



## CREATION STORY

*Told to Mr. Ben L. Squier by Santos Lopez, a Manzanita Indian*

"When I was a small boy the wise men of the tribe used to call all of us youngsters together in the evening and relate to us the lore and legends that they themselves had learned in the same manner from their wise men when they were young, for this was the only way the legends and stories of our people could be kept alive. The story I will tell you now is of how the Indian came to the earth and how he gets to what you call heaven."

"In the beginning the earth was all covered with water. There were two brothers who lived under the water and who wondered what was above them, so they started to climb up a high mountain. The younger brother was the first to reach the top of the mountain which extended out of the water. From there he saw how the earth was made. Insects were coming up from the inside of the mountain through its chimney, each with a little bit of rock as we see the ant built his ant hills. This was the way the earth was made."

"The older brother climbing more slowly up the mountain called out to the younger brother and asked him if he should keep his eyes open or close them as he came up through the water. The younger brother told him to keep them open. So he opened his eyes as he came up through the water which caused him to become blind, and when he came up out of the water to where his brother stood, being unable to see, his brother told him of the strange sight of the land being built by the insects. As the older brother could not see any of this he decided to go back under the water where he was more familiar with conditions. The younger brother remained above. The rumblings and shakings of the earth are caused by the older brother stumbling around below because he could not see."

"Now the younger brother up above found that the earth and the water and the air together began to bring life, and as the land grew by the work of these insects so did life grow and so did the Indian grow with it until he multiplied and became no numerous that the place where they lived did not grow enough food to feed them. So council was held and the wise men decided to send their medicine man to ask advice of their god who lived in the south. The medicine man was gone quite a while and when he came back he told them that their god would appear to them and tell them what to do - that he would appear to them as a serpent with many feet under him, and that they must build a house for him to stay in while he was with them. So they build him a large round house. When the god came they asked him to come into the house, which he did, and coiled himself up but the house was not large enough and the walls fell out and the house caught fire and cremated their god."

"When this happened they were afraid and did not know what to do. The wise men held council and decided that if each man ate a portion of the cremated flesh of the god perhaps some of his strength and wisdom might descend upon them. This they did but when they had done so they found that they could not talk with one another as each one now spoke a different language. So each man took his family and departed from that

place to seek a land where he could live and provide for his family. And this is the way the different tribes were begun."

"Now because their god had been cremated it showed them that this was the right way for them to take care of their dead, which they have done until the white mane came."

"After death the spirit of the Indian still lives and goes on his way to his heaven which is in the south. As he proceeds on his way he finds a deep chasm to which there appears to be no bottom, but across the chasm lies a log and on the other side is heaven. If he is timid, either on account of old age, or infirmity or extreme youth, there are always friends who have gone before him waiting to help him across the log into heaven. He is then given a plot of ground to tend which forever provides his living."

NOTE: Mr. Squire asked Mr. Lopez at the end of the tale why no mention was made of the female of the species in the tale and how could the tribe have multiplied without her. Mr. Lopez laughed and said "Well, you know how boys are, we all wanted to go out and play while the story was being told, and perhaps I sat next the door and slipped out when that part was being told."



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