

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS
OF THE
**American Museum of Natural
History.**

Vol. VII, Part I.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE BLACKFOOT INDIANS.

BY
CLARK WISSLER.

NEW YORK:
Published by Order of the Trustees.
1911.

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INTRODUCTION.

In this third paper on the ethnology of the Blackfoot Indians full recognition should again be given Mr. D. C. Duvall, with whose assistance the data were collected by the writer on a Museum expedition in 1906. Later, Mr. Duvall read the descriptive parts of the manuscript to well-informed Indians, recording their corrections and comments, the substance of which was incorporated in the final revision. Most of the data come from the Piegan division in Montana. For supplementary accounts of social customs the works of Henry, Maximilian, Grinnell, Maclean, and McClintock are especially worthy of consideration.

Since this paper is an integral part of an ethnographic survey in the Missouri-Saskatchewan area some general statements seem permissible for there is even yet a deep interest in the order of social grouping in different parts of the world and its assumed relation with exogamy, to the current discussion of which our presentation of the Blackfoot band system may perhaps contribute. We believe the facts indicate these bands to be social groups, or units, frequently formed and even now taking shape by division, segregation and union, in the main a physical grouping of individuals in adjustment to sociological and economic conditions. The readiness with which a Blackfoot changes his band and the unstable character of the band name and above all the band's obvious function

as a social and political unit, make it appear that its somewhat uncertain exogamous character is a mere coincidence. A satisfactory comparative view of social organization in this area must await the accumulation of more detailed information than is now available. A brief résumé may, however, serve to define some of the problems. Dr. Lowie's investigation of the Assiniboine reveals band characteristics similar to those of the Blackfoot in so far as his informants gave evidence of no precise conscious relation between band affiliation and restrictions to marriage.^[1] The Gros Ventre, according to Kroeber, are composed of bands in which descent is paternal and marriage forbidden within the bands of one's father and mother, which has the appearance of a mere blood restriction.^[2] The Arapaho bands, on the other hand, were merely divisions in which membership was inherited but did not affect marriage in any way.^[3] The Crow, however, have not only exogamous bands but phratries. The Teton-Dakota so far as our own information goes, are like the Assiniboine. For the Western Cree we lack definite information but such as we have indicates a simple family group and blood restrictions to marriage. The following statement by Henry may be noted: "A Cree often finds difficulty in tracing out his grandfather, as they do not possess totems—that ready expedient among the Saulteurs. They have a certain way of distinguishing their families and tribes, but it is not nearly so accurate as that of the Saulteurs, and the second or third generation back

seems often lost in oblivion.”^[4] On the west, the Nez Perce seem innocent of anything like clans or gentes.^[5] The Northern Shoshone seem not to have the formal bands of the Blackfoot and other tribes but to have recognized simple family groups.^[6] The clan-like organizations of the Ojibway, Winnebago and some other Siouan groups and also the Caddoan groups on the eastern and southern borders of our area serve to sharpen the differentiation.

The names of Blackfoot bands are not animal terms but characterizations in no wise different from tribal names. Those of the Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Teton-Dakota are, so far as reported, essentially of the same class. It seems then that the name system for these bands is the same among these neighboring tribes of the area and that it is an integral part of the whole system of nomenclature for groups of individuals. This may be of no particular significance, yet it is difficult to see in it the ear marks of a broken-down clan organization; it looks for all the world like an economic or physical grouping of a growing population.

We have seen in the Blackfoot system the suggestion that the band circle or camp circle organization is in function a political and ceremonial adjunct and that the exogamous aspects of these bands were accidental. So far as we know this holds to a degree for other tribes using the band circle.^[7]

It seems probable that many discussions of social

phenomena could be expedited if clear distinctions were established between what is conventional and what is the result of specific functions and adaptations. Unfortunately, our ignorance of the processes involved and their seeming illusiveness of apprehension make such a result well-nigh hopeless. By the large, conventional things, or customs, appear to be products of ideation or thinking. Now a band circle is clearly a scheme, a conception, that may well have originated within the mental activities of a single individual, a true psychic accident. Indeed this is precisely what conventions seem to be—customs, procedures or orders that happen to become fixed. A band, on the other hand, is not so easily disposed of. The name itself implies something instinctive or physical, as a flock, a grove, etc. Something like this is seen in the ethnic grouping of the Dakota since we have the main group composed of two large divisions in one of which is the Teton, this again sub-divided among which we find the Ogalalla, and this in turn divided into camps, etc. Though detected by conventionalities of language this dividing and diffusing is largely physical, or at least an organic adjustment to environment. Then among the Ojibway we have a population widely scattered in physical groups but over and above all, seemingly independent, a clan system; the latter is certainly conventional, but the former, not. Now the Blackfoot band seems in genesis very much of a combined instinctive and physical grouping, in so far as it

is largely a sexual group and adapted to economic conditions. In its relation to the band system of government and its exogamous tendency it is clearly conventional. What may be termed the conventional band system consists in a scheme for the tribal group designated as a band circle. This scheme once in force would perpetuate the band names and distinctions in the face of re-groupings for physical and economic reasons. Something like this has been reported for the Cheyenne who have practically the same band scheme but live in camps or physical groups not coincident with the band grouping, hence, their band was predominatingly conventional. The following statement of the Arapaho, if we read correctly, is in line with this: "When the bands were separate, the people in each camped promiscuously and without order. When the whole tribe was together, it camped in a circle that had an opening to the east. The members of each band then camped in one place in a circle."^[8] All this in turn seems to support the interpretation that the band circle system is merely a conventionalized scheme of tribal government. We have noted that among the Blackfoot the tribal governments are so associated with the band circles that they exist only potentially until the camps are formed; at other times each band is a law unto itself. So far as our data go something like this holds in part at least, for the neighboring tribes. As a hypothesis, then, for further consideration we may state that the band circles and the

bands are the objective forms of a type of tribal government almost peculiar to this area, an organization of units not to be confused with the more social clans and gentes of other tribes to which they bear a superficial resemblance. In closing, we may remark that exogamy is often but a rule for marriage respecting some conventional groupings. The Blackfoot appear to have paused at the very threshold of such a ruling for their bands.

December, 1910.

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- [1] Lowie, (a), 34.
 - [2] Kroeber, (a), 147.
 - [3] Kroeber, (b), 8.
 - [4] Henry, 511.
 - [5] Spinden, 241.
 - [6] Lowie, (b), 206.
 - [7] See Mooney, 402; Swanton, 663; and Goldenweiser, 53.
 - [8] Kroeber, (b), 8.

TRIBAL DIVISIONS.

As previously stated, there are three political divisions of the Blackfoot Indians. These were definite when the tribes first came to our knowledge and their origins have long had a place in mythology. The genesis of these divisions must forever remain obscure, though there are a few suggestions as to what may have been the order of differentiation. While the term Blackfoot has been used by explorers from the very first, it seems also to have some general significance among the Indians themselves. Thus, a Piegan will tell you that he is a Piegan, but if asked who are the Piegan, will usually reply that they are Blackfoot Indians. Naturally, this may be due to foreign influence, the idea of subordination to the Blackfoot division having grown out of knowledge that such a classification was accepted by the dominant race.^[9] In the sign language, there appears no distinct designation for the group as a whole. According to our information the signs are:—

Blackfoot. Pass the thumb and extended fingers down the side of the leg and supplement by pointing to black.

Blood. Crook the closed fingers and draw across the mouth, the teeth showing. The idea is that of picking clotted blood from the mouth.

Piegan. The closed fist, fingers down, rubbed on the cheek. The idea is “poorly dressed robes,” the sign signifying the rubbing of a skin.^[10] One informant claims

the name to have been given by the Crow because the first Piegan they killed wore a scabby robe.

To the many published stories accounting for the origin of the term Kainaw^[11] (Blood) we add the following from the Piegan which is entirely consistent with the sign. A party of Piegan were found in the mountains frozen. They lay in a heap. Afterwards, the Blood taunted them by singing, "All in a pile." Some time after this, some Blood were found in the same condition but with dried blood and froth smeared on their faces. Then the Piegan retorted by singing and making the sign. In daily speech, the significance of kai seems to be some dried effluvium from the body, hence, the name.

Henry gives a great deal of information as to the Blackfoot but is not quite consistent in his classification, for though he recognized the three historical divisions in his enumeration, he substituted two "bands" for the Blackfoot;^[12] the Cold band and Painted Feather's band, implying that these were distinct and strong divisions into which the Blackfoot were divided. This may have been a temporary segregation under two dominant leaders. Henry estimated the strength of the Piegan as equal to all the other divisions combined, an estimate consistent with all our information and with tradition.

There are some linguistic differences between the three tribes but these are chiefly in the choice of words and in current idioms. The Northern Blackfoot seem to differ more from the Piegan than the latter from the

Blood.

[9] “All these Indians [Piegan, Blood, Blackfoot] are comprehended, by the Whites, under the general name of Blackfeet, which they themselves do not, however, extend so far, but know each of the three tribes only by its own proper name.” Maximilian, Vol. 23, 96.

[10] Clark, 73, 74.

[11] See also Maclean, 44.

[12] Henry and Thompson, 530.

COURTSHIP.

It seems proper to begin the discussion of our subject with those conventions directly associated with sexual activities. Among the Blackfoot, as everywhere, the male is usually the aggressor. He lies in wait outside the tipi at night or along the paths to the water and wood-gathering places to force his attentions. This phase of sexual life is often expressed in myths and tales, intercepting the girl with her bundles of wood being the favorite.^[13] Another manner of approach is by creeping under the tipi cover into the sleeping place of the girls. When countenanced

by the girl's family, attentions may be received by day in full view of all, the couple sitting together muffled in the same blanket, a familiar Dakota practice. Naturally, the girl may offer the first invitation. The most conventional way is for her to make moccasins secretly for the youth of her choice, this being regarded as the first proper step. Curiously enough, when married the young bride is expected to make a pair of moccasins for each of her husband's male relatives. Then they will say, "Well, my female relative (nĩmps) is all right, she makes moccasins for us." As the wife usually goes to live with her husband's people, this is something of a formal demonstration of her worth to his family.

To all appearances, at least, virginity is held in very great esteem and extreme precaution is taken to guard the girls of the family. They are closely watched by their mothers and married off as soon as possible after puberty. For a girl to become pregnant is regarded as an extreme family disgrace. She will be scolded privately; but none of the family will speak of the matter in public if it can be avoided, they bearing their shame silently. No special demands are made of the co-partner in her shame, the girl alone being the one held responsible. Marriage may result, but the initiative is usually left to the man, since he is not regarded as having erred or fallen into disfavor. The formal virginity tests and puberty ceremonies practised among the Siouan tribes seem to have no place in Blackfoot society. The male lover

enjoys unusual liberties. His efforts at debauchery are not only tolerated but encouraged by his family and should he lead a married woman astray is heralded as a person of promise. Thus, while great pains are taken to safeguard young girls, boys are, if anything, encouraged to break through the barriers.

While the flageolet is a favorite adjunct of courtship among many tribes of the area, its use in this connection seems to have been ignored by the Blackfoot. They did, however, resort to charms and formula known collectively as Cree medicine, a subject to be discussed in another paper. From what information we have, the pursuit of the female was much less in evidence than among the Dakota and other Siouan tribes.^[14] We found no traces of conventional modes of registering conquests as among the young men of the Dakota and Village Indians.^[15]

[\[13\]](#) Vol. 2, 58, 109.

[\[14\]](#) Wissler, (b).

[\[15\]](#) Maximilian, Vol. 23, 282-283.

MARRIAGE AND ITS OBLIGATIONS.

Before proceeding, it should be noted that the courtship discussed in the preceding has no necessary relation to marriage, and may continue secretly after one

or both are married. Proposals frequently come from the parents of either the girl or the man and often without the knowledge of one or both of the contracting parties. Mr. Grinnell has described in some detail what may be regarded as the most ostentatious form of proposal,^[16] making it unnecessary to discuss the matter here. In general, it appears that the negotiations are carried on between the fathers of the couple or between the father and his prospective son-in-law. If successful, the next step is the exchange of presents. Grinnell denies that there is an idea of wife purchase in these transactions,^[17] but when discussing divorce on the following page says the husband could “demand the price paid for her.” According to our information, the idea of purchase is still alive, though the woman herself may, as Grinnell claims, be regarded as more than a chattel. Even to-day, the bridegroom is expected to give a few horses and other property to the bride’s parents, and though presents are often sent with the bride, the bridegroom must return at least two-fold.^[18] In former times, it is said, well-to-do families prepared the bride with an outfit of horses, clothing, etc., and paraded over toward the band of the bridegroom to be met in turn by a similar procession and outfit. The chief object here was a parade of wealth, that all the people might see the social excellence of the two families; for, as just stated, the bridegroom must in the end pay a price over and above the mere exchange of presents.

A Piegan to whom the text was read commented as follows:—They do pay for their women. When a man punishes his woman, he generally remarks that he paid enough for her, and, hence, can do with her as he will. On the other hand, if a man who gives few presents or pays nothing, becomes exacting, the woman's relatives will remark that as he paid little or nothing he should desist; they may even take her away and find another husband for her.

There is a belief that the father-in-law was for a time entitled to part of the spoils of the chase and war, especially the latter. During the period between the proposal and the marriage, the hunt was delivered to the tipi of the prospective father-in-law and when cooked a portion was carried to the young man's tipi by the girl.

The formal marriage ceremony was simple, the couple taking their proper places in the tipi and assuming at once their domestic responsibilities. The husband was expected to hunt and accumulate horses; the wife to prepare the food, make the clothing, etc. He had no great obligations to her in his associations with other women; but she, on the other hand, must strictly respect her compact. As the hour of marriage approached, the girl's relatives gave her a forceful talk on her obligations and the shame of adultery. Her attention was called to the important part a virtuous married woman may take in the sun dance as well as her fitness to call upon the sun for aid in times of trial. She was threatened with death, if she

yielded to temptation. Formerly, it is said, a wife was often executed for committing adultery. Should the husband fail to do this, her relatives would often carry it out to save the name of the family. Such executions are described as having been barbarous beyond belief. Later, the woman's nose was cut off; several women now living bear these marks of shame.^[19]

If the husband was a head man, he used his own judgment as to the woman's guilt and it is believed that the penalty was often due more to his unreasonable jealousy than to real knowledge of his wife's guilt. Yet, in any event, the disgrace and shame for the relatives of both husband and wife was so great that extreme penalties for mere suspicion were considered justifiable, if the interested parties were of some importance in social life. Another form of punishment was for the husband to call on the members of his society to deal with the woman, whom they debauched in the most shocking manner and turned out of doors to become a prostitute. Not many years ago, a young man called in all his friends, and delivered his faithless wife to them for such treatment.

