

used as their languages Cree, French, and English, in the order named; often a gibberish between the first two. They were wild, daring, but rather unreliable; easy-going, hospitable, and good natured. They were, in fact, the outcome of their surroundings. All their wrestlings with Nature had taught them the uncertainty of mundane affairs, even of life and death, so they made the most of the present. They had learned from experience that they were liable on occasion to need help, and they were awake to the duty of giving it. They had their faults, but these were not of the grosser kind, nor such as could ever dim the remembrance of their kind hearts and simple ways. I was necessarily thrown much among these people, and became intimately acquainted with their dispositions and ways. The English-speaking variety were really Scotch, and differed from the French, in being more staid, and amenable to civilisation, as the English know it.

Glorious weather followed our arrival—beautifully clear and sun-shiny days, with cool nights, so, while we camped in the "flats", and enjoyed the "douceur rien" after our long walk, I followed the bent of an enquiring mind which prompted me to go in search of information. Everything was new to me and correspondingly interesting.

The rivers of the North-West are mostly little tricklets meandering down the country between banks, high out of all proportion to their volume—chasms that would accommodate some of the most mighty streams of the world. The Battle is no exception to this rule, for, though it ranks only as a brook, its banks are as high as those of the Saskatchewan. The southern sides, or slopes are more or less clothed with trees, or scrub of some kind, while the northern, exposed to the sun, are bare, almost of grass.

The Battle River—the name given it by the Indians—gets its name from having been, for unnumbered years, the fighting ground of the various tribes. It formed the border between the bush country and the plains; north of that line the Crees and Stonies were dominant, while the southern region, the tribes of the Blackfoot alliance claimed as their own.

In Battleford—at that time the Capital of the North-West Territories, the shacks built by the inhabitants for shelter, were of the most primitive character. Round logs not very large, fitted together in square form by notches at the corners and built up, perhaps seven or eight feet high; a square hole at the side filled by a cotton sack, or a piece of thin raw-hide, to

serve as a window; another, and bigger hole fitted with a frame covered with raw-hide roughly, to use as a door, and meant to keep out the weather, not intruders—this is a fair description of the average dwelling. This ingenious combination all resulted from the contact of versatile minds with a dearth of lumber and glass, and hardware. The ground was the floor, and it soon became hard packed, while a mud chimney brought the structure to the stage of a completed residence.

The furnishings were as elemental as the building. A packing case or two, if they could be obtained, would be called table, seats, or cupboard, and probably, a bunk would be made out of small round poplar poles.

The Hudson's Bay had a post, while two private traders kept store, so that all kinds of luxuries, such as sugar, tea, molasses and coal oil, could be obtained by those who had the means of buying. Trade, however, went a very short distance beyond these necessities.

A few Indians, of the Cree and Stoney tribes, with their leather tents, added a picturesque element, and fed my curiosity, as well as taking up a good deal of my time, by constraining me to persistent and detailed investigation. The Red River people had jokingly warned me of the danger of getting scalped, but the few specimens I now saw, did not seem to be in any way dangerous.

The principal—nay only—article of diet, was pemmican, with small rations of potatoes. Flour was eight dollars a sack, upwards—too dear for thoughtless consumption, while meat, that is buffalo meat, would not be available till winter. Now, while pemmican is no doubt a very valuable article for staying the pangs of hunger, it takes long experimenting till one gets accustomed to it. It is satisfying and goes a long way as food, but that is all. A variation of the usual pemmican, in which dried Saskatoon berries are mixed, is a good deal more tasty, and acceptable as an article of diet.

For a few days, and while I was investigating the employment situation, I stayed with the editor of the "Herald", an Ontario gentleman of the old school, a practical newspaper man, courteous, kind and well informed. He appeared to have some acquaintance with everybody in the East. Name a person, and he would immediately proceed to give the person's history, that of all his family, and where his father farmed, with every family detail. And it was not merely talk; he knew. I had the pleas-

ure of his intimate acquaintance for many years after this, and ever found him replete with interesting information.

As for the employment that I was anxious to find, I met with disappointment. Work had been going on during the summer at the government buildings, but they were practically finished, and activity of every kind was most conspicuous by its absence. There were quite a number of people, but they seemed to get along without work. This, I had not experience enough to be able to do. The leader of the party with whom I had made the journey up to the West had been in the employ of the Church of England mission the previous summer, and through him I came in contact with the Reverend John Mackay, a pioneer of the Protestant Church in the country. He was establishing a mission on one of the Reserves that had, that summer been laid out for the Indians; winter was fast approaching, with no other prospect in sight, so I hired with him. He was, at the time finishing off a residence for himself, for he was not above working at whatever his hands found to do, and, I may say, set an example not only in that respect, but in every other, that it is a pity all of his cloth have not followed. He was active, zealous, and yet broadminded, never sparing of himself where duty called, and undaunted and undeterred by difficulties and hardships that the general run of missionary skilfully evades.

That year—1878—the band, called after their chief, Red Pheasant, partly under the influence of Mr. Mackay, and partly because buffalo were rapidly getting scarcer, determined to accept the offer contained in the treaty and settle on land surveyed out for them by the government. The authorities, in order to minimise the dangers that might be anticipated from the proximity to what we call 'civilisation, stipulated that the Reserve must be at least twenty miles from what was the Capital of the Territories, so the Indians had chosen the southern slope of the Eagle Hills as their permanent location. With two companions, therefore, I went out to the Reserve. The person in charge was a Mr. Clarke, who being a farmer's son, and having a practical knowledge of agriculture, had been sent out by the Church Missionary Society for the purpose of inducting the Indians into the mysteries of their new mode of life. The other man was named McLean, a Scotchman, and a carpenter. Shortly afterwards Edward Thomas, one of my fellow Argonauts, came out to help us finish off.

I had hired as school teacher, but we had first to erect a dwelling, and stable. Logs were cut and hauled out of the bush

after being flattened on two opposite sides. These were dovetailed into each other at the corners; poles were cut for the roof and after being peeled, were so placed as to form a basis for the grass thatch that used to take the place of shingles in those days. Holes for the door and windows were sawn and the respective utilities fitted therein. The floor and ceiling were of boards rip-sawed by ourselves. Finally, the chinks between the logs were filled with mud, and the whole whitewashed without and within.

These processes were duplicated in putting up a school-house. We had a long job, and winter was half through by the time the buildings were ready to use but I got a great deal of experience. The finished houses had quite a respectable appearance, and furnished a good example to the Indians. Our house, however, was cold. I slept upstairs, under the roof, and there was always frost on our blankets in the morning during the bitter weather.

The Indian dwellings, on the other hand, were quite warm. They were low and rough, in fact, neither anxiety nor effort had been expended on their appearance, while, with us, looks went a long way. They had big mud fire-places, which threw out tremendous heat, and fire was kept going in them night and day. Indians seem never to be all asleep. Their mode of living, and scanty apparel made it absolutely necessary to have some place to relax in—to soak in the heat, after the vast expenditure of energy that it costs to resist the extreme cold.

