# THE CALIFORNIA INDIANS*

## No. X. The Neeshenams

Perhaps this nation ought to be included with the Meidoos, of the Yuba and Feather rivers. Such is the classification of some of the pioneers, but they have seldom traveled through the length and breadth of the territory, and carefully noted the languages. I prefer to group all the tribes between Bear River and the Cosumnes as a separate nation, with the above name, for several reasons: (53)

1st. As you travel south from Chico, the Indians call themselves meidoo until you reach Bear River; but below that it is neeshenam, or sometimes mana, or maidec, all of which denote "men" or "Indians."

2d. The Meidoo and Neeshenam numerals are a good deal alike, but there is a more abrupt change at Bear River than anywhere else, and south of that stream they remain nearly uniform to the Cosumnes.

3d. South of Bear River the tribes are designated almost entirely by the points of the compass, while north of it they have fixed, specific names.

4th. The customs of the Neeshenams are different in important respects from those of the Meidoos, and especially in that very few of the former observe the great Annual Dance for the Dead.

As to language, the Meidoo shades away so gradually into the Neeshenam that it is extremely difficult to draw a line anywhere. But it must be drawn somewhere, because a vocabulary taken down on Feather River will lose three-fourths of its words before it reaches the Cosumnes. Even a vocabulary taken on Bear River will lose half or more of its words in going to the Cosumnes, which denotes, as is the fact, that the Neeshenam language varies greatly within itself. Indeed, it is probably less homogeneous and more thronged with dialects than any other tongue in California. Let an Indian go even from Georgetown to American Flat, or from Bear River to Auburn, and, with the exception of the numerals, he will not at first understand above one word in four or five, or six. But, with this small stock in common, and the same laws of grammar to guide them, they pick up each other's dialects with amazing rapidity. It is these wide variations which have caused some pioneers to believe that there is one tongue spoken on the plains around Sacramento, and another in the mountains; whereas they are as nearly identical as the mountain dialects are.

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So long as the numerals remain the same, I count it one language; and so long as this is the case, the Indians genrally learn each other's dialects; but when the numerals change utterly, they often find it easier to speak English together than to acquire another tongue. As to the southern boundary of the Neeshenam there is no doubt, for at the Cosumnes the language changes abruptly and totally.

LIke all others, the Neeshenams name every camp, spring, river, etc., but they very seldom use the name of a camp or village, as other nations do, to denote the inhabitants of it. Whatever Indians live next east of them they call easterners, and if there is a camp a little farther east, they vary the form. Thus they use Notos, Notonans, and Notoangcows, which may be rendered "easters," "easterns," and "easterners." So contracted are their journeyings and their knowledge, that they do not need a complicated system of names. If there are any people living twenty miles away, they are not aware of their existence. In consequence of this, it was almost impossible for me to learn any fixed names of tribes. There are the Poosoonas, at the mouth of American River, north side; the Quotoas, at Placerville; the Colomas, at Coloma; and the Wapumnies, near Latrobe. Indeed, I doubt if there is any considerable number of tribal names, for they are such a nomadic nation (within small limits) that they exist in a continual chaos. They move their camps so often that they have not even names for them, properly speaking--that is, no name separate and apart from that of the spring, bowlder, tree, creek, or what not, where they may happen at any particular time to be camping. Hence, in designating one another, they alwyas use the points of the compass--tosheem, como, noto, tei (north, south, east, west)--in various forms; and those living near Bear River always add cow (place), as Tawsingcow, Comoangcow; Notoangcow, Teingcow.