The lending of wives was looked upon as a disgrace, or at least as irregular. A distinction should be made, however, between the favorite wife and other wives. These others were often captured women from other tribes, violated by a war party before becoming members of a household. Such were often loaned by their masters

without exciting public dissent. It may have been such women that came to the notice of Henry and excited his extreme contempt.^[20]

[16] Grinnell, 211-216; see also McClintock, 185.

[17] Grinnell, 217.

[18] “There is no particular marriage ceremony among the Blackfeet; the man pays for the wife, and takes her to him; the purchase-price is announced to the father of the girl by a friend or some other man. If he accepts it, the girl is given up, and the marriage is concluded. If the wife behaves ill, or if her husband is tired of her, he sends her home without any ceremony, which does not give occasion to any dispute. She takes her property and retires: the children remain the property of the husband.” Maximilian, Vol. 23, 110.

[19] See Maximilian, Vol. 23, 110.

[20] Henry and Thompson, 526; also Maximilian, Vol. 23, 109.

PLURALITY OF WIVES.

There were no restrictions as to the number of women taken to wife, but no woman could have more than one husband. Economic conditions, however, were unfavorable to a household of many wives, so that many men kept but a single wife and very few indeed ventured to support as many as five. On the other hand, a man of importance was expected to have two or more wives, suggesting wealth and resourcefulness. Plural wives speak of themselves as *niskas* (married to the same man) or, if of considerable difference in age, as elder and younger sisters. In the normal order of events, the first wife is the real, or head wife (she who sits beside him). A man may depose the head wife and confer the right upon another; but such was regarded as unusual, except where the provocation was great. When he went upon a journey, the head wife alone usually accompanied him. In the transfer of medicines, she took the woman's part and afterwards cared for the bundle. It seems that in this function, at least, she was secure from the whims of her husband. Again, there is the belief that the marriage obligations demanded more of her; the other wives, especially if young, were generally assumed to have lovers among the young men even though such was formally forbidden.

It is said, that sometimes the intimate friends of a young man about to marry would ask for the loan of his

wife after marrying, but that in such cases the wife rarely yielded to his requests as she was always upheld in an appeal to his or her relatives. In the absence of other data, it is not safe to consider this a survival of former practices. However, it should be considered a possible phase of the distant-wife relations.

POTENTIAL WIVES.

The sisters of a wife are spoken of as “distant-wives” and may be, in a way, potential wives, though it is not clear that there was any obligation involved when plural marriages were permitted. If a man proved to be a good husband, it is said, he might be given the “distant-wives” in turn, but there was no compulsion. The marriage of sisters was justified on practical grounds, they being more likely to live together in harmony. If there was a twin brother, the distant-wife relationship applied to him also; if not an actual twin but an inseparable companion (nitâks ok kowõmmaul) the same term would apply, though in these cases to a less degree.

There is, however, a curious social custom still in force by which a man and his distant-wives are expected, on meeting, to engage in bold and obscene jests concerning sexual matters. This is often carried to a degree beyond belief. Thus, there is not only the same freedom here as between man and wife, but the

conventional necessity for license. As practically all other relatives by marriage are forbidden the least reference to such subjects, the force of the exception is greatly magnified. For example, a man will not even relate the obscene tales of the Old Man and other tales containing such reference in the presence of his brothers-in-law nor before their immediate relatives. If we add to this an equal prohibition against the presence of his sisters and female cousins, we have marked out the limits of this taboo. Thus, it appears that with respect to this taboo, the distant-wives are placed in an exaggerated sense in the category of real wives. Other familiarities of a man with his distant-wives are strictly improper.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW TABOO.

The preceding may be a phase of the well-known mother-in-law taboo. Among the Blackfoot, still, a man should not speak to his mother-in-law, or even look at her. The taboo is equally binding upon her. If one is discovered about to enter the tipi where the other is present, someone gives warning in time to avoid the breach. Should the son-in-law enter, he must make her a present to mitigate her shame; should the mother-in-law offend, she must also make a small return. However, as usual with such taboos, there are ways of adjusting this restriction when necessary. If the son-in-law is ill, she

may, in case of need, care for him and speak to him; upon his recovery the taboo is considered as permanently removed. Each may call on the other when in great danger, after which they need not be ashamed to meet. Sometimes when a man went out to war or was missing, his mother-in-law would register a vow that if he returned alive, she would shake hands with him and give him a horse and feel no more shame at meeting. The son-in-law may remove the taboo by presenting a few captured guns or horses. Some informants claim that four such presentations were necessary, after which his mother-in-law would take him by the hand and thus remove the taboo. She may receive support from her son-in-law but, even with the taboo removed, must not live in the same tipi with him, a small one being set up outside. It is observable that the presents for removing the taboo bear some analogy to those made the father-in-law during the first months of married life and may be genetically related to that practice. ^[21]

The counterpart of this taboo does not prevail, since a man need not avoid his daughter-in-law, his association with her being governed by the conventions applying to his own daughters. Yet, it is not looked upon as quite right for a man to spend too much time at the home of his son. On the other hand, for a man to live with his father-in-law, or spend a great deal of his time there, excites ridicule.

Among the Mandan, we are told, “the mother-in-law never speaks to her son-in-law; but if he comes home, and brings her the scalp of a slain enemy, and his gun, she is at liberty, from that moment, to converse with him.”—Maximilian, Vol. 23, 283. Among the Assiniboine the father-in-law taboo may be so removed.—Lowie, (a), 41. For the Cree we may add:—“Amongst our visitors was the son-in-law of the chief; and, according to Indian custom, he took his seat with his back towards his father and mother-in-law, never addressing them but through the medium of a third party, and they preserving the same etiquette towards him. This rule is not broken through until the son-in-law proves himself worthy of personally speaking to him, by having killed an enemy with white hairs; they then become entitled to wear a dress trimmed with human hair, taken from the scalps of their foes.” Kane, 393.

The chief grounds for divorce from the man's point of view, are laziness and adultery. For these or any other causes he may turn his wife out of doors. The woman then returns to her relatives where she is cared for and protected until another marriage can be arranged. The husband usually demands a return for the property he gave for her at marriage; he is sure to do this if she marries again. From the woman's point of view, adultery does not justify divorce, but neglect and cruelty may result in abandonment. She flees to her relatives where she is safe from attack. The husband's family then opens negotiations with her relatives and an attempt at adjustment is made. The woman's family usually agrees to another trial, but may finally decide to find her another husband. Then her husband demands a settlement and is entitled to equivalent return for what he gave at marriage. Thus, formal divorce is really a restitution of the husband's marriage gifts, or a refund of the purchase price.

In general, divorce seems not to have been common as it was looked upon as disgraceful under all circumstances and grievously expensive. The behavior of the husband was softened by his knowing that in case of continued discord his wife's relatives were certain to interfere except she were charged with adultery and even in that event would retaliate if the accusation was manifestly unjust.

When the husband dies, the wife usually returns to her

relatives who again arrange for her marriage.

RELATIONSHIP.

The most important relationships in life are given in the accompanying table where the equivalents in our nomenclature are given for the Piegan terms: first, if the person considered is male, second, if female. In general, it appears that the terms as applied by males to males are more restricted and definite than those of males to females and females to persons of both sexes, though in function the terms are so used as to be equally intelligible. Thus, while a girl uses the term, father, in addressing men married to her mother's sisters, she does not confuse this relation with the real one. On the other hand, it appears that the system as given in the table is ordered on the theory that sisters become the wives of the same man. This is also consistent with the distant-wife relationship previously discussed. Further, the system seems adapted to a gentile band organization in that the relationships of the women are more inclusive on the father's side; this, however, is not entirely consistent.

Relationships.

Significance as

Significance as

Terms	Applied to Males.	Applied to Females.
nĩ'na	my father	my father and husbands of my mother's sisters.
niksö'stak	my mother and her sisters; wives of my elder brothers, brothers of my father and of my mother.	my mother and her sisters; wives of my father's brothers.
nĩ'ssa ^x	my elder brothers and all those of my mother; the elder (to me) sons of my father's and mother's brothers.	my elder brothers and all those of my father and mother; the elder sons of mother's brothers and sisters.
nĩ'nst	my elder sisters and elder daughters of father's and mother's brothers.	my elder sisters and elder daughters of

nĩ'nsta

father's brothers and
sisters.

nĩ'skõn

my younger brothers
and younger brothers
of my father; all my
younger first cousins
by brothers of my
parents.

nĩssĩ'ssa

my younger brothers
and sisters; all of my
younger first cousins.

nicĩnnaua^xs

my father's father,
my mother's father;
also can be used for
father-in-law.

nitau'ka^xs

the mothers of my
father and mother and
my father's sister;
also my mother-in-
law.

all my paternal and

naa' ^x sa		maternal grandparents. Also my father's sisters and their husbands.
naa' ^x s	my father-in-law, mother-in-law; also may be used for grandparents.	
nĩmps	wives of my sons, younger brothers, and younger cousins.	wives of my cousins, of my brothers and of the brothers of my mother.
nĩstõmmo'- wak	husbands of father's and mother's sisters; also my sister's husband.	
nĩtaw'to- jombp		husbands of my sisters.

There is a peculiar artificial relationship among boys that deserves attention. Many of them have a male companion from whom they are almost inseparable. The pairs are usually of the same age and grow up together as

it were; they play together, they go to war together, they aid each other in courtship and in after life call on each other for help and advice. These bonds often last until death.^[22] The terms of relationship for brothers are sometimes used by them and it is not unusual for them to assume the equality of twins. Thus, a twin will speak of his brother's wife as his distant-wife, a term often used in the same way by men holding the relation alluded to above.

Persons of any age or nationality may be adopted into a family. Formerly a man losing a son might adopt a young man from his own or other bands, or even a captive, to fill the vacant place; an old woman might, on her own initiative, do the same thing. Very often the bosom companion of the deceased would be recognized as a son by adoption, but without obliterating his true family ties. In late years, a number of white men have been adopted as a mark of respect and in all cases of this kind, the Blackfoot expect the nominal support of a son to his parents. The ceremony of adoption is not as elaborate and fixed as among the Dakota and some other Siouan tribes, though a form of this ceremonial relation is used in the transfer of medicines.

^[22] Mooney finds something similar among the Cheyenne and makes a vague statement as to its wide distribution.

Mooney, 416. However, it is difficult to eliminate the instinctive from the conventional in a comparative statement of this custom.

NAMES.

Each individual has a name. The name is single in that there is neither family nor band name; though some persons, especially men, possess several names, these are co-ordinate and never used jointly. The right to name the child rests with the father; though he rarely confers it in person unless a man of great importance. He usually calls in a man of distinction who receives presents in return for his services. A woman may be called, but less often than a man, be the child male or female. There is no fixed time for this, but it is not considered right to defer it many weeks after birth. The namer asks to have a sweat house made which he enters, often in company with the father and other men he chances to invite. After the usual sweat house ceremonies, the namer suggests two or three names for consideration by the family. A selection is then made, the father, in any event, having the right of final approval. Prayers are usually offered by the namer. The conferring of the name is regarded as of very great importance since the manner of its doing is believed to influence the fate of the child during the entire span of life. The virtue of the

naming is greatly enhanced, if the officiating person is one of great renown.

The name chosen may have various origins. As a rule, it will be the name of some person long dead, if possible one of great distinction. Thus, the writer was in a way adopted by a Blood head man, who gave him choice of two names, one that of a distinguished warrior, the other of a great medicine man. If a person living is known to bear the preferred name, it may be slightly modified by the change or addition of attributes. Thus, Little Dog may become White Dog, or simply Dog, to distinguish the bearer from another of the same name. In all such cases, there is the feeling that the name itself carries with it some power to promote the well being of him upon whom it is conferred. Again, a father may name the child from deeds of his own, as Two-guns, Takes-the-shield, etc. As a rule, unless he has weighty deeds to his credit, the father will not himself venture to confer a name. As always, there is the feeling that unless the name is of great worth, the fates will be adverse to the named. Sometimes, one may have a dream or hear a voice that gives him power to confer a name; it goes without saying that such is considered highly efficacious.

Mothers usually give the baby a special name according to some characteristic habit or expression. This name is rarely used by others.

Women seldom change their names but men always do. When the youth goes on his first war party his

companions give him a new name. This name often carries with it an element of ridicule and should the youth show reluctance at its proposal it will be changed to Not-want-to-be-called-etc. After the party has returned the family will say to the youth, "Well, I suppose you have a new name: I suppose it is the name of some old grandmother, etc." Then the youth is forced to give his new name which is certain to excite great merriment and teasing. Later, when the youth performs some worthy deed, he will be given a new and more dignified name. This will be his name as a man, though subject to change at any time. Names are sometimes formally changed at the sun dance by the chief-weather-dancer who announces, "Now, if you wish this man to aid you, if you call upon him for help, etc., you must address him as ——. His other name is now left behind at this place." At other times the change of names is less formal and may be at the sole initiative of the person concerned. In practice, it seems that a man never really abandons a name though always spoken of by the last conferred or current name since he will say that he has two, three, or any number, as the case may be, enumerating all those given him during his life. While to ask a man his name is very rude, he himself seems free to speak of it on his own initiative. The custom seems to rest upon ideas of politeness, since not to have heard a man's name even before meeting him is said to reflect upon his good standing among the people.

BANDS.

Each of the three tribes is composed of bands, *kaiyok* ' *kowömmostījaw*, implying not only bonds of friendship but bonds of blood.^[23] These bands have been discussed by Grinnell who considers them true gentes^[24] though he states that in recent times, at least, the adherence to exogamy was not absolute. For our part, we have met with many contradictory statements and observations among the Indians now living, so that we can do no more than offer what seems to be the most consistent view of the data available.

In the first place, while the band is a definite group in the minds of the Indians and every individual knows to what band he belongs, they manifest uncertainty as to how membership is determined and as to its bearing upon marriage restrictions. There is, however, no evidence of a belief in a band ancestor, human or animal; and, hence, no band totem. The name of the band has no relation to a founder but is supposed to designate, in a way, some peculiarity common to the groups as a whole. Thus, the names are in theory and kind the same as tribe names—Blood, Piegan, etc.—originating normally after the manner of object names in general and apparently not in conformity to some system or belief concerning descent or relationship.