RED PHEASANT'S RESERVE—

The Indians' idea, in their choice of this place, was that the location was handy to the plains, for hunting; was good for mixed farming; and was as near as they would be allowed to get to the town. In reality, buffalo hunting was at an end when they took up the land; the soil and the conformation of the country almost precluded farming—except stock-farming—and the town never became of sufficient importance to influence their future in any way. It is a rough country; broken by lakes, by swamps, and by hills; pretty but impracticable.

The Reserve was six miles square—for about a hundred and fifty people, being apportioned to their number, but Indians are gregarious in the extreme, the shacks being all together in groups to preserve the distinction of families. The men wore the "breech-clout"—generally a strip of blanket—leggings of the same, with a fringe of narrow cuttings flopping from right and left; a cotton shirt, or no shirt at all, with the blanket

over all. The women were clothed in a print or "stroud" dress with a loose blouse-like garment above, leggings nicely beaded, tied just below the knees, and blanket. All wore moccasins of home tanned buffalo hide, with either a wisp of grass in the bottom, to keep the sole off the cold snow, or a piece of sacking or rag used as a sock.

The winter passed quietly and quickly when the school was ready, by which time I had made acquaintance all round. Then I gave the youngsters their first lessons in English, in reading, and writing, and in figures. I also taught them the syllabic characters to enable them to read and write in their own language. These, I had first to learn myself and it helped me greatly in assimilating Cree. Taking them all in all, they were in no degree less responsive to instruction than the ordinary run of white children. In my spare moments there was plenty of work fixing the inside of the dwelling house.

The Indians also put in a quiet time. Parties made trips out to the plains after meat and, though buffalo were reported scarce, they secured enough to eat. Rats were plentiful and rabbits, but none of them had shot guns, nor did they know how to hunt any other game than the buffalo. For diversion, they had the inevitable "tea dance" given in house after house, night after night; "no sleep till morn" literally, for the "tomtom" murdered sleep. At first, when they were new to me, I attended one or two of these festive gatherings, but could divine no attraction in them, except for what I could there learn.

Tea is brewed in an immense kettle, as strong as circumstances warrant, and "painkiller", or in default of that luxury, chewing tobacco, stirred thoroughly through it. This concoction is handed round to the company in the cups with which each comes provided. This dance, the white men call "The Tea Dance"; the Crees—"Kees-kway-payth-tah-win". It has nothing particularly reprehensible about it for an orgy. The participants sit round the inside of the tent or house—male on one side, and female on the other. A drum, or something to serve instead, keep time; while all hands join in the singing. Anyone starts a tune, and the rest come in. One after another rises, and with measured step, moves sideways round. The time is three-fourths, and the bodies of the dancers, from the knees upwards, are jerked up and down quickly at the second beat, at the same time taking a step sideways. There are numerous tunes, all in a minor key. I found it almost impossible to master these, never getting more than one or two, they were so weird and unnatural, but, even to my prejudiced ear, they were not

destitute of harmony and some of them I thought quite nice. Many of these people had melodious voices and often there were words sung to the tune. At frequent intervals, they refresh themselves with copious draughts of the brew and as the stuff possesses authority from the admixture of tobacco or painkiller, this, with the heat and excitement, works them up to extreme vigor. They get a great deal of satisfaction out of it.

An incident occurred that winter, connected with a tea dance, which, though tragical, was interesting as revealing one phase of Indian character. A man, who for some reason did not wish his wife to attend the usual tea dance, forbade her to go. She disobeyed him, however, and went, leaving him to take charge of their two young children. The children got restless and cried. He went down to the dance and called her home, but she would not come. After a while he went again, calling her outside, and remonstrating with her, but she still refused to obey. He returned to his shack, took his rifle down from the pegs on which it hung, stretched himself on their bunk, and blew his brains out. It was wounded pride at being openly flouted by his wife.

The Indians placed the fault with the new laws. "Ah, hitherto", they said "a man in that position would have given his wife a whipping, supposing that the fear of chastening had not deterred her—and that would have been the end of the matter. Now that a man could be put in gaol for a necessary act of justice, women would do whatever they liked". Several of the men had two wives; one of them had three, but of only one of these polygamists did I hear that his wives quarrelled. One wife insisted on having a house separate from the others and got it. Each woman brought up her own children.

We lived, that winter, as much as we could on meat in one form or another. Flour was eight dollars a sack of one hundred pounds, tea a dollar, and sugar twenty-five cents a pound, each; there were no vegetables. From the proceeds of their hunting expeditions the Indians got a sufficient supply of food. Notwithstanding this, their begging gave us infinite annoyance and trouble. From their point of view, they were asking nothing more than they were prepared to give if they had been in our position or if they had possessed anything we wanted. What one Indian has, all have. Anyone who refuses to subject himself to this rule is accounted mean. "He wants to be the only one to survive" they say. We were new to these conditions and it took a long time to work us up to breaking this siege of begging and shutting down on them, but at length, at the risk

of falling in their esteem, we were obliged to confess that we were low enough in the scale of humanity to want to live a little better than they did. Once they got it into their heads that, good or bad, we were going to keep to our own way, we had no more trouble. We would give to the sick or in case of necessity, but there was nothing for the idle visitor. In order to inculcate the doctrine of thrift and ambition, as well as to justify our action, we had to be eternally preaching the beauty of the gospel of selfishness, till, for my part I felt pretty mean. By the spring we had the band well broken in so that they gave us no more bother. Two or three years afterwards, when the scarcity of food drove the wandering Indians northward, we had a recurrence of the difficulty. The door would be pushed open and several truculent looking fellows would file into the house and sit down with their rifles between their knees, waiting to be fed. After eating, they would leave at once, but they would sit for hours silently expecting food to be placed before them. They had a wild look and at first bluffed a good many meals out of our timidity, but we became aware eventually that they were purposely trading on the effect their menacing attitude produced on us, and the day came when we succeeded in impressing on them, as we had convinced the others, that we were resolved not to keep open house.

In the spring of 1879, our Indians received the "assistance" cited in the treaty, viz: four oxen, six cows, two plows, with spades, hoes and a few garden seeds, and a white man was sent to superintend, or help them in putting in their small crop. None of the men had ever done a hands turn in their lives before and the attempt they made was, even to a considerate eye, absolutely ludicrous. While one held the plow handles and a second sat on the beam, each ox had a driver by its side. The oxen were freight animals and plowing, or working at anything in pairs was new to them, as to the men; the piece of ground was plentifully covered with short brush and the roots kept pushing the share out of the ground, so that the work was strenuous enough to require relays of the willing helpers who sat in the shade and coned the performance. But the plowing was at length finished and the grain sown. At the fencing, the women, who were quite handy with the axe, ably supplemented the efforts and sustained the reputation of the band in their first essay at agriculture. The women also put in the garden seeds after rooting up the ground with grub-hoes; one by one they would drop the tiny seeds with as much care as though they were sowing grains of gold.