There are also some curious peculiarities in regard to personal names. One can very seldom learn an Indian's, and never a squaw's, Indian name, though they will tell their American titles readily enough. It is a greater breach of decorum to ask a squaw her name than it is among us to ask a lady her age. I have often made the attempt, and never yet have learned a squaw's Indian name from her own lips. A husband never calls his wife by name on any account, and it is said that divorces have been produced by no other provocation than that! It is amusing to note the resemblances between feminine human nature in the aboriginal and the civilized state. No squaw will reveal her own name, but she will tell all her neighbors' that she can think of! For the reason above given, many people believe that half the squaws have no names at all. So far is this from the truth, that everyone possesses at least one, and sometimes two or three. Hella Neoachechit was mentioned as an instance of two; and Haywalla Claygle Numnum, of three. As usual in California, a great majority of the names have no significance, being merely such collocations of sounds as are euphonious to their ears. If one has any meaning, it is generally the name of some animal, as Wowkly--a woman's name--which denotes "fox".

Following is a formidable list of villages which once lined the banks of Bear River, from the Sacramento up to the foot-hills--a list which shows that the population

must have been dense: Hametin-Woleyuh, Laylekeean, Talac, Intanto, Moolamchapa (long pond by the trees), Lidlepa, Solackeyu, Kaluplo, Pacanche, Shokumimleppe (wild-potato patch), Booshamool (this was near the California and Oregon Railroad crossing), Shootamool, Chuemduh, O'pelto, (the forks), Pulacatoo, Kapaka, Yokoalimduh, and Toanimbuttuc (little pine). The Sacramento River they call Nepem Sayoo (great river); Bear River, Nem Sayoo (little river); the plains, Tukudy; the timber land, Chapady; the foot-hills, Yamun; the Sierra Nevada, Nepem Yamun (great hills).

Both in their social customs and in their political organization, the Neeshenams must be ranked on a low grade--probably the lowest in the State. They had the misfortune to occupy the heart of the Sierra mining region, in consequence of which they have been miserably corrupted and destroyed. Indians in the mining districts, for reasons not necessary to specify, are always worse debauched than those in the agricultural regions. And the fact that most observers and writers have seen the Indians of the diggings more than any others, has contributed to bring the whole California race into unmerited opprobrium.

Yet the following facts bear witness to their low aboriginal estate: Robert Gordon, a responsible citizen of Auburn, states that, in 1849, he was surface-mining from Auburn as far up as the North Fork of Feather River; and that a great proportion of the men and women who entered his camp were costumed strictly after the fashion-plates of Eden. This was in a region pretty well up on the mountains, where the aborigines had not yet come in contact with either Spaniards or Americans. Both sexes and all ages moved about his camp, absolutely in puris naturalibus, with that perfect freedom and innocence which betoken unconsciousness of any impropriety. But these naive, unswathed mountaineers, according to the same excellent authority, were often of a magnificent physique--tall, sinewy fellows, who would have made the scale-beam kick at 180.

Most tribes in the State lay considerable emphasis on the formal establishment of marital relations, in their way--that is, by purchase--whether those relations are faithfully observed afterward or not. Bu the Neeshenams may be said to set up and dissolve the conjugal state almost as easily as do the brute beasts. No stipulated payment whatever is made for the wife. A man seeking to become a son-in-law is bound to cater (yaylin) or make presents to the family--which is to say, he will come along some day with a deer on his shoulder, perhaps, fling it off on the ground before the wigwam, and go his way without a single word being spoken. Some days later, whenever it pleases him, he will come and claim his bride, and lead her away with equal unceremoniousness. An incident which occurred will show the despotic and brutal manner in which these matters are managed. A man living on Wolf Creek, a tributary of Bear River, had performed the simple acts which entitled him to his wife, and the day had arrived when he determined to bring her home. But she loathed him, and when she saw him coming she fled from her father's wigwam, and sought refuge, trembling and weeping, with a motherly old widow who sympathized with her. The widow concealed her as well as she could, then hastened out to confront the pursuers. When they came up she told

them the girl had passed that way and escaped from the village. They hurried on in pursuit, but returned after a long search, baffled and angry, and asked the widow's little girl if she knew where the fugitive was. The child innocently told them she was hidden in her mother's wigwam. As soon as they had dragged her forth, they drew their bows and arrows and shot the widow to death in the middle of the village. They were not molested, for the general feeling of the Indians was that the bridegroom owned the girl, and that the widow, in concealing her, was guilty of kidnapping, for which the penalty is death.

