

**ABORIGINAL AMERICAN AUTHORS
AND THEIR PRODUCTIONS:
ESPECIALLY THOSE IN THE NATIVE
LANGUAGES. A CHAPTER IN THE
HISTORY OF LITERATURE**

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Aboriginal American Authors and Their Productions: Especially Those in the Native Languages.
A chapter in the history of literature by Daniel G. Brinton

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ESPECIALLY THOSE IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGES.

A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF LITERATURE.

BY

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Ancient Peruvian Amulet (Cortese Collection).

PHILADELPHIA:
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PREFACE.

The present memoir is an enlargement of a paper which I laid before the *Congrès International des Américanistes*, when acting as a delegate to its recent session in Copenhagen, August, 1883. The changes are material, the whole ~~of~~ the text having been re-written and the notes added.

It does not pretend to be an exhaustive bibliographical essay, but was designed merely to point out to an intelligent and sympathetic audience a number of relics of Aboriginal American Literature, and to bespeak the aid and influence of that learned body in the preservation and publication of these rare documents.

Philadelphia, Nov. 1883.

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ABORIGINAL AMERICAN AUTHORS.

§ 1. *Introductory.*

When even a quite intelligent person hears about "Aboriginal American Literature," he is very excusable for asking: What is meant by the term? Where is this literature? In fine, is there any such thing?

To answer such inquiries, I propose to treat, with as much brevity as practicable, of the literary efforts of the aborigines of this continent, a chapter in the general History of Literature hitherto wholly neglected.

Indeed, it will be a surprise to many to learn that any members of these rude tribes have manifested either taste or talent for scholarly productions. All alike have been regarded as savages, capable, at best, of but the most limited culture.

Such an opinion has been fostered by prejudices of race, by the jealousy of castes, and in our own day by preconceived theories of evolution. That it is erroneous, can, I think, be easily shown.

Let us first inquire into the existence of

§ 2. *The Literary Faculty in the Native Mind.*

This faculty is indicated by a vivid imagination, a love of narration, and an ample, appropriate, and logically developed vocabulary. That, as a race, the aborigines of America pos-