Their spring labors concluded, the overseer left them and the band started out on the prairie to hunt buffalo, while I stayed at home tending the little garden and fighting mosquitoes. There was more rain than usual that year and flies were proportionately numerous and vicious. Buffalo were still obtainable at a short distance out from the Reserve and the band came home with a fair supply of provisions. With government scythes they tried hay-making, but proved too new to the job. Their little crop came to nothing, and the winter played havoc with their cattle. It was starvation, but they blamed something else. Their cattle were wild, Montana-bred and so hard to handle, that there was some excuse for the loss.

That summer, three small chiefs of the Stonies took up land and, for the sake of company, had Reserves laid out adjoining Red Pheasant's. Moosomin and Thunderchild also went on Reserves between the Battle and Saskatchewan Rivers, while "Strike-him-on-the-back" settled on the south side of the Battle, about twenty miles above town. These Indians all returned from the plains to get their treaty.

In those days, the annual treaty payments were made at only a few centres of Indian distribution. Of these, Battleford was one, Sounding Lake another; so, in June of each year the scattered companies of Indians converged toward one or the other of these points. Not only because they would receive the annual subsidy of five dollars a head was this a festival. People who had not seen each other for twelve months would meet and renew acquaintance. They would feast and dance and amuse themselves in their primitive way, till all their provisions were consumed and they had to disperse to replenish their larders. Strong drink, in those days, they saw only occasionally and it had not become a circumstance in their lives; but they could dress up in their finery and ride round the country, lording it over the few whites that lived in the district. The Indian was still of account in his own country.

Treaty payments were, at first, really run by the Indians. If a man said he had ten in his family, there was no one to contradict him. Afterwards, as the officials in charge gained confidence, the several members of a family had to be produced, but the Indians countered this move by lending each other their fathers and mothers, and other relations generally. In this way many were paid over and over again.

After being paid at Battleford, they would travel to Sounding Lake, and, under another name, for most of them have more than one cognomen, receive another payment. Placing in-

structors on Reserves, and paying each band separately, at home, gradually did away with this graft and deprived many smart Indians of a good part of their revenue.

As the money was paid out traders were on hand to secure its proper transfer to themselves. For this, very little guile was required as the Indians were always ready to exchange that which they could not use for something useful and, also, it is to be remembered that for years this treaty money was all the money the Indians ever handled. Five dollars a year had to buy clothes, tea and tobacco for a year, not to speak of the hundred other things which, though needed, had to be done without. In their old way of living they had managed to supply themselves, but their old way of living was gone.

It is safe to say that when the treaty was first made neither white man nor Indian ever dreamed that the buffalo would disappear overnight, as it were. All was done on the assumption that hunting and farming would go hand in hand till the new life was as familiar as the old; when, therefore the whole native population was suddenly thrown on the government's hands, no provision had been made for such an emergency and the assistance doled out was painfully inadequate. For food, the Indian had to depend on government rations, supplemented by what they could kill in the way of ducks, chickens or gophers. And only a few could use a shotgun. Bearing all these facts in mind, it is not difficult to see by how narrow a margin the Indian in those days escaped starvation. If they fell sick they did not escape. To consumption, the disease of privation, they were particularly susceptible. The radical change in surroundings, in circumstances, and in food; the transition from plenty to dearth, and from leisure to labor, wrought deadly havoc with their seldom robust frames. The winters were especially hard on them.

In these first years, while the Indians were an unknown quantity, their peculiar ways, and traditional characteristics gave occasion to continual perturbed speculation as to what they might do to the unguarded country and the few helpless white settlers. Their opportunities were endless, yet crime was rare, partly due to their friendly intentions, and partly to their ignorance of personal liability. They thought the murder of a single white man would break the truce between the two races and that vengeance, rather than punishment, would be the result. Again they were naturally honest, and, in addition had an unspeakable dread of gaol and having their heads shorn. Any

misdeemeanors which called for the intervention of the police arose from quarrels with the officials of the Indian Department. The Mounted Police were undoubtedly a fine body of men, well trained and officered; versed in all the ways and expedients of the country, as well as eminently tactful, but some little part of the praise that is lavished on them for the quiet that reigned is due to the natives of the country. The Indians were more law-abiding than the same number of white men under the same circumstances would have been; had it been otherwise, ten times the number of police would not have kept them in order.

This wholesale homesteading of the Indians called for more than expedients from the Department, wherefore "instructors" were appointed—imported experts from the East—so that the best advice might assist the natives in their new venture. These were all lumbermen from the Ottawa district and, while they knew nothing of the West nor of climatic conditions here, neither did anyone else, but they at least knew all there was to know about driving men, in addition to being experienced wire pullers.

An instructor and an assistant were accordingly allotted to Red Pheasant and the Stonies, putting up their dwelling half way between the two villages. The task set the agent and his subordinates was to make as good a showing as possible for the "assistance" dispensed. The sudden necessity of providing for a multitude of their wards had been but remotely anticipated by the Department and the cost had to be kept as low as possible, while, at the same time there must be some progress to report in justification of the expenditure. This problem naturally gave all concerned much anxious thought. To feed the Indians outright would involve too much expense, so many expedients were tried. The object was to get work of any kind out of the Indians and give them as little as possible. At one time they were paid at a certain rate for the work they did; again they would be rationed while working; or they would be paid in food at a certain rate per day; but in no event would the accomplishment compare with the outlay. The fact was that the Indian was new to manual labor, and could work only short hours and then only in an aimless, inefficient way. Reducing his ration did not spur him as effectually as it might a white man. I have seen Red Pheasant who never did a stroke in his life till he was fifty trying to earn sustenance for his family by cutting cordwood at a dollar a cord. Small game was fairly plentiful, but the men were strangers to the shotgun, and bows and arrows made little impression on ducks and geese. So the Indians were in danger of starving to death.

The Department early recognised the need of some official action in meeting cases of sickness and appointed a doctor. This, they considered adequate provision, and "let it go at that". But the doctor was helpless. Sick people require something more than pills. Proper alimentation, hygienic surroundings, decent care—all these were wanting, and all the representations that the medical man could safely make failed to stir the authorities to action. The Indians, of course, knew nothing of all this; indeed, when one fell sick, they had to be coerced into allowing a white doctor to attend them. They accepted sickness as they took visitations that they could see no cause for and had much more faith in their own medicines and doctors than they had in those who held a white man's diploma. Especially did they stick to the idea that serious sicknesses were caused by witchcraft and could only be dealt with by counter spells. They could recite many confirmatory instances of this and all argument fell dead on their minds. But consumption got their medicine men guessing. They could do nothing with it. They could pretend to find the deadly messenger and suck it out of the sufferer's chest, but this operation did not lead to the patient's recovery. It was a white man's disease. That accounted for their failure. Nor, indeed could the white doctor do much with it either, under the circumstances, so that the white plague took a terrible toll, and it was a good many years before the Department dropped its perfunctory attitude towards the sicknesses of the Indians, and took adequate measures for dealing with them. Today, if an Indian gets seriously ill he or she is sent to the hospital and is looked after exactly as a white person would be and the Indians have learned to appreciate this attention and acknowledge the white man's superiority in medicine.