The Neeshenams are the most nomadic of all California tribes. They shift their lodges perpetually, if it is only a rod, probably to give the vermin the slip; and always a death has occurred in one they abandon it. Nomadic habits among savages of a low grade are little better than death to the aged and infirm, for they can not readily follow, and the few poor conveniences and comforts which they collect around themselves when stationary have often to be abandoned. In fact, it would be hard for a tribe to devise a better way of ridding themselves of those whom they account burdensome. The spectacle which is sometimes presented among the mining towns, of poor, old, purblind, tattered wretches, perhaps laden with all they can carry, feebly tottering after the stronger ones, is a melancholy and pitiable one, indeed. But let it be remembered that this tribe is exceptionally restless, and that the California Indians generally are remarkable for their home-loving and home-keeping, even if not for their filial piety.

As for their political organization, like the snakes of Ireland, it can be described in three words--there is none. True, they have their hereditary captains, or head-men, in the villages, but their authority is the most shadowy thing in the world.

For murder, there is no punishment but individual revenge. That must be had within twelve moons after the murder, for there is a kind of statute of limitations which steps in then and forbids any further seeking of blood. They consider that the keenest and most bitter revenge which a man can take is, not to slay the murderer himself, but his dearest friend. This, however, is probably only the sentiment of casual Indians, though it would comport well with the subtle, Asiatic character of the race.

For kidnapping, as above mentioned, the punishment was death. It is related that a chief, named Bacallimpun, living near Bear River, in 1851, kidnapped a number of women from his own tribe and sold them to the Spaniards for infamous uses. On detecting him in his villanies, the Indians put him to death, and then hacked him into a thousand little pieces. They would throw an eye to one of his fellow-villagers, a finger-joint to another, a toe-joint to another, etc. It should, however, be borne in mind that the California Indians did not torture persons while alive.

For adultery with a foreigner the penalty was also death; and there are few other tribes in the State of whom this can be affirmed. In 1850, a squaw was sacrificed by her people on Dry Creek, near Georgetown, for this offense, committed with an American, though there was really no criminality on her part. The profanation of the

loathed foreigner was upon her, and all her tears and cries were of no avail.

They did not mark their boundaries by artificial signs, though they had them defined with the greatest strictness by springs (pokkan), hills (yamun), valleys (hunum-chuka), etc. They did not ordinarily destory a member of another tribe for trespassing on their territory, but if he caught fish or game, or gathered acorns on it, they demanded reparation in kind. They were frequently at war with the Piutes, whom they called Moanousies, and whom they greatly dreaded. The Piutes were always the aggressors, and came over armed with savage wooden knives, with which they slaughtered the feeble Californians (they seldom cared to take prisoners), and scalped the dead by cutting off a small round patch of hair on top of the head.

In war, upon coming into close quarters, the Neeshenams sought to stab the enemy under the arm, aiming at the heart. They took no scalps. When going into battle, they frequently waxed and twisted out the fore-hair of their heads into two devilish-looking horns, topped their heads with feathers, and painted their breasts black. I once heard an aged Indian describe with wonderful vividness a fight which his nation had by appointment with the Meidoos, many a long year ago, when they were yet so numerous that their hosts darkened all the plains beside the beautiful Yuba. They fought a great part of a summer-day, and, according to his account, there was a mighty deal of thwacking, prodding, and hustling, though it was not a very bloody affair at all. He killed a Meidoo, then presently he turned his back and ran away himself, and got a spear jabbed into his heel. He described both circumstances with the same simple honesty and remarkable vivacity, which showed he was telling the truth, and which contrasted so strongly with the boastful arrogance of the Algonquin, that never acknowledges defeat. Their male captives they tied to trees and shot to death without lingering torture, and the women they sometimes whipped and sometimes married.