At marriage, the wife goes to her husband and is considered as belonging to his band. The general feeling

seems to be that the children belong to the band of their father. Should the father die, the mother and children will go to their relatives best able and willing to care for them, but the children will always be called after their father's band. Should the mother's relatives in her own band be few and not as able to care for the children as the father's people, they remain in the father's band. These relatives may live in the same band, but in any event, the mother takes the dependent children with her. Should she marry in another band, as is frequent, her children may reside with her in their step-father's band. There is no rule governing cases of this sort and it is said that the children usually go to the band in which they have the strongest ties. Yet, they are seldom really lost to the sight of the father's band and are often reminded by them that they properly belong to their band. Thus, it seems that the bands are in part, at least, gentes. Yet a man may change his band even in middle life.^[25]

For a man to join the band of his wife at marriage is not unusual. The reasons for such changes are usually selfish, in that greater material and social advantages are offered, but we have no suggestion of such transfers being made with the idea of recruiting a depleted band. A man who changes his band may become a head man or even a chief without hindrance, as in the case of a well-known Piegan chief now living. Thus, it appears that there is no absolute rule of descent in band membership and that what bonds exist are rather those of real blood

relationship than of an artificial system. Further, it appears that continuous residence or association with a band is practically equivalent to membership therein. The individual seems free to select his band.

To marry within the band is not good form, but not criminal. Thus, when a proposal for marriage has been made, the relatives of the girl get together and have a talk, their first and chief concern being the question of blood relationship. Naturally, the band affiliations of the contracting parties cannot be taken as a criterion since both may have very near relatives in several bands and cousins of the first degree are ineligible. Should the contracting parties belong to the same band but be otherwise eligible, the marriage would be confirmed, though with some reluctance, because there is always a suspicion that some close blood relationship may have been overlooked. Thus, while this attitude is not quite consistent, it implies that the fundamental bar to marriage is relation by blood, or true descent, and that common membership in a band is socially undesirable rather than prohibitive. If we may now add our own interpretation, we should say that the close companionship of the members of the band leads to the feeling that all children are in a sense the children of all the adults and that all the children are brothers and sisters and to a natural repugnance to intermarriage. Further, since most of the men in a band are in theory, of common paternal descent, even the informal adoption of a stranger would tend to

confer upon him the same inheritance which as time dulled the memory would become more and more of a reality. In any event, the attitude of the Blackfoot themselves seems to imply that the band system came into existence after the present marriage customs and adapted itself to them rather than they to it.

A woman is called *nĩmps* by all members of her husband's band, not his actual relatives. She may speak of all male members of the band older than herself as grandfather while the younger males may in turn speak of her as mother. Sometimes men of the same age as her husband, speak of her as "distant-wife." While this may be consistent with a theory of gentile band organization in opposition to other data secured by us, our opinion is that it is at least equally probable that these terms were originally applied as marks of respect and circumstantial association, and consequently of little value as indicating the genesis of the band relations.

We must not permit the question of exogamy to conceal the important political and social functions of the band system. As one informant says, "the members always hang together at all times." In another place, we have noted how the responsibility for the acts of individuals is charged to the band as a whole and how all are bound to contribute to the payment of penalties and even risk life and limb in defense of a member guilty of murder. In such, we shall doubtless find the true function of the Blackfoot band. The confusion as to exogamy

seems to arise from the fact that blood ties tend to hold the children to the band of the father.

The tendency is for each band to live apart. When a band becomes very weak in numbers or able-bodied men, it takes up its residence beside another band or scatters out among relatives in various bands, but this is from necessity rather than choice. At present, the Blackfoot reserves are dotted here and there by small clusters of cabins, the permanent or at least the winter homes of the respective bands. By tradition, this was always the custom, though tipis were used instead of cabins. When two or more bands choose to occupy immediate parts of the same valley, their camps are segregated and, if possible, separated by a brook, a point of highland, or other natural barrier. The scattering of bands during the winter was an economic necessity, a practice accentuated among the Thick-wood Cree and other similar tribes. Something was lost in defensive powers but this was doubtless fully offset by greater immunity from starvation. In summer, the bands tended to collect and move about, both for trade and for the hunt. From what information we could secure, this seemed to be a natural congregation under the leadership of some popular man, usually a head man in his band. While the tendency was for the bands as a whole to join such leaders, it often happened that part of a band cast its lot with one group and part with another; however, such unions were usually temporary, the whole band being ultimately re-united

when the tribe finally came together, either to trade at a post or to perform a ceremony.

Grinnell gives a list of the bands which he implies are to be taken as existing about 1860 and this agrees quite well with the information we secured. From the foregoing, it is natural to expect changes at any time. Since the names seem particularistic in their significance, we give only Mr. Duvall's translations. For the Blood and North Blackfoot, our list is less complete.^[26]

Piegan Bands.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Solid-Topknots | 12. Short-necks |
| 2. They-don't-laugh | 13. Many-medicines |
| 3. Worm-people | 14. Small-robcs |
| 4. Blood-people | 15. Red-round-robcs |
| 5. Black-patched-moccasins | 16. Buffalo-dung |
| 6. Black-doors | 17. Small-brittle-fat |
| 7. Fat-roasters | 18. Undried-meat-in-parfleche |
| 8. Skunks | 19. Lone-fighters |
| 9. Sharp-whiskers | 20. No-parfleche |
| 10. Lone-eaters | 21. Seldom-lonesome |
| 11. White-breasts | 22. Early-finished-eating |

Blood Bands.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Fish-eaters | 5. Many-children |
| 2. Black-elks | 6. Many-lodge-poles |
| 3. Lone-fighters | 7. Short-bows |
| 4. Hair-shirts | |

North Blackfoot Bands.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. Many-medicines | 4. Biters |
| 2. Black-elks | 5. Skunks |
| 3. Liars | 6. Bad-guns |

These lists are doubtless far from being complete. Even among the Indians themselves confusion seems to exist as to some names since a band may be known by two or more names. Under these conditions we deemed the preceding data sufficient to our purpose. Mr. Grinnell explains the existence of bands of the same name among the various divisions as due to members of the bands leaving their own tribe to live with another. As we have no data on this point it must pass, though we see no reason why some of the band names may not be older than the tribal divisions. On the other hand, some of the translated names for Gros Ventre bands as stated by Kroeber are identical in meaning with some of those found among the several tribal divisions of the Blackfoot. Again, we are not ready to accept unconditionally the opinion of Grinnell that the disparity between band ties and blood ties is due to the gradual disintegration of

tribal life, having previously stated our reasons for assuming the system of blood relationship the older form and pointed out that the band is rather political than otherwise.

[23] As to the origin of the term band, used so generally by the older writers and traders of this area, we have a suggestion from Keating: “The term *band*, as applied to a herd of buffalo, has almost become technical, being the only one in use in the west. It is derived from the French term *bande*.” Keating, 379. We may venture that the use of this term for a head man and his following among the Indians of this same area was suggested by the analogy between the two kinds of groups, these old naïve observers not being blinded by sociological preconceptions.

[24] Grinnell, 223-224.

[25] On this point, the following statement of a Piegan informant may be worthy of note: A man may go into another band and live there if he choose, nothing much being said about it.

Sometimes a man may not like the chief of his own band and so go to another. There is neither announcement nor formal adoption, he simply goes there to live. For a time, it may be thrown out to him that he belongs elsewhere but after a while he is always spoken of as a member. When a band begins, it may be a group of two or three brothers, fathers, and grandfather, or a small family band (which means the same thing); later, friends or admirers of the head man in this family may join them until the band becomes very large. Bands may split in dissention, one part joining another or forming a new one. A new group is soon given a name by other people according to some habit or peculiarity. They do not name themselves.

[26] For another list of Blood bands, see Maclean, (c), 255. For a Piegan list, see Uhlenbeck, (a).

As among many tribes, there was a definite order of camping when the circle of tipis was formed. While Mooney may be correct in his claim that the circle of the Cheyenne is their fundamental social organization, it cannot be said that the circle of the Blackfoot holds a very close objective relation to their organization. In the first place, each division (Blackfoot, Blood and Piegan) had its own circle and there are no traditions that they were ever combined. When a circle is formed, all visitors from other divisions must, like those from strange tribes, camp outside and apart. Further, there is a firm belief among the Piegan that the circle was never formed except for the sun dance and certain related ceremonies connected with the beaver medicine. It seems likely that if the circle were fundamental and not of recent origin, there would be traces of a parent circle and vestiges of rules governing its formation. Further, as among the Cheyenne, there is no great unanimity of opinion as to the order of the various bands in the circle but at the sun dance the leading men decide arbitrarily any doubt that may exist as to the place of a particular band. The further discussion of this point may be deferred until we take up the sun dance and its problems.

The opening in the circle is to the east and the order of bands is enumerated from the south side of the opening, as in the characteristic ceremonial order of movement. The present order for the Piegan is as given in the list.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION AND CONTROL.

In a way, the band may be considered the social and political unit. There is, in a general sense, a band chief, but we have failed to find good grounds for assuming that he has any formal right to a title or an office. He is one of an indefinite number of men designated as head men. These head men may be considered as the social aristocracy, holding their place in society in the same indefinite and uncertain manner as the social leaders of our own communities. Thus, we hear that no Blackfoot can aspire to be looked upon as a head man unless he is able to entertain well, often invite others to his board, and make a practice of relieving the wants of his less fortunate band members. Such practices are sure to strain the aspirant's resources and many sink under it; but he who can meet all such demands soon acquires a place in the social life of the band that is often proof against the ill fortunes of later years. This phase of their social life is very much alive, having survived not only the changes in economic conditions brought about by the reservation system but the direct opposition of its officers. This story is oft repeated: a young man takes to stock raising, accumulates cattle and horses, gradually taking into nominal employ all his less able relatives who thus come to depend upon him. Presently, he wakes up to the situation and entertains an ambition to become the leading head man of his band, or even of all bands. Then begins a

campaign. He makes feasts, gives presents, buys medicines, and supports ceremonies; thus making his home the center of social and ceremonial activities, the leadership of which he assumes. His rivals are stirred to activity also and the contest goes on apace. From observation, we believe that bankruptcy is the usual result; but, unless this comes at the very beginning of the effort, the aspirant acquires enough prestige to give him some claim to being a head man for the rest of his days even though he becomes a hanger-on at the door of a younger aspirant.

Thus, the head men are those who are or have been social leaders. Naturally, individual worth counts in such contests and he who is born to lead will both in matters great and small. In former times, these rivalries often led to assassination and other dark deeds.

Before the reservation system came in, deeds of the warpath were also essential to the production of a head man, for in them was the place to demonstrate the power to lead. Great deeds in social and ceremonial life would alone elevate one to the status of a head man, though as a rule the warpath was the line of least resistance.

These head men of uncertain tenure come to regard one or two of their number as leaders, or chiefs. Such chiefs rarely venture to act without the advice of some head men, as to stand alone would be next to fatal. In tribal assemblies, the head men of the bands usually look to one of these as spokesman, and speak of him as their

chief.

While the tenure and identity of a head man is thus somewhat vague, his functions are rather definite. He is the guardian and defender of the social order in its broadest sense. Of this, he is fully conscious; as, for example, no man of importance will accept an invitation to visit for a time in a distant band or tribe without calling a consultation. Should some head men of his band indicate disapproval, the invitations will be declined. The theory is that the welfare of his band is endangered by his absence. Above all, the head men are expected to preserve the peace. Should a dispute arise in which members of their band are concerned, one or more of them are expected to step in as arbitrators or even as police officials if the occasion demand. When it is suspicioned that a man contemplates a crime or the taking of personal vengeance some head men go to his tipi and talk with him, endeavoring to calm him, giving much kind advice as to the proper course for the good of all concerned. If he has been wronged, they often plead for mercy toward his enemy. Again, the head men may be appealed to for redress against a fellow member of the band. In the adjustment of such cases the head men proceed by tact, persuasion, and extreme deliberation. They restrain the young men, as much as possible, after the same method. In all such functions, they are expected to succeed without resort to violence.

For mild persistent misconduct, a method of formal

ridicule is sometimes practised. When the offender has failed to take hints and suggestions, the head men may take formal notice and decide to resort to discipline. Some evening when all are in their tipis, a head man will call out to a neighbor asking if he has observed the conduct of Mr. A. This starts a general conversation between the many tipis, in which all the grotesque and hideous features of Mr. A's acts are held up to general ridicule amid shrieks of laughter, the grilling continuing until far into the night. The mortification of the victim is extreme and usually drives him into temporary exile or, as formerly, upon the warpath to do desperate deeds.

When there is trouble between members of different bands, the head men of each endeavor to bring about a settlement. Thus, if one of the contending party is killed, the band of the deceased sends notice to the murderer's band that a payment must be made. In the meantime, the murderer may have called upon a head man of his own band to explain the deed. The head men then discuss the matter and advise that horses and other property be sent over to the injured band at once. A crier goes about with the order and members of the band contribute.^[27] This offer may be refused by the injured band and a demand made for the culprit's life. No matter how revolting the offence, the band is reluctant to give up the accused without a fight. If no presents are sent in a reasonable time, the injured band assembles in force and marches out. A head man meets them for a conference, but a fight

is likely. After a conflict of this kind, the band killing the greatest number moves to a distant part of the country and when the camp circle is formed keeps in sight but far out to one side. This separation may continue for a year or more. In all such disputes between bands, the head men of other bands may step in to preserve the peace; but, according to report, they seldom accomplish anything.

Taking the Piegan, Blood, and Blackfoot as tribes, we may say that there was a head chief for each. His office was more definite than that of a band chief, though he was not formally elected. All the head men of the various tribes came by degrees to unanimity as to who would succeed the living chief, though the matter was rarely discussed in formal council. The main function of the tribal chief was to call councils, he having some discretion as to who should be invited. Some writers claim the Blackfoot appointed two chiefs, one for peace and one for war; but we could find no evidence for this, except that some band chiefs came to have special reputations for ability as war leaders and were likely to be called upon in time of need. They were not, however, regarded as head chiefs. While the office of head chief was not hereditary, there was a natural desire among the chief's band to retain the office; thus it is said that among the Piegan most of them have been members of the Fat-roasters.

Everything of importance was settled in council.

While each band was represented there was no fixed membership; yet the head chief usually invited those in excess of one member for each band. There seems to have been no formal legislation and no provisions for voting. In former times, the council was rarely convened except in summer. At the end of the fall hunt, the bands separated for the winter to assemble again in the spring at some appointed place. Even in summer they would often camp in two or three bodies, each one under the leadership of some able-bodied band chief, coming together for the sun dance at which time only the whole tribal government was in existence.