Most of the bodily ills that now assailed them were new—the result of the radical change in their circumstances, especially of food. Unleavened bannock with a modicum of grease sat strangely on stomachs accustomed to nothing but animal food. The fetid air of their miserable little huts quickly affected lungs habituated to the fresh breezes of the plains. The arduous nature of their new life probably had a share also in finishing them off. All the good workers succumbed to consumption while the lazy and indifferent flourished.

The relations between the Department and the Indian were, in the beginning, quite cordial, but when both sides became subjected to the strain of daily personal contact a gulf gradually opened. This was the result of their different points of

view. The official counts his wards as lazy and thriftless; the Indian sees nothing but a domineering master in the official. There is something in both views but neither will take a single step toward bridging the chasm. It may be that now, when the rising generation speaks more or less English, they will understand each other better.

THE SUN DANCE

Of the customs of these Indians that which struck me as excelling in interest was what the white man has called "The Sun Dance". Until the year of the Rebellion, this was an annual affair, though objected to by the authorities, since it brought the Indians together, and increased the chances of massed insubordination. After the rising was quelled the dance was forbidden, ostensibly as cruel, although in answer to this reason the Indians "cut out" everything but the apparently innocent fasting and dancing. At the present day, when undertaken at all, the ceremony takes place where the unsympathetic eye of authority will not be offended.

An incident connected with the Sun Dance and its relation to the Department, occurs to me. Some years after the Rebellion, I was temporarily in charge of the Reserves of Moosomin and Thunderchild. The latter chief, who had escaped the stigma of being a "rebel", and was therefore *persona grata* with the Department, was chosen by the Indians to negotiate permission to hold a Sun Dance. The agent, just at this juncture, was very anxious that the two bands should buy a stallion which some political friends of his wanted to dispose of, so he landed at the Reserve one day and called the two chiefs to council. The agent told them that they were losing both time and opportunity in working with their small ponies. They should be bred up and in a few years their horses would be fit to do the same work that white men's horses did. A great chance had come his way and he hastened to lay the proposition before them. The stallion could be bought cheap and payment spread over a term of years to suit them. Thunderchild saw his time had come. He replied that he thoroughly agreed with all the agent had said, indeed he would go further and say that it was a pity the Department had not seen fit in the past to put a good stallion on the Reserves. But, there was something infinitely more pressing. From time immemorial the Indians had made the Sun Dance the principal ceremony in their worship of God. The God of the Indian and the God of the white man were one and the same, but each race had been taught a different way

of worshipping Him. Could it be right to prevent that worship? Would not the white man incur a serious responsibility in hampering it? The agent did not allow him to finish his harangue, but said that the Indian Department forbade the dances. The chief asked "why?" and he was told that the ceremony included performances that were inhumane and indecent and that the priests who were trying to turn the Indians into Christians viewed all these pagan rites with intense disapproval. "But" he went on to say, "what he came about was the buying of a stallion" and he carefully recapitulated the advantages the purchase would entail. Thunderchild, after listening very patiently, replied that he was anxious to help the agent and he was sure that if the Indians got leave to hold their dance they would be so pleased that they would consent to buy the stallion at once. Also, that at every Sun Dance he had seen priests looking on and he had never heard of their saying a word against it. If there were anything bad in the dance, the priests would not regard it with lenity, and the agent could hardly forbid a performance that even missionaries countenanced.

The agent, driven into a corner, thought he saw a loophole here for peace with honor. He said that he was sure no priest or clergyman could approve of the dances; so sure, that if the chief got written approval from both Roman Catholic and Protestant clergymen—and bought the horse—no steps would be taken to prevent the dance. The agent thought this would end the discussion so far as the dance was concerned, but the diplomatic chief turned up next day at the Indian office with letters from both clergymen, denying that they saw anything reprehensible in the Sun Dance and repudiating the idea that it should be stopped on their account. The missionaries did not want "to get in wrong" with their charges. So the Indians had their dance—and bought the stallion.

The first summer I passed on the Reserve the Indians after their trip out on the plains for buffalo meat, set out for town where all were to gather for treaty payments, and a young Indian who had attached himself to me, and whose influence was instrumental in keeping me safe when the Rebellion started, invited me to join the crowd, as there would be an opportunity of witnessing a Sun Dance. I accepted the offer; he gave me the visitor's part of his tent, which was occupied by only himself and wife, and treated me to the best he had, without expecting anything in return. I saw many Sun Dances after that, but none that interested me so greatly. A great

crowd had already assembled, and set their leather tents in a circle, each band together. They were a wild lot, making night hideous—and alarming, with their weird songs and dances. The Stonies especially seemed to be hunting for trouble. They would go round to the door of every head man and give him an ovation, with vocal and instrumental music and speeches, all very disturbing to the mind of one, who like myself was a stranger to it. But the danger was more seeming than real.

The dance to which the white man has given the name "Sun Dance", was peculiar to the prairie Indians, until it was adopted, with variations, by the inhabitants of the wooded country to the north. It is known among the Crees by a name that means "denying one's self water", in the same way as fasting means denying one's self food. Also though the Pantheon of the Indian is indiscriminately inclusive, the sun seems to have been neglected; so, how the Sun Dance acquired its name is a mystery. The booth of the Sun Dance is the temple of the Thunder; the dance itself, a locally annual ceremony of supplication and thanksgiving.

Certain persons, only, undertake to "make" a dance; those whose spiritual acquirements warrant them in assuming the great responsibility it entails. They must be males. Until quite proficient, the "maker" associates himself with one more expert than himself, and the two are named as makers but a single individual may do it. Each maker has some side lines more or less in ceremonial from the others.

The dance is projected during the fall or winter months previous and is the result of a promise made in sickness or trouble; or, maybe, in endeavor to secure some favor from the Powers Unknown. The same idea actuates the dancers. They vow to dance for whichever time they choose, one night, or two nights—fasting, or modified fasting, dependent, of course, on someone making a dance, or at the next dance. Before spring opens out, it is heard that this or that man is going to "make" a dance, at such and such a place; or the maker may send a message round, inviting people. Everyone, in some way or other, learns of it. If the maker wishes to do the thing in style, he wraps small pieces of tobacco up in parchment—Wah-pay-kin-e-kun—this is called, and despatches young men round to distribute them. These will travel from one camp to another, going to the head men. They will present their little package, and say, "Smoke this"—"So-and-so says thus to thee, 'I intend to make a Thirst Dance, Come! Help me! and all your people'".