There is a curious way of collecting debts practiced by them. When an Indian owes another, it is held to be in bad taste, if not positively insulting, for the creditor to dun the debtor, as the brutal Saxon does; so he devies a more delicate method. He prepares a certain number of little sticks, according to the amount of the debt, and paints a ring around the end of each. These he carries and tosses into the debtor's wigwam without a word, and goes his way; whereupon the other generally takes the hint, pays the debt, and destroys the sticks. It is reproach to any Indian to have these dunning-sticks thrown into his wigwam, and the creditor does not resort to it, except in case of a hard customer.

That their treatment of superannuated parents is not remarkable for tenderness may be gathered from the following fact; In 1858, there was an immense concourse of Indians at a place called Spenceville, some coming even from the Coast Range--the purpose of all being, as was then supposed, a concerted attack on the Americans. Preparatory to this gathering and what should follow it, numbers of them put to death the aged and infirm of their camps, who would have been an incumbrance, though it was said it was done at the instance of many of the victims themselves.

Being so nomadic in their habits, they have brought the savage field-commissary to perfection. They discovered the substantial principle of the famous Prussian pea-sausage long before the Pickelhauben did. When about to go on a journey, the squaws pack in their deep, conical baskets a quantity of acorn panada, made by processes heretofore described, which is food in as condensed a form as they could make it without scientific appliances. They generally start from camp rather late in the morning (the California Indians are poor travelers), and rest once or twice during the forenoon, always by a spring. Taking out some of this panada, they dilute it with large additions of water, making a cool, thick, rich porridge, which they drink from small baskets. In this manner a squaw will carry enough to last two persons a fortnight, and that while they are dancing--the hardest work an Indian does--nor will her burden exceed thirty pounds. About eleven o'clock, they call a halt for noon; then they do not break camp again until two, three, or even four o'clock, but march until nightfall, when started, or even long after.

As it was from the Neeshenams that Captain John A. Sutter procured most of his laborers, I wish here to make mention of a matter which falls properly within the scope of this narrative. It is related by several men who came here in 1849 and subsequently (there is to this day frequently a slight pique between the ante-forty-niners and the forty-niners, the land pioneers and the gold pioneers), that the captain was accustomed, in clover-time, to compel his slaves (as they call them) to go out into the clover-field for their rations. In view of the amount of labor they performed for him, this charge, if true, would be a grave one. But it is a fact abundantly substantiated that Indians who have been reared all their lives in American families, will, if permitted, in the season when the savor of the blossoms is wafted sweet as honey on the breeze, go afield for dinner, in preference to the most lickerish viands ever cooked.

I have been told by the Americans that they themselves had often eaten California clover, boiled and salted, and accounted it altogether a desirable mess of the season. Without doubt, then, this story is a true one; that is, Captain Sutter's Indians preferred to eat clover for a change and a relish, and he simply--let them do it. That he was a kind master to them, let the following document attest. It was shown to me by the owner of it, who had it wrapped in many folds of paper and inserted inside the lining of his hat, where he had carried it nearly ten years as a sacred treasure. He was said to have been one of the captain's majordomos, and to have had charge at one time of nearly 200 Indians:

> "The bearer of this, Tucollie, Chief of the Wapumney tribe, has presented himself before me, with the request to give him a certificate of his good behavior, and it is with pleasure that I comply with his wishes, as I know him over (22) twenty-two years as a good and honest Indian, therefore I can recommend him to the benevolence and kindness of my fellow-citizens, and particularly to those residing in his native country.
>
> Very respectfully,
>
> J. A. Sutter,
>
> Special Indian Agent.
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> Hock Farm, August 11th, 1862."