The organized men's societies among the Blackfoot were, when in large camps, subject to the orders of the head chief or executive of the council and on such occasions seem to have exercised the functions of the head men of the respective bands. This subject will be taken up under another head, but it is a matter of some interest to note how, when such camps were formed, the head men of the bands were merged into a council for the whole and the men's societies became their executive and police agents under the direction of the head chief. Thus, when there was danger, certain societies were detailed to guard duty, especially at night. As the chief aim of an organized summer camp was to hunt buffalo and the success of a general hunt depended upon successful co-operation, the discipline was devised to that end. The head chief gave out orders for making and breaking camp,

and rules and punishments were announced. Thus, a man found running buffalo or riding about outside without orders might have his clothes torn off, be deprived of his arms, his horse's ears and tail cropped. Should he resist, he might be quirted and his hair cropped. His tipi and personal property might be destroyed. However, these were extreme punishments, it being regarded as best to get along by persuading the would-be wrong-doer to desist. The punishment inflicted by the members of societies were not personally resented, as they were acting entirely within their rights. As to whether the men's societies were police by virtue of their own membership, or whether they were individually called out to form an independent body is not certain, but will be discussed elsewhere.

A long time ago Nathaniel J. Wyeth^[28] set down some interesting theories concerning the economic reasons for the unorganized state of the Shoshone in contrast to the buffalo-hunting horsemen of the Plains. He doubtless sensed a truth in so far as the camp organization of the Plains is considered as a type of government having for its chief function the supervision and conservation of their immediate resources. Perhaps of all cultural phases in this area, the one most often detailed in the older literature is the organization and control of the camp when pursuing buffalo. So far as we have read, the accounts for the different tribes are strikingly identical and agree with the data from the Blackfoot. In most every case, the

horse, the tipi, the camp circle, and the soldier-band police were present, even though the participants, when at home lived in houses and cultivated corn. That the camp circle, or band circle, is a special type of tribal political organization in this area seems obvious. It would be suggestive to know just how some of the tribes having clan organizations adjusted themselves to this scheme when using the circle.^[29]

[27] One informant commented on this paragraph as follows: When the payment is made it is through the head men of the bands concerned. The head man of the band to which the wronged party belongs is given the offerings and he passes on them. When he judges them ample, he takes them to the wronged party and tells him to drop the case now since he has received full damages.

[28] Schoolcraft, 205-228.

[29] We have heard that the Winnebago used a provisional band scheme for the circle, entirely independent of their regular social organization and in conscious imitation of the Dakota. If this proves correct, it will throw some

light on the whole problem of bands and camp circles.

PROPERTY RIGHTS.

When a man dies his property is raided by the relatives. The older sons usually take the bulk but must make some concessions to all concerned. If the children are young, the father's relatives take the property. In any event, nothing goes to the widow. She may, however, retain her own personal property to the extent of that brought with her at marriage. She may claim, though not always with success, the offspring of her own horses. These are horses given her by her relatives and friends. Though not clearly thought out, the feeling seems to be that as the widow returns to her band she is entitled to take only such property as she brought with her at marriage.

At the death of a wife, her personal property is regarded as due her relatives, and may go to her daughters, if grown, otherwise back to her band. Theoretically, at least, the woman owned the tipi, the travois, the horse she rode, her domestic implements and clothing. Even to-day, when the white conception of property tends to dominate, a man seldom speaks when his wife bargains away her own hand-work, bedding, and house furnishings.

Formerly, disputes concerning property were taken to the head men for adjustment: now the settlements of estates go to the authorized Indian court. Property was bequeathed by a verbal will. A man would state before witnesses and his relatives what horses and property were to go to the wife, to the children, etc. At present, written wills are sometimes executed to protect the family. Under the old régime, the relatives sometimes disregarded the wishes of the deceased and left nothing for the widow and children; but, if a woman of good character with many relatives, she was seldom imposed upon.

In the division of meat from a co-operative hunt, the best cuts went to the chief, the medicine men, and the owners of medicine pipes. This is somewhat at variance with the usual democratic way of doing things and bears a striking resemblance to a similar custom among the Western Cree. In an individual hunt anyone approaching a man engaged in butchering was given meat, sometimes even the last piece. However, he was certain of being invited later to eat.

DIVISION OF LABOR.

The women dress the skins, make their own clothes and most of those used by men. They make most of their own utensils: the tipi, the travois, the riding-gear, prepare and cook the food, gather the vegetables and berries, and

carry the wood and water. As the greater part of the baggage, when travelling, is their property, they bear the burden of its transportation. It is a disgrace both to himself and his women, for a man to carry wood or water, to put up a tipi, to use a travois, to cook food when at home and above all to own food or provisions.^[30] While the men usually did the butchering, the meat on arriving at the tipi became the property of the women. A young man may cook food but in seclusion. There is a pretty tale of a young fellow surprised by his sweetheart while cooking meat. He threw the hot meat into the bed and lay upon it. The girl embraced him and fondled him while the meat burned deeply into his body; but he did not wince.

In the tipi, a man seldom rises to get a drink of water but calls on the women to hand it to him. The men often make their own ornaments and sometimes their leggings and coats. The painted designs upon men's robes and upon tipis are made by men; those upon parfleche and bags are by women.

^[30] An informant states that this applies especially to married men: that in some cases a young single man is called upon to get water after dark, or at any time when it is very cold, a woman may call upon a young man to get wood.

BIRTH CUSTOMS.

As the period of pregnancy nears its end the women discard their bracelets and most of their metal ornaments. They dress in old clothes and affect carelessness of person. Should a person look fixedly at one, she will say, "Don't. My child will look like you; you are ugly," etc. As the hour approaches, they retire to an isolated tipi where they are attended by other women, men not being admitted. A medicine woman may be called, who usually administers decoctions for internal use, supposed to facilitate delivery. For bearing down, the patient holds to a pole of the tipi, an attendant grasping her around the waist. When delivered she is laced up with a piece of skin or rawhide as a support. She is then required to walk or creep about in the tipi for a while instead of resting quietly, in the belief that recovery will be hastened thereby. The after-birth is thrown away and not placed in a tree as among the Dakota.

Men should not approach the birthplace for a period as their medicine and war powers would be weakened thereby. The father may enter but at some risk. It is bad luck for men to step upon the clothing of the newly born or touch those of the mother; lameness and other disorders of the feet and limbs will surely follow.

Birth marks are regarded as evidences of re-birth. Boys so marked are believed to be returned warriors bearing honorable scars. Twins are neither regarded with

suspicion nor especially favored. What data we have seem to be against infanticide even in the case of great deformities. Tales emphasizing the enormity of the crime are told of mothers to whom suspicion attributed the death of such unfortunates. The still-born, it is believed, will be born again.

MENSTRUAL CUSTOMS.

There is no special taboo upon a menstruating woman requiring her to live apart but she is not supposed to come near the sick. The belief is that in such a case something would strike the patient "like a bullet and make him worse." Further, at this time, women are supposed to keep away from places where medicines are at work. These restrictions also apply to immediate associations with men and to women lax in virtue.

CARE AND TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

Large families seem not to have been unusual though I have never seen many children with one woman. Some old men now living claim to be fathers of more than twenty children each, though not by a single mother.^[31] The young children, at least, receive considerable attention and some discipline. They are sometimes

punished by a dash of cold water or a forced plunge. In former times, some old men were charged with responsibility for each boy's morning bath in the stream regardless of temperature; hence, children were admonished that these men would get them. Striking a child is not regarded as proper. The favorite boggie is the coyote, or the wolf. Women will say, "Now, there is a coyote around: he will get you." Sometimes they say, "Come on wolf and bite this baby." Such words often compose lullabies, a favorite one being, "Come, old woman, with your meat pounder smash this baby's head." After the use of intoxicants became general, children were threatened with a drunken man.

From the first, children are taught to respect all the taboos of the medicine bundles owned by the family and those of their relations and guests. Girls are taught to be kind and helpful, to be always willing to lend a hand, to be virtuous and later, to respect their marriage vows. Special stress is laid upon virtue as a "fast" girl is a disgrace to all her relatives. All children are expected to retire early and rise early. They must respect the words and acts of the aged and not talk back to elderly people. They are taught to take "joking" gracefully and without show of temper. All "tongue-lashing" is to be taken quietly, without retort. Should a child be struck by his equal, to retaliate in kind is proper. All requests for service or errands made by elders, are to be rendered at once and in silence. The ideal is the child that starts to

perform the service before it is asked; or, if asked, before the last word of the speaker is uttered. Talkativeness is almost a crime in the presence of elders. The ideal is he who sits quietly while the adults talk. If he is teased, he may smile but not speak. Above all, when grown up, he should be self-controlled as well as firm and brave.

Boys were taught to care for the horses and to herd them by day: girls to carry wood and water and to assist with other children and household duties. Before marriage, girls must be proficient in the dressing of skins, the making of garments, and the preparation of food. About the time of puberty, boys are expected to go to war. Singly or in pairs they may get permission to accompany a war party, provided they have shown efficiency in hunting. At such times, they receive new names, as previously stated. While the boy is expected to go to war, his family not only uses persuasion to keep him at home, but often forbids his going. In any event, he gets permission or goes secretly. It is said, that in this way the virtue of both parents and sons is shown.

We failed to find definite evidences of puberty ceremonies aside from the boy's change of name. Certain other small ceremonies may be noted. Often when a child takes its first step or speaks its first word, the parents are adroitly reminded that it is their duty to do something. Then they give out presents or make a feast to which all the relatives contribute. Ear-piercing is also somewhat of a ceremony and may be accompanied by a display of

wealth, except when performed at the sun dance. An old woman is called for this service and, in imitation of a warrior counting coup, calls out just before piercing an ear, "I have made a tipi, worked a robe, etc., with these hands."

[\[31\]](#) "These Indians often have many children, who generally run and play about quite naked, and swim in the river like ducks. The boys go naked till they are thirteen or fourteen years old, but the girls have a leather dress at an early age." Maximilian, Vol. 23, 110.

DEATH AND MOURNING.

When one is taken ill the family sends for a medicine man, promising him a horse. If the family is of some importance they may call in a number of such men, to each of whom a horse is promised. They sit around the tipi and work their magic powers in turn while their women assist with the songs. Food and other comforts must be provided for them and their enthusiasm stimulated by gifts of additional horses. A long acute illness will deprive the family of its accumulated

property. Often a man will tell you that he is very poor now since he or some of his relatives have been ill for a time. Medicine men usually permit the family to keep the gift horses until needed and often transfer, or sell, their claims to a third party. Should the patient die, they leave at once, often taking with them all the loose property of the family.

If a person dies in a house it is abandoned, or afterwards torn down and erected elsewhere, as the Blackfoot believe the ghost of the deceased haunts the spot. Should a young child die, the house will be abandoned for a time only. In former times, the tipi was abandoned or used as a burial-tipi.

When all hope for the patient is abandoned, he is painted and dressed in his best costume and, at present, often taken out of the house to a tipi so that it may not be necessary to tear down the building. After death the body is wrapped in a blanket, formerly in a robe, and buried within a few hours.^[32]

In recent years, the Indians have been forced to use coffins and to practise interment. These are placed upon high hills and barely covered with earth and stones. No effort is made to mark the spot and fear keeps all the mourners far from the place. Indeed, it is difficult to persuade any one to go near a known burial site. Some distinguished chiefs rest in houses built on lonely hills. In former times, tree burial was common but now rare, only one example having come under our observation. A

person of some importance was placed in a tipi on some high place. The edges of the tipi cover were often weighted down with stones, circles of which are often met with on elevated positions. Persons usually make requests of their families that certain personal belongings are to be buried with them. Sometimes the request is for a horse; in this event, one will be killed at the burial place. It was quite usual for the tail and mane of a man's favorite horse to be cut at his death.

At death, or its announcement, there is great wailing among the women, who gash their legs and often their arms. Their hair is cut short, a practice often followed by the men. Such hair should be thrown away and not handled or used for any practical purpose. Women may wear a single bead over one ankle for a time. In former times, a man would take to the warpath and go along indifferently, neither seeking enemies nor avoiding them if encountered. At present, they go on a long visit to some distant relative. If a man owning an important medicine bundle loses a dear relative he may be moved to cast it into the fire or otherwise desecrate it because of its failure to prevent death; hence, a person once owning such a bundle takes it away at once. After a time, medicine men approach the mourner with suggestions that it is well to take up the care of his bundle now. When he consents, a sweat house is made and after the ceremony, the mourner is painted and newly dressed. The medicine bundle is then brought into his tipi and he resumes his

former functions. While the preceding is the normal order of events, men have been known to destroy medicine bundles in the face of great opposition.

During the mourning period—an indefinite time—the man may dress in the meanest possible clothes, neglect his hair and person, and live in a small dilapidated tipi. However, there seems to be less formality in this than among the Dakota, and the spectacular abandonment of the mourning state often observed among the Teton is wanting.

In this connection, may be mentioned a practice not unlike “running a-mok,” though apparently without mania. A man realizing that he is the victim of an incurable disease may with more or less deliberation arm himself and attempt the life of all persons he may meet. He will announce that as he must die, he expects to take as many with him as possible. The records of the reservations will show a number of killings brought about in this way. Thus, a man took his wife out to a small hill, shot her and took his stand against his pursuers, whom he held at bay to his last cartridge with which he, though badly wounded, took his own life. An attempt of this kind came under the observation of the writer while camping with a Blood band. A young man suffering from consumption, slightly intoxicated and threatened with arrest for disorderly conduct, announced to his family one night that he expected to kill all of them and as many of the camp as possible. Fortunately, while he attacked his wife with a

knife, his rifle was spirited away and the camp aroused; yet, as he kept out of reach, it was necessary to hold him off with guns until dawn, when he fled in terror of capture alive. Many officials attribute such outbreaks entirely to intoxication, but the evidence we have gathered indicates that there is a conventional side to the practice and a strong probability that it is a variant, and in some respects a survival, of taking to the warpath. Officials and many Indians, respect the convention to such an extent that every effort is made to prevent persons fatally afflicted becoming aware of the fact until near the hour of death. The writer found a similar practice among the Teton, though it seemed that one life is regarded as sufficient, the doomed man usually taking his own life after a short interval.

[\[32\]](#) See Maximilian, Vol. 23, 121.

TALES OF ADVENTURE.