If the receiver of the message assents, he and the crowd of men assembled solemnly and in silence smoke the pipe in which the tobacco has been put. This means that the answer is in the affirmative. Should the concensus of opinion be adverse to the proposition, the package of tobacco is returned to the messenger untouched. But such an eventuality is unheard of in the case of an invitation to a dance. The time is given in the moon's phases. All this is done in a most dignified official style. The ceremonial completed, the assemblage allows itself to discuss matters in a gossipy way with the messenger until he leaves.

Apart from its religious significance the Thirst Dance means the yearly gathering of people whom the exigencies of life compel to spend the fall and winter in isolation and it is looked forward to as such. The young make, and the old renew acquaintances, and it is a general holiday.

In the early part of June—in the north, when the leaves are full-sized—the maker pitches his tent at the appointed place and, as the people arrive, they pitch their lodges by tribes and families in a circle calculated to hold all expected to attend. When the circle is complete an old man, chosen for his loud voice and strong lungs, marches slowly round by the openings of the lodges, crying out that the operations are about to be commenced and the people are to get ready at once. This means that every young man that owns or can borrow a horse, arrays himself and his steed in all the finery he can muster. If he can persuade a girl to sit with him all the more glory! And, oh,—if he had a prancing horse.

But, first, the convenor, as Master of the Ceremonies, followed by all the men, young and old, marches to a tune round the circle. The music may be composed by the maker, or his familiar or perhaps one of the tunes sacred to such occasions. Then they set off to the bush, old and young, the first with axes, the others mounted, and provided with long lariats. The horsemen and girls gallop off, making their ponies cut up and rear to show off; the dogs bark; girls squeal in coquettish fear; guns are fired; and everybody has a great time. The older men chop down the necessary trees; the young attach lines and haul them. The pole for the middle is perhaps twenty feet long and six or eight inches through, with a few stumps of branches left at the top. A lot of shooting is done, at and over this stick. It is felled and drawn to camp by a crowd of young irrepressible horsemen. Not a little trouble is often experienced in hauling

the tree to its place in the middle of the proposed pavilion, but difficulties only make occasion for more shooting, and shouting and fun.

The hole for the butt end of the tree is dug two or three feet deep and the first timber is drawn into a perpendicular position by a crowd of willing but unsystematic helpers. The Master of Ceremonies may be hauled up with it, seated in a nest made for him at the top. His progress upward is marked by directions to his associates and, often, fears for his own safety, before he finally sits erect on a securely fixed platform. Uprights, about eight feet long with crotched tops, are set in the ground, say ten feet apart in a circle with a radius of about twenty feet, with the tree as a centre. Rails are placed round in the crotches of these uprights, and rafters join this wall to the nest in the tree. Leather tents—unsolicited contributions—are spread so as to cover that part of the enclosure where the performers will sit. The door is on the south; it is the entrance—merely an open space. A few feet north of the tree a hole eighteen inches square is dug and an old buffalo skull placed beside it. A wall of leafy branches goes round, where the dancers stay, and is continued, breast high, in front of them, and at the ends of their line, so that they are fenced in, back, sides and front, in a semi-circular lane, six feet, or so, wide. With the green of the boughs enlivened by variegated prints—the gifts of votaries—the grotesque get-up of the dancers, and the generally barbaric surroundings—the scene is one to be remembered. The impression produced, too, is accentuated by the wild and fantastic appearance of the Indians and their savage reputation. On the pole in the middle are hung articles dedicated to the "Great Bird", Thunder—guns, rifles, pieces of cloth—anything the giver wishes. These things will be taken down and hung in some out-of-the-way place in the bush, to be safe from the mocker or marauder.

The actual dance begins in the evening. A small fire is lit on the far side of the pole; apparently for the benefit of smokers. To the right of this—where one enters—sits the choir, round the men who pound the "tom-tom" with small drumsticks. This choir is composed of the best singers, gangs of whom relieve each other at intervals. This is a purely voluntary service; they come and go as they please. Men occupy the right side and women the left, any others who will, join in the singing. Some of the men, and many of the women have good voices and are experts in their own style of harmony.

Each dancer has a small pipe, made from the leg-bone of a goose, on which he sounds a shrill "toot-toot", in time with the drum. They dance or rest, as the spirit moves them. All are arrayed as fancy and means dictate; paint of all colors disguises their countenances, and the general effect is unquestionably diabolical. Dancing is not continuous, each night all stop for a few hours' sleep and there are frequent intervals during the day. Males and females have each their own side of the lane and are separated by a barrier of boughs. A slight bending of the knees to allow the body to move up and down in time with the drum constitutes the "Dance". A song will be raised, and the drum started; the dancers—few, many, or all—bob up from behind their leafy screen, whistle in mouth; "toot-toot-toot" *ad lib*—the singing stops; the dance ends; down they drop behind their screens.

There are many diversions. Once, a votary had the top joint and a half of his little finger chopped off in fulfilment of a vow. A block of wood was brought in and placed beside the fire. The victim made a little speech, telling how he had promised to do this when his child was sick. The child had died, but he was going to keep his word. Some would not have done so but he was one who did what he said. He sat down "beside the block" and began to sing. He laid his finger on the block, and an old fellow, with a business-like air, held the hand, while with one sweep of a long, heavy, cleaver-like knife, he chopped off a piece of the finger. The song stopped when amputation was completed. The finger was terribly mangled, the bone being so shattered that the wound took a long time to heal. All interest in the event vanished as soon as the deed was done.

The vow may be of some other mutilation. A couple of inches of loose skin, on each side, just above the breast, are caught between the finger and thumb, and held tight, while the sharp blade of a jack-knife is pushed through, making a slit of a size to take a small wooden skewer about four inches long in each breast. These allow room for a line to be fastened on, the free end of which is attached to the top of the middle pole from the outside. The victim then dances or staggers round and round the outside of the booth, straining on the line. He must break loose; and he does it by throwing his weight on the line till the skin gives way. This does not always happen quickly, and it may be that the added weight of a friend is needed to end the torture.

Similarly, skewers are run through the skin of the shoulder-blades, by which to drag one or two old buffalo heads. A line

is tied to the heads, which drag on the ground behind, and much careful choosing of the way is necessary to bring the burden safely into the middle of the tent, with a minimum of jerking. On arrival at the pole, the line may be untied and the skewers withdrawn. If the ordeal be prolonged, these skewers swell with moisture, and are often to be got out only by catching hold with the teeth, and giving a sharp jerk.

Again, articles may be suspended from the skewers. In one instance, two men went off behind a little knoll, some distance away, carrying ten guns. The total weight must have been sixty or seventy pounds, and these were borne into the booth, a gun hanging by a thong on each of ten different skewers through the back, while the bearer, the whole way, sang as heartily as the pain would allow. In the tent, the "maker" unhitched the strings from the skewers, which latter, he extricated with his teeth. The guns he piled by the centre-pole where the owners came up singly and claimed them.

