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## AN UNRECOGNIZED FORCE

Weird and strange as it may seem, our hearthfires today burn on the very spot where once curled the smoke of the Indians' campfires. Their whispering voices still haunt our hills, the groves of our valleys, and the oak and fir of our mountains. In fact there is not a region in all of this northwestern country that does not silently present a record of that long past golden age of the aborigines, an age immortalized by a people whose whole life was characterized by a perpetual happy hunting ground, where no unrest of civilization interfered and no white man appropriated his haunts.

From the far away northland to the sunny southland plains, every spot of the way is eloquent of the history, lore and legend—quaint and whimsical—of this vanishing race.

The social organization was very simple. Beyond the family the principal basis for organization were the villages and the language. The common bond which united the Indian into groups was the similarity of language.

Their religious beliefs and ceremonies varied somewhat in different areas; and all united in attributing life, intelligence and supernatural powers to the animate and inanimate in nature. There was a belief in a life hereafter, but of a life unaccompanied by an idea of reward or punishment. Disease was supposed to be caused by some small material, supernaturally present in the body.

We obtain a great deal of their religious thought through their myths. The mythology of the coast Indians differs greatly from that found in other parts of north America. Still, there is a similarity in the beliefs of these Indians to those of primitive peoples of all races.

The Indians' nomenclature and legends cling to our mountains, rivers, lakes. Indeed, all Oregon is an incomparable autograph book of these first inhabitants.

Come with me in fancy to Shasta, where I was privileged to visit one summer. We shall pause just long enough to learn a little of the folk-lore in which this region so richly abounds. Our camp will be among the giant redwoods, where to our north Shasta rears

skyward its miles of ice and snow and pierces the blue sky. Near us are encamped a few pitiable remnants of a once proud and happy people. And, as we stand gazing up at the giant trees which have stood as guards over the land for centuries, we see before us the old Indian village which nestled in the very spot 150 years ago. Thatched huts are scattered here and there, and in front of one sits a young girl grinding acorns. Her home is covered with the skins of many animals, for her father is a great hunter. She is dressed in skins ornamented with shells, and near her, sitting on a carpet of pine needles, is the wrinkled old grandmother weaving a basket. Soon we see the mother winding her way through the trees carrying a basket of water upon her head. Food must be prepared for the hunters will return soon. Then the stalwart men approach the hut, laden with deer; and in the twilight with the stars just beginning to peep through the leaves of the trees, with a group of her grandchildren about her, the revered old grandmother slowly rocks to and fro as she musically croons out the legend of Mount Shasta.

"Long, long ago, when the world was so new that even the stars were dark, the Great Spirit above, Olelbis, could not see through the darkness to the new earth. With a large stone he bored a hole in the sky. Then, through the hole, he pushed down masses of ice and snow until a great pyramid arose on the plain. Olelbis climbed down through the hole, stepping from cloud to cloud, until he could put his foot on top of the mass of ice and snow. Then with one long step he reached the earth. The sun shone through the hole in the sky and made the earth warm and soft. When it was soft enough, Olelbis bored with his fingers here and there in the earth and planted trees. Streams from the melting snows watered the trees and made them grow. Then he gathered leaves that fell from the trees and blew upon them, and they became birds. He took a stick and broke it into pieces; out of the small end he made fishes and put them in the streams; of the middle piece he made all the animals except the grizzly bear. From the big end he made the grizzly bear, who was master of all. So strong did the grizzly grow that Olelbis feared the

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