Many Blackfoot men now but a half-century old took part in raids and fights, or went on the warpath, so that now, as of old, deeds of war are important social assets. In former times, only men of great deeds were called upon to perform certain public and ceremonial functions, a custom still in force but naturally less binding. While

there are other social ideals, such as owning important medicines, becoming a head man and possessing wealth, that of being a successful warrior can scarcely be overestimated. The tale of adventure as told by the chief actor is the delight of the fireside and entrances old and young alike when delivered by a skilful narrator. Other tales, those of tradition and hearsay, are seldom offered as it is the custom for one to narrate his own experiences, a rather high ideal of truthfulness being entertained. Of course, there are historical traditions, but they are usually given in brief without much life. Adventures with animals and of the hunt have a place, but are of far less social significance. The following is offered as a type of war narrative and also because it gives a very clear picture of just how an expedition for plunder was conducted. It was narrated by Strangle Wolf, a very old man, and recorded by Mr. Duvall.

It was in the fall of the year. I was living with Lazy Boy, for he was an uncle of mine. Lazy Boy was one of the chiefs of the Blackfoot Indians. In the evening, Lazy Boy said to me, "Strangle Wolf, we will go out for some Assiniboine horses." This meant, of course, to steal them. "I have plenty of extra pairs of moccasins. We shall need them, for we are going to travel on foot."

Somehow, Lazy Boy's father-in-law, Heavy Shield, heard of this, came over that night, and said to him, "Lazy Boy, you must not go this time. You can come over in the morning and take my best horses; I don't want you to go. I have had bad dreams."

Then the old man returned to his lodge. Lazy Boy only

laughed and said to his wife: "Go tell your father that I won't listen to him this time. I must go and get some horses to give him, for the Indians never give him any even when they have many. Another thing is that I have my party ready and will start in the morning."

In the morning, we all started. There were thirty of us in the party. Lazy Boy was the leader. He was noted as a fast walker, and asked me to take the lead with him. Lazy Boy fell to telling me about things he said I ought to learn. He said, "Whenever you are out with a war party, as we are now, and all are on foot, you should keep close to the leader, for if you hang back at the tail end you will always be in a trot to keep up with the others; but if you are in the lead you can keep the gait and not become tired so soon." Another thing he said to me was, "When we get to the Assiniboine camps, you must try to get the horses tied close to the lodges for they are the best horses. The Assiniboine always keep up their best horses at night while they drive the others out to the hills."

We went down the Missouri River. The game was plentiful. Buffalo and elk we saw on our way, so we did not go hungry. Everyone had a little pack of meat on his back and his extra pairs of moccasins. When the sun went down we camped for the night. We made three lodges with sticks and bark. After we had cooked and eaten some meat, the chief said we must sing the wolf songs. These songs are supposed to give us good luck, on a trip, i. e., if we truthfully tell what our sweethearts said when we left them. Each man is supposed to sing a song in which are a few words his sweetheart said to him.

After we got through singing, all went to sleep. In the morning, we all started out again. When the sun was high, we saw something a long way off resembling a person. The Chief said, "It must be an Assiniboine. We must go after him and kill him." So we all ran toward him, and as we approached he seemed to be making signs to us. When we got up to it, we found out that it was a black stump with its black branches sticking out like arms. As we all went on, I heard some of the

men say that it was a bad sign.

We travelled many days and nights, until we came to a lot of timber along the river. It was snowing and very cold. The Chief always kept two men ahead to look over the tops of the high hills, so that we would not run into some of the Assiniboine that might be waiting for us. At this place we all stopped and the chief called out to two men, "You go across the river to see if you can find out just where the Assiniboine camps are. We must be close to them now. We will wait for you here." The two men took off their clothes, tied their leggings and shirts around their heads so as to be able to put them on dry when they got across. The river was wide and deep and the two men swam across. We all waited. When the sun was getting down close to the mountains, Chief Lazy Boy said to one of the men, "Why can we not cross and wait for them there? It is too cold for the two men to swim back again."

So we all got a few poles, tied them together and put a rawhide on top of them. Then we put our clothes and guns on top of that. Then four men tied ropes to the raft and taking the ends of the ropes in their mouths swam across. When we all got across the chief said, "Although we are very cold we must not make a fire, for we are close to the camps. They would see the smoke."

The sun had just gone down when the two scouts came back, saying to the chief, "We saw two men leading their horses down to the river. Their horses were loaded with meat, so the camps cannot be far off." We waited here a long time until it stopped snowing. The moon was shining brightly. A little later on we heard dogs barking. It was nearly morning when the Chief said, "Come, let us go, it is nearly daylight." All went on until the Chief stopped, when we all stopped beside him. He took a stick and, beating time with it on the barrel of his gun, sang his war song, looking up at the moon. Once he used the following words: "Elk woman, try your best." When the Chief had finished, the others in turn sang their war songs. Then we all started again. After we got close

to the camps the Chief told me to go back and tell two of the men to come with him, but for me to stay back with the others. He said, "We shall go through the camp to find out where the best horses are. Then we shall come back to inform you, and then we can all go together." I told the two men and they went off with him, while the rest of us stayed in the brush. About daybreak, we heard a sound as if someone were riding along. Some of the men said it was a loose horse. One of the men went out to look for signs of our party. At the time the chief left us, four men from our party followed him. Thus there were seven. It is believed to be unlucky when there are only seven in a war party. Any way, it proved to be at this time. It was just daylight when we heard three shots, and at the same time the men who went out came back to us saying, "You said that was a loose horse we heard, here is what its rider lost." He carried a gun-sack, ramrod, and a saddle blanket. We all got up and ran up the river as fast as we could. We had not gone far when we heard more shooting, war whoops, and galloping horses. We kept on until we got to a place where there was thick timber. We stayed there all day. We heard no more noise for we were now too far away. When night came we all crossed the river and travelled part of the night until we came to one of our old camping places. Our brush lodges were still there. We had planned to meet there after we got our horses. We saw a light in one of them and when we went in we saw one of the men who was with our Chief. He got up, shook hands with us all, and then began to tell about it. He said, "When we all got near the camps, we met an Assiniboine who ran back into the camp. Then we started back to where we had left you. We had not gone far before we heard three shots. We did not go fast, but when we got to where we had left you we saw that you were gone. Then the chief said that you must have crossed the river. So we began to cross too. We were just about in the middle, when the Assiniboine came upon us, and began to fire. When we got across a number of the enemy were there for their horses could swim faster than we and of course they headed us off. Then we had a fight. There were

only three guns for us to fight with for while we were crossing four of the men lost their guns in the water. Two of our men were killed at the beginning of the fight. Our Chief kept encouraging us saying that we must fight and die bravely for some day our people would hear of our sad end. All this time dirt was flying around us where the bullets struck. The smoke of the guns was like a fog a little above our heads. The Chief was shooting and talking to the Assiniboine, telling them that many of them would fall before the last of us. We kept them away as much as we could, but sometimes they would try to run us down with their horses. After we wounded several of them, they kept at a distance. When the sun was getting close to the mountains, our Chief was killed. Our ammunition was nearly all gone. There was a loose horse near by. I jumped on him and rode away. Then the Assiniboine took after me. When I got to some thick brush, I jumped off the horse and ran into the brush. They took the horse and went back. Then I came on afoot. That is how I come to be here with you now.”

We all lay down to rest for the night and about daybreak started home. Just then the other three men came along. They got away from the Assiniboine after dark. We travelled on for many nights and days until we reached home.

When we got home we stopped on a hill near the camp, but did not sing the song of victory. We gave the sad sign that three warriors had been killed. One of our men stood out alone, took three robes and, while the people in the camp were watching, threw them away one by one. Then the Indians all knew that three of our party had been lost and came running out to meet us.

Of a somewhat different character were the adventures of Many White Horses as narrated a short time before his death:

The Piegan were in camp at Ft. Benton. Rations gave out,

so they broke camp about sundown and pitched again after dark near some brush. I planned to go on a raid against the Flathead for horses. Next morning, a large party joined me and we went on to High Wood where we met and camped with a white man and his Indian wife. I traded my black and red blankets for his white ones. We followed the south bank of the Missouri, the berries were ripe, game was plenty and fat and the journey was pleasant. We followed up the Bear Tooth, or South Fork, where the railroad runs now. When one day's march from the Flathead country, a storm came up, and beat the tall grass down flat. In jest, I said to Calf Necklace, "Let us go on alone. I believe that when we get out the wind will go down." Soon we came to an open country and to a cliff. Looking over we saw a river and a Flathead camp. We returned to tell our party but lost them. We could not trail them as the grass was down. Then we gave the call for having seen an enemy. The party answered and soon joined us. Then we made a medicine smoke and gave prayers for success.

I have a war-bonnet with four songs. When transferred to me, my face was painted and the songs taught. When near the enemy I go through this in the same way. I painted my powder horn and bullet pouch. I carried two awls, mending materials and extra moccasins.

There was no moonlight that night. We walked down to the Flathead camp and found some of them still awake. Nearly all were drunk and had not tied up their horses. One horse, however, was tied to a tipi pole, a striped pinto. My party scattered every one for himself. Some had guns, some bows. The horses were wild so they were run up a hill into brush. The men now worked by twos and threes driving five to ten horses each. After we got into the brush some were caught. I mounted at last. I decided to follow the ridge of the mountain. The way was rough and many of our horses got away. I went in the lead to pick the way. It snowed and made going slow. At last we lost the way and stopped to rest and repair moccasins. Soon the weather cleared and we found the top of the ridge but the snow was very deep. It took us all the next day to reach

the gap at Sun River Pass. The next night we started down to the plains. Two of my men got very tired and sleepy so we stopped to rest them. All lay down, but overslept and awoke at dawn. When I awoke I called out and all jumped up scared. I was angry with myself. Our horses were gone.

Now, it seems that when the Flathead discovered their loss, a party set out on our trail. While we slept they passed near and camped far in advance in a little valley. Our escape was certainly due to my songs and medicines.

We found most of the horses and started on. As I learned afterwards, the Flathead saw us going over a ridge. We watered our horses at Sun River and went on. I went on ahead to look over a ridge. As I came back the party signalled something wrong. They had found the tracks of the Flathead party. As we went on we saw two antelope and stopped for one to pursue them. Then Calf called out, "Flatheads are after us."

They dashed out of a valley and killed one of us before we could mount and soon after, another. Our party began a dash for home. It was funny to see one fellow's leggings slip down to his ankles and get tangled under his horse. My horse was strong so I rode behind whipping the others. As the Flathead were good shots we scattered some. I could hear our pursuers talk but not understand them. After a while, I saw that their horses were very tired: so I directed our course over the tops of the hills. As their horses soon gave out, they dismounted to rest. When out of sight we turned back toward Sun River and hid in the brush. It seemed a very long day. One of our party was wounded and some had lost their clothes. When night came we started again. Some rode double so there would be blankets to cover all. The next day we spent on the Teton; the next near Dupuyer, where we found the old camp fires of our people. Finally we got home.

HERALDRY AND PICTURE WRITING.

The term deed as used by us has the same social significance as coup, a full discussion of which has been given by Grinnell.^[33] Without going into details, it seems that among the Blackfoot, the capture of a weapon was the coup, or deed, rather than the formal striking of the enemy, though such was also taken into account. Our impression is, from what we have heard in the field, that there was no such formal development of the coup practice as among many other tribes. An old man relating his deeds seldom mentions scalps but dwells upon the number of guns, horses, etc. captured; whereas, according to our observation, a Dakota boasts of his wounds, enemies slain and coups. However, heraldry was a prominent feature in Blackfoot life. By this term, we mean those conventions by which deeds are recorded and accredited, with their social privileges and responsibilities. Anyone with such recognized deeds is likely to be called upon to name a child, to perform special services in social functions as well as specific parts of ritualistic ceremonies. In all cases of this kind the warrior comes forward and in a loud voice states what deed or deeds he has performed and immediately renders the required service. For this, he may receive presents unless the occasion is one of special honor. In theory, at least, the formal announcement is a kind of challenge for contradiction by any of the assembly in so far that it implies the eligibility of him who makes it. Women do not ordinarily perform such deeds but often recount the

embroidering of robes, their resistance of temptation, etc., when about to perform some ceremonial function, a truly analogous practice.

As elsewhere, the graphic recording of deeds was chiefly by picture writing, upon robes, back-walls and the outsides of tipis. A few might be indicated upon leggings, but in general, garments were not considered the place for such records. The outside and inside of the tipi were the conventional places. Good examples of this are still to be seen. An unusual tipi was collected by the writer in 1903, bearing several hundred figures, representing sixty-six distinct deeds most of which were performed by seven Piegan then living. The tipi was in reality one of the "painted lodges" to be discussed under another head, but may be considered here merely as a good example of picture writing and heraldry.

fleeing Gros Ventre which in the system counts as a deed; (f) as a man he has two adventures with Crow Indians, taking a gun from one; (g) he, as leader, met five Flathead in a pit and killed them; (h) a Cree took shelter in some cherry brush in a hole, but Big Nose went in for him; (i) not completely shown, but representing a Cree Indian killed while running off Piegan horses; (j) Double Runner, carrying a medicine pipe, took a bow from a Gros Ventre and then killed him; (k) Double Runner took a shield and a horse from a Crow tipi, a dog barked and he was hotly pursued; (m) he killed two Gros Ventre and took two guns; (n) he captured a Gros Ventre woman and a boy; (o) he took four mules. From this sample, it will be noted that a great deal is left for the memory, though a little practice will enable one to determine the character of the exploit suggesting each drawing. Fig. 2 needs less comment as the technical aspect of the work speaks for itself. The large man with a pipe is symbolic of the vision in which this type of tipi had its inception and, hence, belongs in a different category. The drawing was done by a number of individuals; in some cases, by the hero of the exploits, but often by a young man under his immediate direction. This is obvious in the varying degree in execution and conventionality, the range of which is adequately shown in the sketches. When considered as a system of recording deeds, it appears that much is left to the whim of the artist, but that certain general modes of suggesting common types of adventure are recognized

and allowed to control the composition to such an extent that even a stranger may interpret the sketches with confidence. Of course, the function of such writing is to objectify the formal re-counting of deeds, only such performances as are so recognized and carry with them social and ceremonial values being considered worthy of a place in the series.

From the many examples collected, we selected the following more or less conventionalized symbols:



Fig. 2 (50-4485). Selected Figures from a decorated Tipi.