Again a horse may be tied to a skewer and led into the tent. Perhaps the animal is led round the ring. This is a trying ordeal as everything tends to make the beast shy and he often breaks loose. The penitent will be fastened to the bridled horse in the open, anywhere, and he will make the round of the large circle of tents, singing. This completed, he will enter the tent and go up to the pole, against which he will lean with bowed head and folded arms.

Ludicrous incidents are frequent. Once a brave undertook to lead a dog into the tent by a line fastened to a skewer through the skin between his shoulders. The dog was a great big brute—for an Indian dog, a monster. The man got the round of the circle completed, led the dog up to the centre-pole, and bowed his head there in lamentation. The wails became louder and louder. During this the dog was uneasy, being evidently suspicious of his surroundings. Whenever the man's devotion vented itself in sudden and loud bursts of penitential outpouring, the dog would tug at the line which confined him and, as the animal was about as heavy as the human being, the latter found it hard to preserve that equilibrium of mind and body which the solemnity of the occasion demanded. But, the trouble was bearable, until, in the course of his penance, it became necessary for the Indian to fire his gun off into the air. At the explosion the dog gave a fearful jump and, howling, jerked the man over backwards, dragging him out of the booth and through the crowd, till he finally burst himself loose and left

the astounded worshipper to recover himself amid the roars of the hastily assembled Indians.

The large audiences, too, afford the opportunity for the braves to recount their deeds of daring. It will be something like this. A number of select warriors—practically naked—their bodies smeared all over with white mud, picked out with red signs of their daring, file into the arena, singing and dancing. They dance "to somebody for somebody", as their saying is, and their aim is to enhearten the dancers. Presently, they stop dancing and one or other tells the story of some successful raid. The oration will run as follows:—"We were camped at such and such a place. From there a war party went out. I was one of them. So many nights we walked, hiding in the daytime. Suddenly we felt the enemy. We sent out scouts. They found a large camp. Three days we stayed there; we saw them every day, but they never felt us. We brought away twenty horses. I cut loose one that was tied to the door of a lodge. Three days we fled. They never overtook us." A tap or two is given on the drum at each sentence, with a loud and long burst at the end, to show the appreciation of the audience. Or the speech may run thus:—"We started out from the Elbow on a hunting tour. We came across people on the edge of the Eagle Hills. A large camp. We struck out on the prairie. On the tenth night, the Blackfeet attacked us. We beat them off. For three days we fought as we travelled. I was riding a buffalo runner—a bay with white feet. I exchanged shots with a Blackfoot. I rode at him. He ran away. I caught him, and pulled him off his horse. I stabbed him with a knife." Deafening applause, and salvos of drum-beats.

The story is perhaps enacted in dumb show, if Indians of another tribe—as Stonies—are in camp. It is astonishing how perfectly the untutored actor can convey the required impression to the spectators, though at least some slight knowledge of the sign language of the Plain Indians is necessary for a complete understanding of the performance.

It has often been remarked by old Indians, that the tales told by braves during a Thirst Dance are, to say the least, outrageous exaggerations. Each event narrated has been witnessed by one or other of the audience, so that the exact truth is well known. Therefore, it may be taken for granted that these stories have merely the foundation true; interwoven with this are all the embellishments that the imagination and oratorical powers of the narrator allow.

On the second day, most of the offerings are made. Wearing apparel, ornaments, household utensils, guns, horses, equipment—any of the things that enter into Indian life, either as necessities or superfluities, are offered in sacrifice. The small things are piled up in the open space in the tent, lifted up, one by one, by the "maker", and held out for some one to come and take them. Horses are led into the booth. A few words accompany each gift—a reminder of the giver's virtue. The takers are mostly old people—the cheekiest. The underlying idea of the offering is, that it may buy something the giver desires—health, long life, success of some kind—which will be contributed by the recipient. So, the oldest and poorest, who have very little to lose, elect to take chances. They will give reasons why they are the proper persons, with a better right than any other to receive the gift, but the unprejudiced listener will inevitably conclude that impudence is their principal attribute.

A crowd of spectators sits three or four deep round the edge of the booth, that is not allotted to the dancers; men on the left, and women on the right; males in breech-clout, leggings and blanket, females in the most gaudy prints they can muster. Either may, in addition, have a blanket thrown over the shoulder. The number of horses a man has stolen, will be told by the horse-hoofs marked on the blanket; hands indicate the times he has grappled with the enemy; while the feather in his hair will be tipped with a little red branch for every foe killed.

By this time, if the weather is hot, the zeal of the dancers has visibly waned. When a tune ends, they all drop out of sight as promptly as possible, to while away the hours in smoking or gossip or in the pleasures of the toilet. Little mirrors are part of their equipment and so is paint. They may leave the booth for any good reason.

The most stirring tunes will now be started, and the drum pounded with all the vigor that a full stomach, to encourage an empty one, can put into a stroke. The helpers will come and dance frequently. In repeated harangues, the votaries are reminded by the Master of Ceremonies that their release is at hand; at sundown they will be free; and that the Thunder will be invoked to send a shower to refresh them. This is because they may drink any rain water they can catch. The Master of Ceremonies will then sing his own particular song (home made), which is always distinguished to a greater degree by vigor than by harmony. A curious coincidence is, that there is invariably rain during a Thirst Dance, sometimes a shower, perhaps merely

a sprinkle, but always enough to convince the Indians that their supplications are noted. Notwithstanding this refreshment, some of the dancers collapse, and have to be taken home for revival.

The joker now has his part to play in the ceremony. As though about to recount some brave deed an old warrior will leave the circle of spectators, and advance into the arena. His harangue will run thus:—"On a summer hunt, once, camp was made in Round Valley"—here the drum will beat rat-tat-tat—"A party went off after horses"—drum beat—"I was one"—drum beat—"A long way off we came up to the Black-feet"—rat-tat-tat—"They felt us"—rat-tat—"But we gathered some horses together and fled before them"—rat-tat-tat—"Three days we fled"—rat-tat—"The land was dry"—rat-tat-tat—"All the springs and lakes to which we came, were dried up"—rat-tat-tat—"We were very thirsty"—drum beat—"As thirsty as you are now"—burst of drum beats—"Our throats were parched"—drum beat. "We thought to perish"—rat-tat—"Any kind of water we wanted"—rat-tat—"Only a little"—rat-tat-tat—The third evening we came to a spring near Tramping Lake—roll of drum beats—"And we all had a good drink, just as you will this evening. Persevere". Fusillade of drum-beats, and loud applause.

The dance ends at sundown, when the exhausted devotees repair to their tents for much needed refreshments, with that peace of mind which only a sense of duty fulfilled, and obligation paid, can bestow.

In the later days, after the dance was over, the Indians quickly dispersed. One by one, as necessity pressed, they would fold their tents and steal away, each to the place where, in his experience, the needs of life have proved the easiest to satisfy. Formerly this haste was not necessary.

