued and hungry, and it being very late in the evening, he thought it would be too much trouble, and take too long to go round by land, so after a few moments hesitation he ventured upon the ice and made for the opposite shores; but when he got about half way, he heard a rumbling noise and the ice began to be elevated in different parts of the lake. The young hunter being terrified, ran for his life; but before he reached the land, death overtook him amid the broken fragments of ice, and he found his grave beneath the waters.

The father being deeply grieved for the loss of his favorite son, vowed vengeance upon the destroyers of his life, and determined to watch for a favorable opportunity during the hot days of the ensuing summer, when the cruel monsters would emerge occasionally from their dismal abode in the deep to come and enjoy the sunshine upon

the sandy beach. Snow and ice disappeared. Warm weather came. When the proper time arrived, the father took his bow and quiver one fine morning, and repaired to the lake. Having chosen a convenient spot near the sandy beach, he there took up his position, and in order to avoid detection, transformed himself into an old pine tree scorched all over. About noon the sea gods appeared on the surface, and after having carefully surveyed their pleasure ground and its vicinity, and perceiving no danger, swam towards the shore, landed, and reclined upon the sand. But not being used to sunshine, they were soon overpowered by the heat, and fell into a deep sleep. The father had now the power of inflicting a deadly wound upon any of them, so he quietly bent his bow, took a deliberate aim, and let fly his flint-pointed arrow into the side of one of the slumbering monsters.

The water deities being thus startled from their pleasant repose, and finding one of their compeers terribly wounded, were driven in their rage beyond all bounds. They immediately plunged into the deep and commenced to agitate the waters, which soon overflowed the banks of the lake, sending forth floods in all directions, sweeping everything before them, until the whole earth was buried under water. In the meantime, Nanahboozho perceiving his perilous situation, took refuge on the highest point of the earth, but the flood came up to him rapidly; he then got upon a pine log that was floating by, being the only means within his reach by which he could save himself from immediate destruction. Sitting upon this log he was driven and tossed about by the fury of the elements until at length they exhausted their rage, then the waters became still.

As soon as the fair weather commenced, Nanahboozho took into his consideration various schemes by which he might be enabled to recover the lost world. Whilst meditating deeply, he happened to notice a muskrat that was on his log canoe, he forthwith commanded the animal to dive and endeavor to bring up a piece of mud from the bottom. The muskrat plunged at once into the water and went down; after a long time he came up to the surface apparently dead. His master took him up, and on examining the arms of the animal, he found a lump of clay under one of the shoulders; this lump he pressed between his hands, and when he made it very thin, he carefully placed it upon the surface of the water. This piece of mud became a large island in the course of a few days, which continued to increase until the earth was formed as we have it now. The new earth again became the habitation of human beings, covered with luxuriant verdure, and furnished with other necessaries for the use of man and

other animals. It is remarked that the surface of the new earth was perfectly level in its commencement, but, in the course of its formation, an enormous beast arose from the ocean, and came upon the land where he began to paw and otherwise disfigure the surface. The earth being then quite soft, he made lasting impressions, hence we have mountains and deep vallies. Nanahboozho is said to have been of a gigantic stature; of a happy and kind disposition. He continued to reside with men for some time after the flood, the great part of his time being employed in instructing them in the use of many things necessary for their well-being. He then told them that he was going away from them; that he would fix his permanent residence in the north, and that he would never cease to take deep interest in their welfare. As a proof of his regard for mankind, he assured them that he would from time to time raise a large fire, the reflection of which should be visible to them. Hence the northern lights are regarded by the Indians as the reflection of the great fire kindled occasionally for the purpose of reminding them of the assurances made to them by their benefactor.

With regard to the unity and dispersion of the human race. The Indians appear also to have had some notions of their own on the subject. The story is short and simple, but sufficiently clear in its own way; and, I may observe, nearly the same story is current with almost every tribe. It is as follows:—

The tribes were one and the same people in the beginning; but at a certain point of time, their ancestors had a great dispute. The cause of that dispute was the foot of a bear, and when they could not make up their differences, they quietly dispersed in different directions, and their children became distinct nations under different names.

One more legend, and I shall close my present writing. It is usually told nearly as follows, viz.:—Several brothers, or a body of men of the tribe, were being pursued and hard pressed by fierce enemies, and being driven to the ends of the earth, when it was impossible for them to retreat any further, one of them suddenly turned round and struck the earth with his stick, which immediately opening, all their pursuers were swallowed up in the yawning abyss, the earth closed again, and thus saved his companions from death.

This legend, heard by me in childhood, has almost entirely escaped my memory since, and I can only relate the substance of it. I have sometimes thought of it in after times, and wondered whether it might not possibly be a tradition, giving an Indian account of the tribes of the Israelites when overtaken by the pursuing armies of Pharaoh, and the drowning of the Egyptians by the waters of the Red Sea.