Wounds received or given are indicated by a black

spot with a dash of red for bleeding. Enemies killed, when not fully pictured, are represented by a row of skeleton figures as in Fig. 3a, a form always used in heraldic horse decorations. In the pictured form, death is often indicated by three wounds—in the head, heart and thigh, Fig. 3b. A scalp taken is symbolized by human hair and white weasel skin, except in painting when the symbol is as in Fig. 3c.

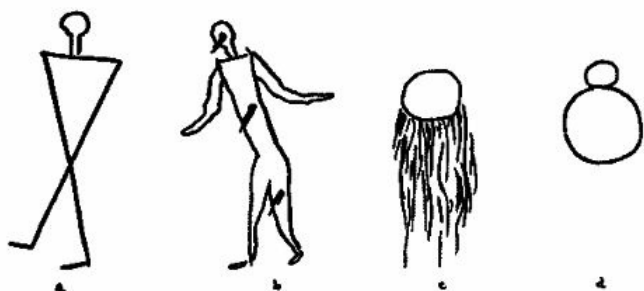


Fig. 3. Symbols used in War Records.

The capture of the enemies' property, or a deed, is indicated by pictures of the objects recognized as worth considering. While naturally, there is difference of opinion, the following may be taken as the approximate list of captures conferring ceremonial rights:—horses, guns, shields, lances, bows and quivers, shot-pouches and powder horns, daggers, war-bonnets, and all medicine objects. The following order or rank, was given by an informant recognized by the Piegan as an authority in heraldry:—gun, lance, bow, the enemy's life, cutting a horse loose from a tipi, leading a war party, acting as a scout, shields, war-bonnets, a medicine pipe, and driving

off loose horses. The most significant point is that while the life of an enemy is fourth, the capture of his gun is first. When a man was seen to fall with a gun, it was not unusual for one or more young men to rush boldly out to snatch the prize. To ride up, jerk a gun from an enemy's hand and get away without injury to either party was the greatest deed possible. While in picturing such deeds realistic forms are used, as the symbol for a shield (Fig. 3d), they are often greatly conventionalized. Blankets, if counted, are shown as rectangles with one or two cross lines for the stripes on most trade blankets. Horses taken in open fight, when not pictured, are represented by track symbols, Fig. 5d and under the sketch of a mule in Fig. 1. The rectangular variant as found among many other tribes is not used as an equivalent.



Fig 4. Methods of recording the capture of Horses.

Stealing a horse tied up in the enemies' camp is a deed of special importance and naturally has a definite symbolism. This case is of some interest here because we find among our collection practically all the steps

between the full pictured form and the bare symbol. Thus, we find drawings showing the adventurer cutting loose horses picketed near the tipis, Fig. 4; again, the cutting represented by a knife and a hand, the pickets alone representing the horses so taken, and finally, a series of crossed lines. The last is the simplest form but may be said to be an alternate with the preceding one, some persons representing the picket stake one way, some the other. The Hidatsa^[35] are reported to use the crossed lines for a coup and the Teton use it as a rescue symbol (a coup saved from the enemy); hence, its substitution in Blackfoot records for the more realistic form of picket stake may have been due to suggestion.

A war party intrenched is indicated by a circle (Fig. 5c); sheltered in a wind brake, by an open circle (Fig. 2). A camp may be represented by a series of tripods, signs for tipis (Fig. 1).

Two functions of the warpath are honored by distinct symbols; that of leader and scout. The symbol for leader is shown in Fig. 5a and is given once for each party led. In like manner, the sign in Fig. 5b indicates having been detailed as a scout. The origin of these cannot be definitely traced, but the second is said to be a diagrammatic representation of the course taken by a scout with reference to the main body. Thus, the curve represents the war party waiting and the zigzag line the course always taken by the scout to conceal their true position. This seems probable, but no rational theory for

the origin of the leader's sign was encountered.

The coup stick, striped like a barber's pole, used by the Cheyenne, seems not to have been known among the Blackfoot except its analogous form in a boy's game. The Dakota stick made by binding together two long rods with spiral decorations and four pendants of feathers with scalp locks was seen in the hands of an old man; he, however, frankly avowed having made it in imitation of those seen by him when visiting the Assiniboine.

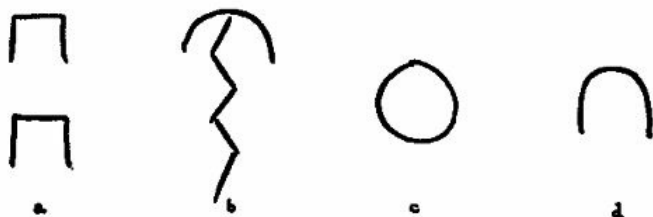


Fig. 5. Highly conventionalized symbols.

In a general way, it appears that the Blackfoot show some individuality in the conventions of picture writing. Some data we collected from the Gros Ventre show many of the same forms, however, and in the absence of good data from the Crow and other neighboring tribes, it may be that this individuality is more apparent than real. On the other hand, the Blackfoot make little use of such writing for the presentation of religious experiences as is the case among many Central Algonkin tribes and to a much less degree among the Dakota. While the Dakota have developed some heraldic symbols as conventional as those just described by us, they have, in addition, a

very complex and highly developed feather symbolism, a feature almost lacking among the Blackfoot. Yet, the latter showed a tendency to use the white weasel skins for the same purpose. More than this can scarcely be said until additional data are at hand.

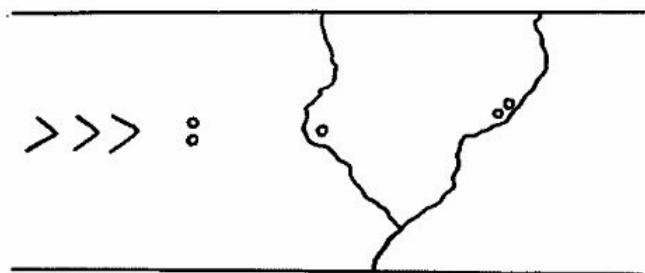


Fig. 6. A sand Map showing the Course of a War Party.

In this connection, it may be well to note that by a system of signs, a war party left definite information for the guidance of stragglers or other parties of their tribe on similar errands. On leaving a camp site, a willow bent V-like was stuck in the ground, the apex in the direction taken; if the distance to the next camping place was small, the angle was quite acute, etc. Another sign, used chiefly on the trail, was the mark of a travois, or two converging lines, the apex toward the direction taken. Indeed, the twig is spoken of as a travois sign. Explicit directions were often left for a second party by a kind of map marked in the sand or in bare earth. A sketch by the writer from such a map made at his request is shown in Fig. 6. Two branches of a river are represented easily recognized by one having a knowledge of the country.

The travois marks indicate the direction of movement. Pebbles painted black or pieces of charcoal mark the proposed camping places, the number in each case indicating the length of stop. Thus, the sketch would imply that the next camp would be one day's journey from the nearest river; whence, after a stay of two nights, they camped one night on the nearest fork and two nights on the second. To indicate that they were joined by a second party, the travois signs are used to denote two paths converging on a camp site. A sketch giving more details is shown in Fig. 7. By the travois signs leading to *a* we know that two parties of Blackfoot combined and camped two nights, thence moved to a second camp, *b*. While here, they met and fought enemies, indicated by two sticks painted red. Between the two sticks are two bones (shoulder blades) upon which the result of the engagement is pictured. Then the party moved on to *d* where this sketch was left.

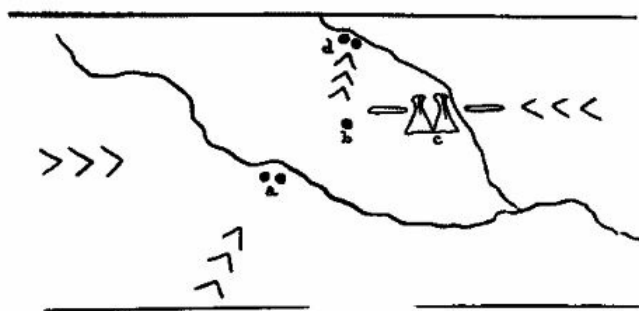


Fig. 7. Map recording a Battle.

In cases where the stops were by day and travel by

night, yellow pebbles were used instead of black. Mountains were indicated by small heaps of pebbles. Marks were often made on stones and other objects along the trail. In case a peaceful meeting occurred, instead of the red painted sticks, black ones were chewed on one end and tobacco tied on the other. The practical value of all these marks is obvious. When a war party was over due, search was made by following the trail whence from the signs its career could be determined, even to the identity of the wounded or killed, etc.

We did not gather much information as to signalling codes, though the system seems to have been highly developed. When a war party returned the members paused for a time upon a hill in sight of the camp until attention to them was noted.^[36] Then, if a victory was won at small cost they sang songs for a while and came to camp slowly. If the leader or an important man was killed, a robe was held up on a stick and then dropped. If ordinary men were killed, one of the party stepped aside and threw down a robe, once for each. For a wounded leader, a robe was held aloft but not dropped. They then entered the camp silently while the women began wailing and performed the usual acts of mourning.

^[33] Grinnell, 248. Also American Anthropologist, Vol. 12, 296.

^[34] For a complete series for one

individual with illustration, see
Maclean, (a), 119.

[35] Hoffman, 73; Maximilian, Vol. 23, 287.

[36] See Maximilian, Vol. 23, 118.

RECKONING TIME.

As far as our information goes, the time of day was noted by the sun and the night by the position of Ursa major, the Seven Stars. The year was designated by the winter, each winter constituting a new year. Two divisions or seasons were recognized; spring and autumn were regarded as originating with the whites. Each season was considered as composed of moons; the period during which the moon was invisible taken as the beginning of another moon. We found little consistency in the nomenclature of moons, our information implying that they were considered more by numerals than by names. The tendency was to count the moons from about October, the beginning of winter or the new year. Variation seems to have been due to the fact that calendar counts were kept by a few individuals, usually medicine men, who modified the system according to their own theories. One man who kept a calendar gave the following list:—

Winter Moons.

Summer Moons.

1. Beginning winter moon	Beginning summer's moon
2. Wind moon	Frog moon
3. Cold moon	Thunder moon
4. Two-big-Sunday moon	Big-Sunday moon
5. Changeable moon	Berry moon
6. Uncertain moon	Chokecherry moon
7. Geese moon	

The references to Sunday are to the Christmas and July holidays of our own calendar. The year is generally regarded as comprising fourteen moons equally divided among the two seasons. As calendars were usually in the keeping of men owning beaver bundles and the number seven was employed in enumerating parts of their rituals, this division of the year into moons may be a matter of convention rather than observation. They claim to have reckoned twenty-six days to a moon. Some, however, assert that thirty days were counted; but in this case the year could not have comprised fourteen moons.

From one man we secured a set of 179 sticks used for keeping track of time. Red sticks were used for years. Another used a bag with two parts; one faced with red, the other with blue. Fourteen pebbles were used to mark the moons; each time the moon became invisible he moved a pebble to the other side. Calendars, or winter counts, were kept by memory rather than by sticks, or paintings. We get the impression, however, that there was less interest in such records than among the Dakota and

Kiowa. The following is Elk-horn's winter count, beginning about 1845:—

1. Camped down at Mouth River; Gambles killed; sun dance at Crow Garden (a place).

2. Camped near Fort Benton; moved to Yellowstone country; some Crow escaped by letting themselves down from a rock with a rope; Yellow River, the place of the sun dance; camped at a place where Bad-tail killed a Sioux.

3. Crossed Missouri River to camp; traded at Ft. Benton and spent most of the winter on the Marias; a fight with the Snake; the ice broke up in the winter (unusual); sun dance near this place; some Piegan killed by enemies.

4. On the Marias; man named Goose killed; in autumn hunted south of Ft. Benton; traded at Ft. Benton.

5. Wintered on the Teton; spring, moved down the Missouri; killed a man named High-ridge; made two sun dances; went to Bear Paw Mountains; went toward Crow country; John Monroe came up to tell Piegan that soldiers were near to issue ammunition and some Piegan did not go because they were skeptical; six Flathead came there for ammunition, some Nez Perce, two North Blackfoot, a few Blood, four North Piegan and some Gros Ventre, but no Sarcee.

6. Camped on Two Medicine River.

7. Missouri River; deep snow winter; sun dance at Yellow River.

8. Slippery winter; some Piegan killed by the Snake.

9. Camped on Cut Bank; went toward Missouri; Some-bull killed by fall from a horse (chief of the tribe); traded at Sun River.

10. Sweet Grass Hills; spent spring on the Marias; in summer went south; Big-snakes (chief) killed; ammunition issued.

11. South of the Missouri; Blood fought among themselves; first time steamboats came to Ft. Teton.

12. Camped at Bad Waters; Sioux after Piegan; this camp north of the Missouri; killed 7 Cree; a fight with the Crow and lost two chiefs, Good-raven and Mad-plume.

13. On the Marias; first fight with Gros Ventre; summer camp on the northeast side of Sweet Grass Hills (Canada).

14. A few cases of smallpox; fight with the Kootenai in which many were killed; during the summer Mountain-chief was attacked by Sioux; a Piegan was killed by a number of Gros Ventre.

15. Captured a double barrel shot gun; sun dance at High Ridge.

16. Flies-low was killed.

17. Many Piegan visited the Southern Gros Ventre (?); ammunition issued; summer camp above Sweet Grass Hills; a fight with the Flathead; also with the Gros Ventre; returned to Two Medicine River.

18. Eagle-chief killed; in summer killed Eagle-horse.

19. Fought with the Crow, Gros Ventre, and Flathead.

20. Straggling-wolf killed near camp; Piegan killed

Crow in revenge.

21. Assiniboine (name of a chief) killed.
22. Big-prairies' father killed by his own people.
23. Body-sticking-out killed by his own people.
24. Three-eagles killed by his own people.
25. Many-horses (the chief) died.
26. Many buffalo and many trading posts on the Marias.
27. Man tried to kill his wife, she (Sarcee woman) stabbed him, he killed her; in summer, Home-chief died.
28. Chief Old-woman-child dies; an open winter.
29. Killed seven Assiniboine.
30. Crossed the Missouri; Sitting-bull killed many Piegan.
31. Camped south of the Missouri.
32. Camped on Two Medicine River; White-dry, chief of Assiniboine, killed by Piegan; after this the Piegan were confined to the reservation.
33. Wolf-eagle shot in the arm by Cree.
34. Many Indians died of sore throat; Chief Birch-bark died.
35. Crow-big-foot visited Piegan; Crow came to steal horses.
36. Eagle-child died.
37. Many cattle died.
38. Stallions issued.
39. Mares issued.
40. Two Indians arrested and died in prison; in

summer cattle were issued.