Unlike several tribes in the northwest of the State, these are not misers, but quite the contrary, as are all the southern California Indians. They never hoard up shell-money, beads, trinkets, or anything of a merely factitious value, unless it is for the purpose of burning them in honor of some great chieftain on his funeral pyre. In a bountiful acorn-harvest they gather and store up in wicker granaries (sukin) sufficient to last them two or three years; but they use the surplus above the winter's supply to gamble on, and often gamble away even the provisions which are immediately necessary. No Indian is despised so much as one who is close-fisted; nothing is more certain than that, if an Indian comes along hungry, they will divide with him to the uttermost crumb.

The Indians immediately south of Bear River observe the following fixed dances. The most important is the First Grass Dance (Cammin, the generic word for "dance," hence the dance of the year), which is held in autumn or winter, after the rains have fully set in and started the grass. None but a resident of California can appreciate the joyfulness of the feeling which gives rise to this festival, when, after the long, weary summer of drought, the first cool rain commences trickling down on the parched plains and the naked foot-hills, and they clothe themselves again with a soft, pale green. Assembled in the sweat-house together, both men and women, they dance with such extraordinary enthusiasm and persistence that they sometimes fall exhausted, and lie in a trance for hours.

The next is the Second Grass Dance (Yomussy), which is celebrated in the spring, when the grass takes its second growth, after the dry season is well established, but before the clover has faded from its blossoming glory. Hence this is held in the open air--a fete champetre. Otherwise it is like the first; the dancers being in two concentric circles, the men in one, the women in the other--the former gaudily decorated with feathers, the latter more modestly with beads, etc. It continues three or four days, accompanied with plenty of good eating.

Then there is a dance held regularly in spring, called Wayda, which is observed to prevent the snakes from biting them during the ensuing summer. Though held for so momentous a purpose, it seems to be quite a sportive affair. A bevy of young maidens dance around two young men in succession, singing a very gay and lively chorus, and ever and anon they make a dash at him, catching him by the shoulders, laughing, stretching out their arms toward him, tantalizing him, etc. The point appears to be, that these girls constitute the two young men mock-priests, to be their champions against the snakes. After the dancing, a couple of old fellows go around among the women with baskets, soliciting presents of bread, fish, and other eatables, wherewith to pay the singers; and when the women are about to contribute, they are frequently seized themselves by the old fellows and dragged along sportively, to the vast amusement of the bystanders. But with all this fun-making and horse-play, they entertain a very genuine terror of rattlesnakes. When an Indian is bitten by one, or lacerated by a bear, they exclude him rigorously from camp for certain days, believing that the snake or the bear, having tasted his blood, will follow him to camp and play havoc.

There is not among the Neeshenams any secret society, or any organization other than the family; but there is something analogous to our modern spiritualism, table-rappings, etc. Indeed, spiritualism among the Indians long antedates the wonderful Fox sisters, and whatever we may offer them in this department of science at least, they can show us "a trick worth two of that." And, more than that, they make practical use of the spirits to most excellent purpose. When an Indian gets troublesome to manage, the chiefs invite him to the sweat-house some evening, a dance is held, then all the fires are extinguished, and the congregation sit profoundly still in the darkness. Presently, the gates of hell yawn open, and there issues forth a grim spectre, who rustles his pinions and feathers, raps and ramps over the floor, and then addresses the company in the best English, "Good evening, gentlemen." He speaks as many words in that language as he can command well, adds a little Spanish perhaps, then makes a lengthy discourse in Indian, and it always happens to fit excellently well upon the back of the unruly member. Most Indians are profoundly convinced of the genuineness of these apparitions, and that these grim familiars have the gift of tongues, also power to hang them by the neck in the apex of the lodge, or disembowel them instantly, if they do not make presents to the chiefs and look well to their p's and q's. All Americans are rigorously excluded from these proceedings, but a man named William Griffin, understanding the language well, overheard from the outside what was said and done.