*INDIAN LIFE IN THE FIRST YEARS OF THE
RESERVATIONS 1878-1883*

*Transition—Indian Character—Games—The Sweat-Tent—
Clothes—Tents—Dogs—Children—Voracity—Laziness—
The Summer's Hunt—Domestic Relations—Fire—
Language—The Dance—Magic Rites—
Religious Beliefs—Pounds—The
Indian as a Warrior—The First
Battle of Cut Knife*

TRANSITION—

For six years I remained with these Indians in Red Pheasant's Reserve, teaching their children in school in the winter months—for they generally scattered in summer—and getting a little variety by teaching in Battleford while the Indians were absent. This was the first school opened in Battleford. During the first three of these years, buffalo meat might be obtained by seeking it far enough down south, but about '81 or '82, the Sioux claimed sanctuary on the Canadian side of the boundary, and, though the Indians claimed that never were the animals more plentiful than at that time, they suddenly and instantaneously disappeared. According to the Indians' notion, the poor brutes, stressed by continual hunting, had submerged themselves beneath the waters of lakes and boggy places for shelter and respite from the merciless baiting to which they were being subjected. Tracks to the edges of these places were pointed to in confirmation of this theory. This sudden cutting off of their natural supply of food, brought on a crisis in the Indian question.

While game was plentiful, all but the mildest tempered had despised the miserable provision made by the Indian Department for the training of natives in the practice of agriculture and for their subsistence while learning. Nor were they at all anxious to settle down. Although war between the hostile tribes had been stopped yet it was by decree only. Private fighting and stealing went on much as before and, as long as their quarrels and depredations were not injuring or interfering with white men, the authorities were tautful enough not to mix up in them. The Mounted Police were but a handful. So, though Cree and Blackfoot no longer fought on sight, they stole each other's horses whenever chance offered and redressed wrongs in their own old way. More than that, as circumstances became more stringent, they made incursions south of the Line and

killed cattle there, as well as in Canada. Soon, conditions became still harder, while restraints grew tighter and tighter, till, one by one, the bands drifted to their home in the north country, obliged to turn their hands to peaceful occupations.

While it lasted, this disturbed state of things affected us—dwellers of the north. Our apprehensions were never allowed to subside for want of reason. The Indians continually went to-and-fro and each fresh visitor brought new stories of lawlessness to keep alive our trepidation. When the treaty was made the Indians were told that the country would soon be full of white men, and, though several years had elapsed, the threatened influx had not materialised. Doubt was beginning to invade the natives' minds as to whether the stories of the white man's numbers might not be all bluff. So, while the peace of the land was in the hands of the Indians, armed, painted and frightful to the eye, with strange, uncouth customs and language, it is a matter of small reproach that every story was greedily swallowed and that apprehension was constantly and fearfully present. In isolated country houses few people would care to sit at night between a light and the window. Yet nothing happened. In all those years I can recall no instance of any wrong done to the whites; all misunderstandings were between the Indians and their guardians—the officials of the Indian Department.

CHARACTER—

During those six years that I resided among the Indians I learned and unlearned a great deal. Nearly all that I thought I knew, I found incorrect. I had to begin again. I learned their language; I learned their character and customs; I learned their point of view. I saw how they were born, how they lived, and how they died. In their natural condition, I found them honest, truthful and good-natured under all kinds of adverse circumstances. Even to-day in their degeneration, they will bear comparison in these respects, with their neighbors of various European nationalities. But, the more they mix with white men, the worse they become.

Their constitution inclines them to honesty. They are not ambitious enough to be greedy of other people's property, even if there were not the additional restraint of confinement and being shorn of their hair. Indeed, this characteristic is carried to a fault: no reward is great enough to induce them to labor arduously and continuously or after their immediate needs are satisfied. For this, they rest under the imputation of being

lazy; but, it is not so much laziness, as want of foresight and lack of emulation amongst themselves as to their manner of living. They are not individualistic enough. If one person is blest with more than his neighbour, then, Indian ethics require that he be not niggardly in assisting that neighbor, since, some day, things may be the other way about. There is little inducement, therefore, to look any distance ahead. In his own way, the Indian is energetic, patient and tireless. He will work like a demon, always in a good humor that neither difficulties nor discomforts can disturb. But, when he wants to go—to quit—when he gets homesick, or thinks he has sufficient money ahead—no consideration will stop him from going.

They are good tempered under the most trying conditions, philosophically inclined and thoroughly impressed with the idea that what must be, must be. In all the years that I have known Indians, I have never seen—or heard of—two men, or more, guilty of unseemly brawling, with threats and animadversions and loud talk. They can disagree and dislike one another, without working the feeling out in vituperation. Not that they do not express slighting opinions of each other, but that they do it in a matter-of-fact way that seems to need more than words to refute.

An illustration of this:—two men, who had long been at variance, at length reached a day when the forbearance of one came to the breaking point. Not hastily, but soberly, he bade his wife go and tell the other man that he was coming out after him with a rifle. The woman, after futile remonstrance, did as she was told. Number two was sitting in his tent when the word was brought him. He received the news without comment, only when the woman finished speaking, telling her to wait. He proceeded to push the lower skins up on the poles of the tent, all round the eaves, about two feet. This gave him a clear view all round. Then he took his rifle, loaded it and sat down in the centre of the tent. All this completed, he sent the woman back. He waited there with his rifle between his knees till evening, but no one appeared. It seems that mutual friends had interfered, and induced Number one to forego his homicidal intentions. As an illustration, this occurrence is most apt.

In intercommunication, they are precise to an extreme. They have a word, which might be translated "it appears", which is used so punctiliously, that it is always possible to distinguish what a speaker has himself seen or heard, from second-hand information. In delivering a message, they are careful to use, as nearly as they can, the exact words spoken to them.

About promises, even without consideration, they affect to be very particular. The average white man, over and over again, says what he intends to do and thinks nothing of it if he should fail to carry out his intentions. There is no debt created, when one formulates projected action. But the Indian expects all to do exactly as they say. Their idea is that one should not speak inconsiderately; so they regard the white man as light and irresponsible.

Indian council meetings are very, very serious affairs. Men only attend, and they all sit round in a circle. Until the tale is complete those who have arrived gossip and chat. When all are there, the convenor rises, and officially states the reason of the meeting. One by one, those who have anything to say get on their feet and say it—gravely and ceremoniously. Objection is made and answered, till a decision is arrived at. Everything is well ordered and correct, and a spectator at these meetings would infallibly conclude that the Indian was of a most sober mind.

