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Queer Indian Beliefs.

There is an odd feature in the theology of the small Indian tribe of the Bella Coola, which inhabit British Columbia in about latitude 52. They believe that there are five worlds, one above the other, and the middle one is our own world, the earth. Above it are two heavens, and under it are two underworlds. In the upper heaven is the supreme deity, who is a woman, and she doesn't meddle much with the affairs in the second world below her.

The zenith is the center of the lower heaven, and here is the house of the gods, in which live the sun and the rest of the deities.

Our own earth is believed to be an island swimming in the ocean. The first underworld from the earth is inhabited by ghosts who can return when they wish to heaven, from which place they may be sent down to our earth. If then they misbehave again, they are cast into the lower of the underworlds, and from this bourne no ghostly traveler returns.

The Bella Coola are sun worshippers, for Senex, the sun, the master of the house of gods, who also is called "the father" and "the sacred one," is the only deity to whom the tribe pray. Each family of the Bella Coola has its own traditions and its own form of the current traditions, so that in the mythology of the tribe there are countless contradictions. When any one not a member of a clan tries to tell a tradition which does not belong to his clan, it is like a white man trying to tell another's joke—he is considered as appropriating the property right which does not belong to him.

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