41. Wolf-coming-over-hill dies.
42. Chief Walking-through-the-beach dies.
43. Crow-big-foot dies.
44. Yellow-medicine dies.
45. Three-bulls dies.
46. Big-nose dies.
47. Four-bear dies.
48. Gets-paint dies.
50. Black-living-over-tail dies.
51. Old-kicking-woman dies.
52. Lance-chief dies.
53. Fat-buffalo-horse dies.
54. Bites killed in a runaway.
55. Running-rabbit dies.
56. White-calf dies.

This calendar is given as a type and not for the value of its contents, though it doubtless has its merits from that point of view. The narrator was somewhat uncertain as to the order of many counts and made frequent use of a set of improvised counting sticks. We asked him why in later years the winter counts were designated chiefly by the deaths of the most prominent men, to which he replied that since his people were confined to the limits of the reservation nothing else happened worth remembering, and further, that the count ended with the death of White-calf because there were now no men living of sufficient worth to be honored with such mention. From the human

point of view we agreed with him in that the book should be closed, for the old ways have all but gone. If we were interested in the historical aspect of this account the dates could doubtless be checked by certain specific references as Nos. 11, 22, 43, and 56.

For completeness, we add the winter count of Big-brave, covering a span of sixty-one years, but not giving full representation to the later years. Since reservation days, there is a general tendency among the older men to fix their counts in units of residence at a given spot; i. e., "for five winters, I lived on Two Medicine, then for eight winters on Cut Bank, etc.":

1. The fall of the year, Gambler went on the warpath and was killed; Piegan spent the winter on the Marias River.

2. In the fall of the year, Big-lake, chief of The-don't-laugh band died; Piegan wintered on the Marias River which was high and flooded their camps. In the summer, they had a sun dance at Sweet Grass Hills; Bobtail-horse was shot and killed; a woman was also killed.

3. Leaves-big-lodge-camp-marks clubbed a Flathead but did not kill him; in the summer, Piegan killed some Sioux on the Marias.

4. Black-tattoo became crazy; in the spring a man named Goose was killed by Sioux; in the summer, Goose's father went to war and killed some Crow; some of the Crow escaped by letting themselves down a high cliff with a rope.

5. Still-smoking was killed; the Piegan stole a sorrel race horse from the Flathead. In the summer some Piegan were on the warpath south of the Missouri River. They came to some white settlers and there saw a Sioux Indian whom Last-bull killed with a club. The Sioux had been visiting with the white men.

6. In the fall, the first treaty was made by the Government at the mouth of Yellow River; there were seven different tribes there. That winter, Mountain-chief spent on Belly River. One of his daughter's clothes caught fire and she was burnt to death. During the summer Mountain-chief became ill with the hiccoughs which lasted some time.

7. This winter was called the slippery winter because there was so much ice. In the summer Mountain-chief and his people went to Canada and killed thirty Sioux.

8. The Piegan camped on Marias, and one by the name of Blood killed a Flathead Indian. Lame-bull, a chief, was killed by falling from his horse in the summer.

9. Mountain-chief spent the winter on Milk River and found an extra large buffalo dung which was about three feet across when measured. Chief Big-snake was killed in the summer.

10. Lazy-boy was killed. In the summer, the Blood camped at Yellow Mountains and fought among themselves; Calf-shirt killed some of his own people.

11. A man named Peace-maker was killed. Eagle-child was killed in the summer; a Blood was shot through

the face with an arrow by a Sioux but did not die.

12. Piegan fought with the Gros Ventre and one, Many-butterfly, was killed. The Piegan killed five Sioux who had a horn spoon.

13. Chief Coward was killed by Crow Indians. In the summer, the Piegan attacked the camps of the Gros Ventre and killed many of them; also, some Piegan were killed while out hunting.

14. The Assiniboine attacked Mountain-chiefs camps on Big River in Canada, at night, but did not kill anyone. The Piegan fought with the Gros Ventre in the summer and a Piegan, whose name was Half-breed, was killed.

15. Piegan had what was called red smallpox; in the summer they attacked the Assiniboine's seventy lodges and running them out captured the lodges.

16. At Fort Benton, the Government gave the Piegan clothes, etc.; the white man who issued the things to them went by the name of Blackhorse-owner. At this place they also made peace with the Gros Ventre. In the summer Little-dog was killed and the Piegan fought with a great number of enemies, with the Crow, Assiniboine, and Gros Ventre who helped one another in fighting the Piegan; but the Piegan overpowered or whipped them all.

17. Bear-chief was killed south of the Missouri and the following summer the Piegan killed Weasel-horse, a chief of the Blood.

18. Mountain-chief camped south of the Missouri and the Piegan killed two Flathead near the Piegan camps;

in the summer the Piegan killed thirty Assiniboiné who were picking gum off the pine trees.

19. Strangle-wolf was killed by the Gros Ventre while out hunting; Chief Crow was killed by Gros Ventre while he was out hunting. He had six women with him.

20. The Piegan had smallpox and the soldiers attacked seventy camps, killing many old men, women, and children. Running-raven was wounded by a Gros Ventre.

21. The Piegan fought with the Cree on Belly River in Canada and killed one hundred of them. In the summer they had a big battle with the Assiniboiné and Big-brave and his horse were wounded.

22. A Piegan, Red-old-man, was killed by the Gros Ventre near Bear Paw Mountain while he was trying to steal some horses from them; Black-eagle, a Piegan, killed an Assiniboiné and his wife, in the summer.

23. Bull-chief and High-wolf died; while they were on the warpath in the summer, White-man's horse and his war party were nearly all killed.

24. Calf-chief killed two Flathead Indians near the Piegan camps while they were about to steal some horses. Black-eagle was killed by the Northern Blackfoot in the summer.

25. The Agent issued hogs' heads to the Piegan as rations; in the summer Big-nose took four Assiniboiné prisoners.

26. There were plenty of buffalo and many

Assiniboiné came to visit the Piegan. In the summer the agent, known as Wood, issued clothing, etc., and the Piegan made peace with the Crow at Sweet Grass Hill.

27. A Piegan killed his wife who was a Sarcee woman; in the summer, Chief Calf-chief died.

28. Open winter, there was no snow all winter; Big-buffalo-rock died during the summer.

29. Weasel-moccasin was killed by the Assiniboiné; had a sun dance; cattle tongues were first used for sun dance; Agency was moved down where it now is.

30. Piegan moved and camped south of Missouri; in the summer the soldiers brought the Piegan back to the Reservation.

31. The Piegan wintered south of the Missouri; Black-cheek was killed by the Flathead. In the summer, the Piegan moved back to the reservation and an Indian was accidentally shot by the Agency doctor during the sun dance.

38. White-dog, an Assiniboiné, was killed by the Piegan; Big-brave and many others lived on Birch Creek seven winters and summers.

39. In the summer Big-brave moved to Blacktail Creek and wintered there.

40. Mares were issued to the people and Little-dog received two buckskin mares.

42. Big-brave moved to White Tail Creek and lived there two winters and summers.

61. Big-brave moved to Blacktail and has been living

there ever since, nineteen winters and summers he has lived there.

Though we failed to find among the Blackfoot such elaborate chronicles as among the Dakota and Kiowa, what did come to hand were obviously of the same type and suggest common origins. Further, we get the impression that in details our material is more like the counts of the Kiowa than the Dakota.

OATHS.

The sun is called upon in the most solemn oaths. Thus, when women get into a dispute one may take the other by the chin and say "Now, we will talk to the sun. If what I say is not true, may I never live to put my foot into another snow," etc. A man may appeal to the earth but more likely it is the sun, as, "The sun hears me," etc. Men usually make oaths over pipes. Thus, when a man tells an improbable story he may be asked if he will smoke upon its truth. This refers to the mode of making formal oaths. Often when laboring with a man to prevent him from taking the life of another, the head-men and relatives induce him to take an oath that he will not do the deed. A medicine man fills a pipe, paints the stem red and addresses the sun as to the purpose of the ceremony about to be performed; the one to take the oath then smokes the pipe which is considered most binding. The

same method is often used in pledging a man to mend his evil ways.

There is another method—something like an ordeal. The point of a knife is held in the ashes at the fire and extended with the charge, “If you say what is true, touch the point of this knife with your finger.” The belief is that one will certainly be killed by a knife or other sharp instrument, if swearing falsely.

ETIQUETTE.

To discuss this subject in detail would be a matter of considerable interest and doubtless of definite comparative value; but it is our intention to note only such points as came readily to notice. Naturally, many points mentioned under previous heads may be considered as bearing upon this topic. On approaching the tipi of a stranger, it is proper for a man to pause some distance away and call out to know if the head of the family is at home. If he is out and there is no adult male to act instead, the visitor is upon such information not expected to enter but may, of course, carry on a conversation with the women on the outside. When one is acquainted, or where the man is known to be within, he enters without ceremony and takes a place to his right of the door. Should the entire side be unoccupied he moves up to a place opposite the host; should it be occupied he

takes the first vacant place. However, a man's status and age may make it incumbent upon those seated to make a place appropriate to his rank.^[37] The fire is the dividing point of the house: hence, to pass between a guest and the fire is very impolite. Should a man of some importance be smoking, one must not pass between him and the fire, he may, however, take the pipe in his hands and pass between it and the smoker. As soon as a male guest enters, the host begins to cut tobacco and fill a pipe, which when lighted is passed to the guest, back to the host etc., until it has burned out. Women as guests usually take places to the left by the wife.

There are a great many observances that partake of taboo rather than etiquette. These will be discussed elsewhere, but it is proper to respect all the restrictions of your host's medicine. The well-informed are expected to know what bundles the host owns and, of course, the observances thereto. Thus, the bear must not be named in a tipi when there are certain bundles, guests seeing these bundles hung up there must act accordingly and designate the bear, if at all, by some descriptive terms. Again many men have individual restrictions of the same sort, all of which are to be respected.

It is a breach to ask a leading question as to one's personal medicine or experiences. One may wear an object until it has attracted general attention and though many are certain that it is a medicine object of interest, they will not ask about it. It may, however, be hinted at

and a desire for information implied, but the approach must end there. On the other hand, the owner may speak freely if he so choose. We found no reason to believe that a man felt any great reluctance to speak of such things at his own initiative or that he felt under special obligation not to do so: it is the blunt asking for information that is offensive.

Food should be set before a guest. A visitor, if from a distance, should receive presents from the host and his relatives. Even now, a Blackfoot visiting one of the other divisions of his people, returns with horses and other property. This is, however, a kind of exchange, since his relatives are expected to do likewise when visited by those befriending him.

Jesting at the expense of a guest, provided he is not a distinguished man, is regarded as proper. Oft-times very rude jokes are thus played upon strangers. A show of timidity or resentment is sure to stimulate such acts. The usual procedure is for a number of men to gather, some of whom begin to make indecent remarks concerning the guest while the host and a few others pretend to speak against such proposals. Further indignities may be offered but the host prevents the affair from going too far. We mention this extreme of jesting to emphasize the large place it plays in Blackfoot social life. Notwithstanding all this, the victims whatever their rank, are extremely sensitive to such jests.

[37] The ownership of certain medicines may determine the seat. Thus, as guests, the medicine pipe men are given a seat opposite the host and must give way to no one. Should they go out for an interval, no one should occupy the seat. As the penalty will be disease, we have here what may be considered a taboo.

AMUSEMENTS AND GAMES.

In former times, there was a good deal of merriment in the Blackfoot camps. We have just characterized some of the jokes often perpetrated and may mention others strictly for amusement. One Piegan band was noted for its pranks. One of their favorites was to annoy visitors by a mock family row. The host would begin a quarrel with his wife and then to fight. The neighbors would rush in and with mock indignation take the woman's part. The result was a general mêlée in which they took care to fall upon the guest and wallow him about as much as possible without serious injury.

As a rule, jokes were between band and band. Thus it is related that one time a band drove off the horses of another and herded them in the brush near by. Then they innocently offered to join the war party for pursuit. When

all was ready they suggested that they look in the brush as the horses might have been overlooked. Again, a band dressed one of their men in white man's clothes and painted his face black. Then while his confederates were at the camp of the victim band he came up and in plain view caught two horses, going off slowly. The confederates were careful to call attention to it. Some young men pursued but when they were near the man took aim at them. So they hesitated. Finally, the thief disappeared over a hill. Then he whipped up, returned by another route and left the horses in their places again to the confusion of the pursuing party on their return.

Such pranks afforded amusement to all and served to brighten the life of the camps.^[38] While there were always a number of persons adept at chaffing and pranks there seems to have been no clown or buffoon, not even in ceremonies. There were, and are now, certain dances that may be termed social in which there are features expressly for amusement, but as these also contain ceremonial features they may be passed by at this writing. Games, on the other hand, seem to have no ceremonial associations and may, therefore, be considered under this head. We shall, however, make a distinction between amusement and gambling. The first are indulged in by children and youths, rarely by adults.

Children had a great many games similar to those of white children, from whom they may have been learned. Among these are tag, hide-and-seek, jumping the rope,

stilt-walking, slings, tops, dolls, hobby-horses, coasting, ball games, shooting contests, racing, and follow-the-leader.

The hobby-horse seems to have been peculiar to girls. A stick was selected with a natural bend between two parallel ends. A miniature saddle was sometimes placed in the crook and other trappings added. Girls coasted on pieces of rawhide, squatting at the rear and holding up the front with the hands. In summer, this contrivance was used in sliding down steep hills and cut banks. Boys usually coasted by sitting on a kind of toboggan made of buffalo ribs lashed to cross sticks, though they were not averse to using the more comfortable rawhide sheet.^[39] Small boys often played at owning, stealing and tending horses, using rude images of mud or selected stones of appropriate form. When buffalo were represented, their foot-bones were usually used. The buzzer of bone and the bull roarer were known as children's toys, but the winged bones of the Teton and the snow snake were not recognized by our informants. A toy called "whizzing bone," has not been identified by us, but was described as a contrivance for throwing. Some of our informants had seen the cup-and-ball, but rarely among their own people.

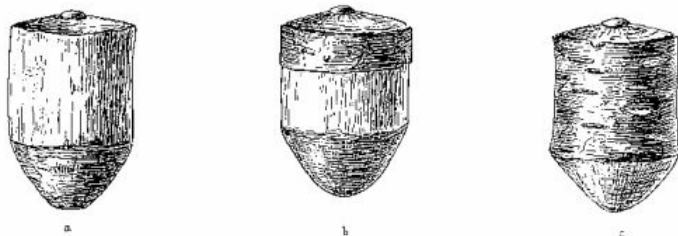


Fig. 8a (50-6153c), b (50-6153e), c (6153 f).

