

PAGAN PRAYERS

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Pagan Prayers by Marah Ellis Ryan

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MARAH ELLIS RYAN

**PAGAN
PRAYERS**

PAGAN PRAYERS

COLLECTED BY
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FOR THE SOUL OF RAFAEL, INDIAN
LOVE LETTERS, ETC.



CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
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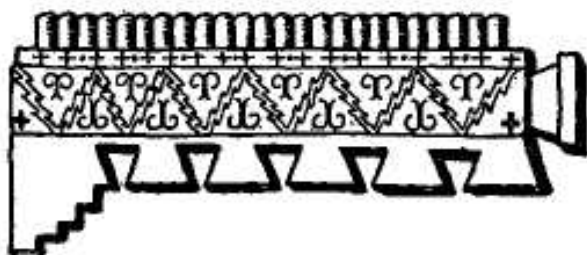
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PREFACE



THIS little book of thoughts big, and thoughts childish, goes to the reader with the hope that it bears the little known fact that Ancient America had a written aboriginal literature—much of which was beautiful.

The Apache and the Navajo prayers are oral, transmitted from priest to priest through the centuries; but the Mexican are fragments, rescued from a wide literature by the learned and courageous Franciscan, Bernardino de Sahagun, in the Seventeenth century.

The first archbishop of Mexico took credit to himself for the burning, in one town, of 60,000 Mexican books and manuscripts on history, religion, law, medicine, astrology, genealogy and poetry. It was his part of the approved battle against the false gods. For four centuries he has had ardent imitators—which accounts for much.

The masked, dramatized prayers of the Indians of the Southwest of today, suggested to the compiler a key to ancient Mexican rituals where god or goddess replies directly to priest or suppliant. This is the one special liberty taken with the records—the deity or priest is placed as the Indian places him, in the temple of feast or sacrifice; while the Spanish records gave only the spoken words with little to indicate the ritual or the speakers.

The Peruvian had reached a higher spiritual and philosophic stage of culture before his annihilation, though at loss of the spontaneous poetic imagery, wistful or colorful, of the Mexican.

Such as they are, these prayers reflect the culture of both extinct and living primitive peoples of the world we call the New, and they go out for judgment side by side with the better known rituals of the world we call the Old.

M. E. R.

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