There is a social gathering which may be called the soup-party, which answers to our dinner-party. The inhabitants of two or more villages meet at a designated place in the open country, bringing acorn-flour (and nowadays frequently wheat-flour) and a little salt, and baskets to cook and eat the soup in--nothing else. Nothing is <u>en regle</u> except the soup, an article something thicker than gruel and thinner than mush. After they have eaten a great quantity of this, the younger people amuse themselves in dancing, while the elders exchange the gossip and scandal of which the Indians are so excessively fond.

Among most California Indians it is usual for a man requiring the services of a medicine-man to pay him in advance; but these hold to the principle, "No cure, no fee." The benfit which the man of drugs renders his patient generally consists in sucking from him certain sticks and stones, which he alleges were lodged just under the skin, to his great detriment. When it is manifest to all beholders that the sufferer has been marked by Death for his own, and that he can not long survive, his friends and relatives collect around him in a circle, and stand awaiting the final event in awe-stricken silence. As his breath grows stertorous, showing that he is passing through the last grim struggle, one of them approaches reverently and kneels by his side. Holding his hand over the region of the heart, he counts its feeble pulsations, as they grow slower and weaker. When it ceases to beat, and all is ended, he turns to the waiting relatives and silently nods. Whereupon they commence the death dance, with frightful wails and ululations. Every family have their own burning-ground, and as soon as the corpse is cold, it is conveyed thither for incremation. Around Auburn, a devoted widow never speaks, on any occasion or upon any pretext, for several months, sometimes a year or more, after the death of her husband. Of this singular fact I had ocular demonstration. Elsewhere, as on the American River, she speaks only in a whisper for

several months. As you go down toward the Cosumnes, this custom disappears, and only the tarred head is observed. It is only fair to remark that the widow is generally more faithful to the memory of her husband than the widower to his wife's, and seldom disgraces human nature by remarrying in a week or two, as he not infrequently does.

Apropos, the following story. An Indian woman, living on Wolf Creek, lost her husband and went to live with her mother, who was also a widow. One day, before the customary period of mourning had expired, during which a widow is forbidden to do any work or attend a dance, her mother requested her to go down into the ravine and gather some clover. She went, accompanied by a young girl, one of her unmarried companions. Going afield with her basket, she was observed by an Indian named Roeno, her husband's brother, who watched where she went and for what purpose. He reported to his father, and by him was charged to follow and strike her dead. He did so, following her several hours, but he had no heart for the butcherly business; and he finally returned home without accomplishing his errand. His father upbraided him bitterly as a coward and an ingrate, for not avenging the insult to his brother's memory. Stung to madness by the paternal reproaches, in a moment of furious passion he rushed away, fell upon the offending widow, and smote her unto death.

When a mother dies, leaving a very young infant, custom allows the relatives to destroy it. This is generally done by the grandmother, aunt, or other near relative, who holds the poor innocent in her arms, and while it is seeking the maternal fountain, presses it to her breast until it is smothered. We must not judge them too harshly for this. They knew nothing of bottle-nurture, patent nipples, or any kind of milk whatever other than the human.

A touching story is related of old Captain Tom, of Auburn. His son Dick was an incorrigible rascal, and it finally fell out that he was arrested for something or other, tried, proved guilty, and sentenced to San Quentin for ten years. This was a terrible blow to Captain Tom, for he loved his boy, with all his wickedness. When Dick was mancled and taken away out of his sight, the old man turned away his head and wept. Dick became to him as one who is dead. Nevermore (for ten years to an Indian seems like eternity), nevermore should his old eyes behold him. The White man had bound his wrists and ankles with iron, carried him away to the uttermost ends of the earth, and buried him alive. He turned sadly away, and went back to his wigwam. Mingling their tears together, he and his family mourned for Dick as for one dead. Then they arose, gathered together all the things that had ever belonged to him, carried them out to the family burning-ground, erected a pyre, and placed them on it. Years ago, a brother to Dick had died while they were living in another place, and his ashes rested where they were burned. They were now brought and sprinkled over the pyre (for such a grievous calamity had never befallen the Indians before, that they should be compelled to burn one's possessions without his body to accompany it). They were sadly troubled to think how they should send Dick's clothing to him in the Happy We stern Land--or wherever else he was gone--and they thought, they hoped, if his brother's ashes were sprinkled on the pyre, perhaps his spirit might convey them. With these