Not only collectively, but individually, the Indian always keeps control of himself, except to his intimates and under exceptional circumstances. He seldom betrays his feelings, and is always dignified in bearing. He leaves it to women and children to show that uncontrollable events can affect them. Some carry this stolidness to extremes. I have seen a man, two of whose children were at the point of death, playing cards in a neighboring house, apparently unconcerned. When I ventured to remonstrate with him, he explained "that grief could not help the sick. He could do nothing. The game diverted his mind." It was not that the man was hard-hearted but that he recognised the hand of fate. The women, however, make no pretence of stoicism; their grief is adequately worked off in such howls of lamentation as the occasion demands. On the death of any member of a family, every reminder of the deceased is given away, except some small article that can be stowed away in a portable bundle that is never parted with. This is kept in remembrance. Both male and female relations of the deceased loose their hair over their shoulders, and let it hang unkempt till their sorrow has abated. The women also gash their arms, and visible places of their bodies, and generally, make their mourning as unmistakeable as possible.

In private, however, the Indian wears none of this armour of austerity; he can laugh and joke with the rest, indeed they do not take life seriously enough, for with them existence seems to be one long song and dance—especially dance.

I never heard anyone who knew Indians say that they were thieves. That they carried on a series of retaliatory depredations on their enemies is beside the mark: there they were engaged in a professional, legitimate business. During the years that I lived on Reserves we never locked our doors, yet never had anything taken. Even the white men of those days seldom stole from each other. If an Indian happened on a cache of food out in the wilderness, he took what he wanted only if in desperate need, otherwise, he did not touch. If he came on anything on the trail, dropped by some one who had preceded him, he would place the article on the roadside, out of the track, and there it would remain till the owner came to retrieve his property. I once had a pony to dispose of, as it was too lazy for my purposes, and I offered it for sale at treaty time for twenty-five dollars. I was thoroughly nonplussed when a young Indian came along and told me he was willing to give thirty for the animal. I explained that I was letting it go for twenty-five but he persisted that it was worth thirty to him.

In old times, I used to admire the Indians' speeches; but times have changed, and oratory, with them, has become a lost art. But, to the unsophisticated savage's aptitude in this respect, it would be hard to do justice. It would be almost impossible to give a literal translation of an Indian's speech so full was it of hyperbole and irrelevant, airy fancies. Sometimes they would run on for a long time and leave no clear impression on the hearer's mind but gradually it would appear what the speaker was leading up to; they would build up their subject allegorically like a parable, and let the listener draw the inevitable conclusion. At its best, it would be like a figure appearing through a fog—first a shapeless mass and dim, but gradually growing more and more distinct, till it stood out clear and plain. The Indian liked to make speeches and, officially, never missed an opportunity; however, his orations were always works of art, and accomplished by their ornate eloquence a great deal more than mere bald, matter-of-fact begging or demanding would have done.

Every Indian is not an orator, but they are all adepts at "sounding"—that is weighing and gauging the influences that sway the person they are addressing, with a view to directing all their efforts to the weakest point. Their preliminary talk is all aimed at this, and what follows is an appeal, an argument, or a threat, as they have decided the occasion requires. I have watched this process over and over again, and wondered at it as often: first he will try to frighten you, and, if he finds this

is not working, will gradually change his tone till he has found the feeling you will respond to.

GAMES—

There is a game which has a sort of infatuation for the Indian, and to which he turns, more than to anything else for diversion. It resembles the old pastime of guessing in which hand an opponent hides the button, except that this is much more complicated, and that there is no guessing about it. Success depends upon ability to follow the adversary's thoughts—to gauge the workings of his mind.

A challenge is given, and there are mostly two or three on each side. After assembling, each side places a value on its opponent's stakes; that is, if one produces a blanket, the other values it. It is worth so many sticks, and the small sticks used as counters are handed over and so on with all the articles produced. If, in the progress of the game, one side is cleaned out, some fresh article is thrown into the ring, and the play is resumed. A blanket is spread on the floor—the counters staked all in view—with the selected players squatted in position on opposite sides. The things hidden are anything small enough to be held in the hand without making it noticeably bulky—the spiral wire used for extracting the load from an old-fashioned muzzle-loading gun is a favorite, or a brass button. There are two used, one called a double, and the other of lesser account. The hider kneels on the blanket, which lies out in front of him far enough to allow of it being pulled up over his thighs. He puts his hand under this flap to hide the buttons. He may leave both on the ground; he may have one in a hand and the other on the ground, or he may have one in each hand. The drum is beaten, and a song started, while the hider bends his head down so that his face is not in view, and shuffles the buttons under the flap of the blanket. Suddenly, he straightens up, and folds his arms, trying to keep his countenance blank, or working it into grimaces, that it may convey no information to the other side. The drum is now beaten by the hider's side with panicky vigor and all the noise and nonsense possible made to distract the attention of the guessing side. The man chosen as finder by his side, after a momentary and dramatic pause, shoots out his hand in the direction he supposes the buttons to be. Certain gestures in this respect have recognised meanings. If he finds the lesser button a counter is passed over to his side and he has another try for the greater. If he is again right he wins another counter and the buttons and drum change sides; if he is wrong he loses a counter and the performance is begun anew. During

the critical period of hiding and finding, everything known in the way of bandinage, is passed from side to side in the endeavor to fluster the opposition. When a hider or finder is repeatedly unsuccessful he is superseded by another. In this game success or failure depends entirely on being able to follow the workings of an adversary's mind. The hiding is not done haphazard, but according to plan and any scheme the mind has formed is bound to be betrayed by unconscious action. A novice will hide the buttons by chance, and is consequently hard to guess but when he becomes familiar enough to form plans of hiding, it is only a question of finding his system. It is not likely that sleight-of-hand is much practised as precautionary rules make trickery difficult. The game is often kept up for days at a time and the whole of a family's possessions may have changed hands at the end of it.

While on the subject of games, there is only one other that deserves notice. This is played with an ordinary pack of cards with the lower numbers taken out. It is called "marriage", follows common rules, and presents no feature of novelty to the civilised enquirer. It probably originated with Halfbreeds.

SWEAT-TENT

A diversion to which the Indians are excessively addicted—males, that is, not women and children—is the Sweat-Tent. It is rather an indulgence, since they treat themselves to it as often as twice a day. At every old camp one comes across the relics of this habit—a few granite stones, the size of one's head, in a hole in the ground.

A big fire is built, and the stones thrown in to the heat, while a bunch of willow sticks are cut, and stuck, butt ends into the ground, in a circle five or six feet across. The branch parts are brought together and interlaced into a rounded top, making a framework the shape of an overturned bowl. Over this frame blankets and robes are thrown for a covering. Inside, a hole, a foot in diameter and a foot deep, is dug out with a knife. A small kettle of water; a wisp of long grass, with the stones red hot, and the preparations are complete. A green willow, doubled into the form of pincers, is used to transfer the stones from the fire to the hole inside. The men—as many as the booth will accommodate, strip themselves to the breech-clout, and squeeze inside, when the covering blankets are closed to exclude the air. With the wisp of grass the water is now sprinkled on the hot stones and the steam arising fills the place till it oozes out through the cracks of the covering. Deep grunts, perhaps songs,