feelings in their breasts, but with many tears and sad misgivings, they applied the torch, and prayed their son, whose ashes they had sprinkled on them, to waft the clothes and money quickly to poor Dick, in that unknown and undiscovered country to which the White man had conveyed him.

## ORIGIN OF INCREMATION.

The moon and the coyote wrought together in creating all things that exist. The moon was good, but the coyote was bad. In making men and women, the moon wished to so fashion their souls that, when they died, they should return to the earth after two or three days, as he himself does when he dies. But the coyote was evil disposed, and he said that this should not be, but that, when men died, their friends should burn their bodies, and once a year make a great mourning for them. And the coyote prevailed. So, presently when a deer died, they burned his body, as the coyote had decreed, and after a year they made a great mourning for him. But the moon created the rattlesnake, and caused it to bite the coyote's son, that he died. Now, though the coyote had been willing to burn the deer's relations, he refused to burn his own son. Then the moon said unto him: "This is your own rule. You would have it so, and now your son shall be burned like the others." So he was burned, and after a year the coyote mourned for him. Thus the law was established over the coyote also, and, as he had dominion over men, it prevailed over men likewise.

This story is utterly worthless for itself, but it has its value, in that it shows there was a time when the California Indians did not burn their dead, as is also established by other traditions. It hints at the additional fact, that the Neeshenams to this day pay homage to the moon, consider it their benefactor in a hundred ways, and observe its changes for a hundred purposes.

## THE BEAR AND THE DEER.

At first, all the animals lived on earth, but afterward the clover grew, and then they ate that also. There were no men yet, or rather, all men were yet in the forms of animals. One day the bear and the deer went out together to pick clover. The bear pretended to see a louse on the deer's neck, and the deer bent down her head to let the bear catch it, but the bear cut her head off, scratched out her eyes, and threw them into her basket among the clover. When she went home and emptied her basket, the deer's children saw the eyes, and knew they were their mother's. So they studied a plan of revenge.

On another day, when the bear was pounding earth in a mortar for food, as acorns are now pounded, the deer's two children enticed the bear's children away to play, and persuaded them to enter a cave beneath the great rock Oamlam (high rock) on Wolf Creek. Then they fastened them in with a stone, and made a fire which roasted them to death. When the bear came and found them, she thought they were asleep and

sweating, but it was the oil on their hair, and when she pawed them the hair came off. Whereupon, she flew into a great passion, tore them to pieces and devoured them.

Then she pursued the deer's two children to destroy them. She called out to them that she was their aunt and would do them good; but they fled and escaped up the great rock Oamlan, and it grew upward with them until the top of it was very high. The bear went round behind the rock and found a narrow rift where she could crawl up; but the deer's children saw her coming, and they had a stone red-hot, which they cast down her throat and slew her. Then they took this same stone and threw it to the north, and manzanita-berries fell down; to the east, and pine-nuts fell down; to the south, and one kind of acorns fell down; to the west, and another kind of acorns fell down. Thus they had now plenty of food of different kinds, and they ate earth no more.

After this, while they were yet on the rock, the deer's children thought to climb into heaven, it had grown so high. The big one made a ladder that reached the sky, and, with a bow and arrow, he shot a hole up through, so that the little one could climb up into heaven. But the little one was afraid, and cried. So the big one made tobacco and a pipe, and gave them to the little one to smoke as he went up the ladder, whereby the smoke concealed the world from him, and his heart was no longer afraid. And this is how smoking originated. So the little one climbed up through the hole into heaven, and went out of sight; but presently he returned down the ladder, and told his brother it was a good country above the sky, with plenty of sweet browse, and grass, and buds of trees, and pools of water, and flowers for them to sleep on. Upon that they both climbed the ladder and went above the sky.

Presently they saw their mother by a pool of water, cooking, and they knew it was she, because she had no eyes. Now, the big brother was a deer, but the little one was a sap-sucker. So these two made a wheel to ride on, that they might pursue their mother, for they were not well pleased to see her without eyes. But they were punished for this act of wickedness, for the wheel went contrary with them, turned aside, and plunged into a pool of water, so that they were drowned.

This story contains a considerable part of the Neeshenam cosmogony. In common with most California tribes, these Indians regard all animals, including men, as having a common original and being intimately related. Thus, the bear calls herself aunt to the deer's children, and one of the latter is a bird. In some vague, misty way, the coyote was the first of all; but whether as creator, or simply as a kind of protoplasm, the Indians are not clear. But it is certain that the Neeshenams anticipated Darwin by some centuries in the development theory, only substituting the coyote for the monkey. The fable generally runs that man was originally in the form of a coyote, but the Neeshenam version varies a little. As we have seen above, the moon and the coyote created all things, and a man was primarily a simple, straight, hairless, limbless mass of flesh, like an enormous earthworm. By and by, the moon split him at one end, so that he acquired a pair of legs. Then the same beneficent luminary split off a pair of arms from his body, split his toes and fingers, etc.

There is another tradition to the same effect substantially, and that is, that the time once was when men were on the same level with the beasts of the forest, and habitually devoured their own dead, as the coyote is said to do.

## HILPMECONE AND OLEGANEE.

In the earliest days of the world, while there were yet few inhabitants upon it, there lived a man and his wife, named Hilpmecone and Oleganee. They loved each other with a love passing the love of brothers, and they were greatly happy in their lives. But at length it befell that the wife, Oleganee, fell sick, and, though her husband did all that love and tenderness could do, he saw her slowly fade away from before his eyes, and die. He dug a grave close beside his camp-fire (for the Neeshenams did no burn their dead then(, that he might daily and hourly weep above her silent dust. His grief knew no bounds. His life was now become a burden unto him; all the light was gone out of his eyes, and all this world was black and dreary. He wished to die, that he might follow his beloved and lamented Oleganee. In the bitterness of his grief, he fell into a trance, and the spirit of the dead Oleganee arose out of her grave, and came and stood beside her husband. When he awoke out of the trance and beheld the spirit of his wife, he cried aloud in the greatness of his grief, and would have embraced her. She beckoned to him in silence to follow her. Together they set out to seek the spirit land (ooshwooshe koom, literally, "the dance-house of ghosts"). They journeyed on through a great country and a darksome--a land that no man has seen and returned to report--until they came to a river that separated them from the spirit land. Over this river there was a bridge of but one small rope, so very small that a spider could hardly cross it. Here the spirit of Oleganee must bid farewell to her husband, and go over alone to the spirit land. When he saw her leaving him, in an agony of grief he stretched out his arms toward her and implored her to return.

If an Indian sees a ghost and it speaks to him, in that instant he dies. Hence, the spirit of the woman answered him not, lest he should die, but turned about and came back, and together they returned to this world. Upon reaching it, Oleganee turned again to go back to the spirit land, but again Hilpmecone cried out, and vainly stretched out his arms to stay her return. Then, at last, she spoke: "You have been to me a husband true and kind. You have gone with me to the border of the spirit land, whither you could not enter; and I have seen and know for myself all your love and sorrow. I now speak to you these words, that you may die, as you have desired, for no Indian can hear a ghost and live." Then he died in that self-same instant, and together they took their last departure for the land of spirits.