Wooden Tops. Length of a, 7 cm.

Top was a favorite game for boys. The wooden top (Fig. 8) is usually made of birch in the round and varies in length from 11 to 16 cm., in diameter from 8 to 12 cm. The bark is removed entire or in sections and the heads marked with nails or paint, partly for ornamentation and partly for identification. The wood must be well seasoned so as not to be heavy. The whips have four buckskin lashes about 35 cm. in length and handles about 75 cm. long. This game is played in soft snow, the object being to determine who can drive his top over the greatest distance without interrupting the spinning. The usual stakes are buckskin whip strings and tops.



Fig. 9 (50-6155g).

A Stone Top.

Length, 8 cm.

Another top game is played upon smooth ice. The tops are water-worn egg-shaped pebbles (Fig. 9) about 15 cm. in transverse diameter. The whips are similar to the preceding except that bark strings are used as shown in Fig.

10. This is a matter of economy since it

is the belief that the rocks and the ice wear out buckskin strings very quickly and while the bark strings are also

short lived they are easily replaced. In the game, the rocks are set spinning by whipping and when at high speed are driven together, the one that stops spinning first loses. In this game, the players are in pairs.

Sometimes these rock tops are used on hard snow. A shallow trench is dug which the tops must cross while spinning. A skillful player will whip his top in such a way that it will jump the trench. However, should it fail it may be whipped out or thrown out by the hand; if it ceases to spin, the player loses. The name for top games is approximately, "knocking it."

Another boy's game is with balls of mud stuck on the ends of willow rods about two meters long. A swing of the rod will drive off such a ball with great force. If such play becomes a contest, the aim is to see who can throw the greatest distance.

There are a number of arrow games. The collections contain two sets. One bow (Fig. 11b) has a peculiar decoration on the back, produced by cutting away portions of the bark. The other bow (Fig. 11a) is of similar form but plain. The arrows are in sets of six, of plain feathered shafts, about 75 cm. long and



Fig. 10 (50-6154a).
Top Whip with Lashes
of Bark. Length, 71 cm.

slightly sharpened. One arrow with the carved bow has a peculiar head (Fig. 11b). There are also two grass targets as in Fig. 11a.

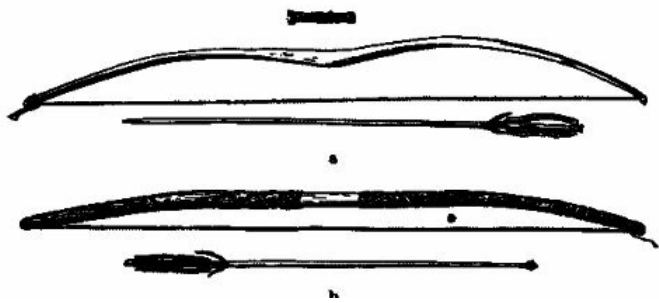


Fig. 11 *a* (50-6148 g, a), *b* (50-6147 a, c).
Gaming Bows and Arrows. Length of Bow, 97 cm.

One simple game is opened by a player shooting an arrow into a bank of earth which in turn becomes the target for all. The one placing an arrow nearest the target arrow wins all the arrows shot in the round. In a more complicated game one arrow is set up beside a bank and used as a target as in the preceding. The boy making the best shot gathers up all the arrows at the target and shoots them at the grass target (Fig. 11). Each arrow striking this target is his, otherwise they revert to their owners. The grass target must be held in the hand grasping the belly of the bow and the arrow. By a swing of the arms it is tossed forward and upward and must be hit while in the air to win.^[40]

Another game spoken of as the sliding arrows was in favor. No bow was used, the so-called arrows being but straight slender sticks about 80 cm. long, neither

sharpened nor feathered. The set in the collection contains 39 sticks, 28 of which are plain, 4 burned black at one end and 7 decorated with a spiral burned band. We have no information as to the significance of these divisions. In the game the players take an equal number of sticks. They are thrown by hand, poising them on a small heap of earth. The player throwing the greatest distance, takes all the sticks thrown. As in other games, the play continues until one has all the sticks.



Fig. 12 (50-6146). A Wooden Dart. Length, 90 cm.

The casting of wooden darts, or arrows, is another boys' game of the same general type. The set of darts in the collection contains twelve willow sticks about a meter long and 1.8 cm. in diameter. Each stick is sharpened at one end and split into quarters at the other, Fig. 12. These darts are usually decorated and to some are attached tufts of horse hair. In the game the darts are thrown from the hand. First one is cast into a clump of bushes and the players in turn cast at it as a target. The last throw wins the darts. The use of the hair tufts was explained as an aid to the count; thus, if several darts fell about equally near the target dart, the one whose hair tuft touched it was declared the winner.

We secured vague accounts of another game in which arrows were shot at a bundle of arrows, the best shot

taking the bundle.

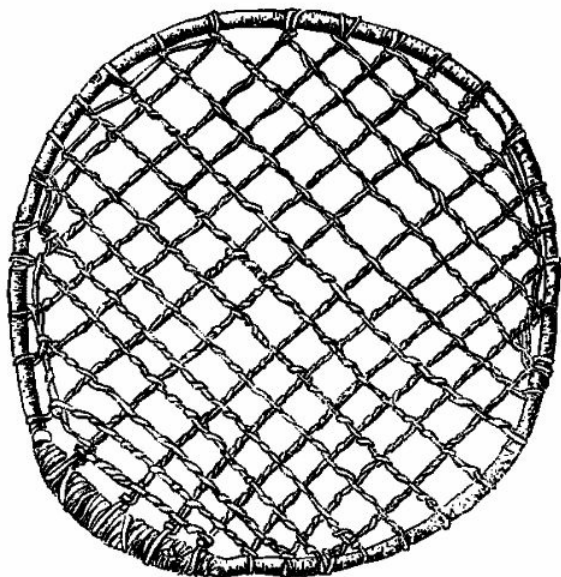


Fig. 13 (50-6165). The Wheel Game. Diameter, 41 cm.

The wheel game is played with a netted hoop, strictly for amusement, by young people. The hoop in the collection is shown in Fig. 13.^[41] The center mesh is called the navel and the open parts of the loops around the hoop, the teeth. The darts are simple pointed sticks about 80 cm. long without forks at the end as observed among some other tribes. Counts are made when the darts pierce the navel or one of the teeth, according to any value agreed upon by the players. Two persons are necessary to the game, but there is no maximum limit to the number of players. The opposing sides take up positions at fifty yards or more. A player rolls the wheel toward the opposite side, its players casting darts at it as

it passes. Should a count be made the wheel is thrown back high in the air, the opposing side attempting to catch it on their darts. Should they in turn make a count, the wheel is thrown back to the other side, etc. For every failure to count, the wheel is returned by rolling.

A kind of shinny, called "batting ours," was played by men, women and youths. Bats of rough sticks with slightly curved ends were used (Fig. 14). The balls are spherical, about the size of a base ball, composed of skin covers stuffed with hair. The game is rough and frequently results in serious injuries. The players are arrayed in two sides. Two lines, or goals, are placed about 300 yards apart. The players group about the midway point and the game is opened by tossing the ball into the air. Each side strives to bat the ball over its own goal.



Fig. 14 (50-6149). A Shinny Stick. Length, 89 cm.

Another ball game, known as the Cree Women, is played by adults and youths. A ball is used similar to the preceding, but is tossed from hand to hand. The players are in pairs. The game is opened by tossing the ball into the air whence each player strives to recover it. The one who secures it, then faces his partner and the ball is tossed back and forth. The other players may use every means to disconcert them except actual physical

interference. When the ball is dropped all rush for it and the first to secure it, plays with his partner as before.

Wrestling was common among boys and young men. Formal bouts were usually between two sides. The players sat facing in rows. One side put forward a man with a challenge to the other. They put forward an opponent. The victor was then the next challenger until thrown.

A rough game, known as kicking each other, was popular among young men and boys; the usual way was to form two opposing lines and kick each other to see which would give way. Another game, known as bear play, was popular when swimming; boys would unite, seize a boy and toss him into the deepest water, then scamper away. The victim pursued until a boy was caught when, at once, the others joined in tossing him into the water.

A children's game, known as skunk, is a kind of round in which all stand in line each with hands on the shoulders of his neighbor. The leader carries a stick of wood, burning at the end, from which he beats sparks with another stick. The row of children sing and dance without breaking the line. The leader endeavors to come near the rear of the line so that the sparks will fly upon the players, they in turn seek to avoid him without breaking away. While this was a rough game, it was popular.

Boys often amused themselves by placing embers from the fire on a stone and striking them with another

stone. When skillfully done, this gives off a report like a gun.

[38] For a sketch of the social amusements in Blackfoot camps, see Grinnell, 185.

[39] Maximilian says of the Mandan that children glided down heaps of snow “on a board, or a piece of the backbone of a buffalo, with some of the ribs attached to it,” 445.

[40] Culin, Fig. 505, 391.

[41] An unusual form of this wheel is shown by Culin, 447.

GAMBLING.

Playing for stakes was always a favorite and the games to be described here were rarely played except in gambling. Gambling is often spoken of as fighting, or war, and in turn war is spoken of as gambling. This is reflected in a myth where the players’ scalps were at stake.^[42]

The Hand-Game. Piaks kaiösin, approximately fancy gambling, was in a way team work, sometimes as many as twenty-five men on a side, band playing against band

or even camp against camp. The outfit consists of 4 hiding sticks, or two pairs, 12 counters and a number of drumsticks for beating time on lodge poles set up in front of the players. The pair of hiding sticks are designated as the short and the long, though they are really of equal length, the one called long being designated by a string wrapped about its middle. They are about the thickness of an ordinary lead pencil and about 7 cm. in length. The materials are wood or bone. The counters are about 38 cm. long, of plain wood sharpened at one end for sticking up in front of the players. The drumsticks are short clubs of no definite form. Each side takes a pair of hiding sticks and selects a man to do the hiding and one to do the guessing, according to their known skill. Each hiding man, or leader, faces the guesser of the opposing side and the play begins. The leaders put their hands behind them and then show their hands when the guess is made. The side guessing correctly takes one counter and also their opponents' pair of hiding sticks. This opens the game. There are now two leaders for the playing side. They confront the guessers of their opponents. The player's side now sings and drums upon the tipi poles, provided for that purpose, apparently to divert the attention of the guessers. For every failure of a guesser, the playing side takes a counting stick. Should one of the leaders be guessed correctly, he gives his hiding stick to his companion who plays with the four. If the guess is now wrong, he takes one counter and restores a pair to his

companion to play as before. However, should the guess be correct, the playing side loses the hiding sticks to their opponents. Thus the play continues until one side has the 12 counting sticks, or wins.^[43]

The songs have a definite rhythmic air but consist of nonsense syllables. However, jibes and taunts are usually improvised to disconcert the guessers. The game is very boisterous and, in a way social, but is never played except for stakes of value, as horses, robes, guns, etc.

Formerly, this game was often played by members of the All-Comrades Societies, as the Braves against the Dogs, etc. In such cases the songs were from their own rituals. The man handling the sticks was sometimes very skilful in deceiving the guessers. To disconcert him, the opposing side often counted coup on him. One would recount how he took a scalp, leap upon the shoulder of the player, grasp his hair, flash a knife, etc., he, all the while handling the sticks. They might pretend to capture his blanket or repeat any other deeds they had done in war. The idea was that if the deed counts were true, the re-counting of them would give power to overcome the skill of the player. This made the game noisy and rough, but quite exciting. The players were always skilful jugglers and regarded as medicine men. The amount of property changing hands in such gambling was truly astonishing, whole bands and societies sometimes being reduced to absolute poverty and nakedness. Women may play the game but with three counting sticks instead of

twelve.

The Wheel Gambling. For this game, a small wheel about 7 cm. in diameter is used. The form is precisely like that of the Gros Ventre shown in Fig. 22, p. 188, Vol. I, of this series. There are two sets in the Blackfoot collection one of which has six spokes, the other seven. The spokes are distinguished by beads of different colors or combinations. For the game a wheel and two arrows are required, there being but two players. The arrows in the collection have metal points and are feathered. They are about 85 cm. long. In playing the wheel is rolled by one of the players toward an obstruction, usually a board, about 6 m. distant. The two follow it closely and as it falls after striking the obstruction, try to thrust their arrows under it. This must be done so that the wheel will fall upon them, not cause its fall. The count is according to the position of the spokes upon the arrows. The winner rolls the wheel, the advantage being always with the one who does this. The counts are usually in multiples of five, values being assigned to the various spokes by mutual agreement at the opening of the game.^[44] Small pebbles are used as counters, or chips. The betting is by pledging a blanket for so many pebbles, a knife for so many, etc.

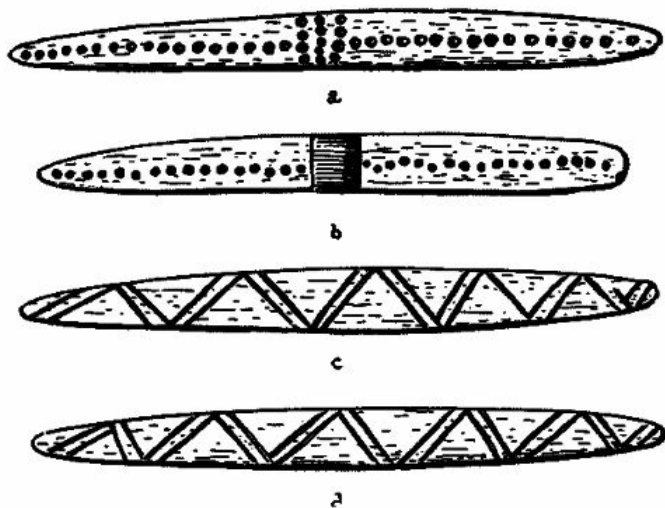


Fig. 15 (50-5408). The Four-stick Game. Length of *a*, 18 cm.

The Four-stick Game. To the Blackfoot this is known as “travois gambling,” and is played by women. A set in the collection was said to be of buffalo bone (Fig. 15). The sticks were named six, two, and snakes; though sometimes designated as twos and snakes, a pair of each. The detail of the markings varied but followed the same general scheme in so far that the snakes were always marked with the wave-like design. They were cast upon the ground or a blanket. Since the opposite sides of the sticks are blank there are eight faces. The usual count is as follows: zero two blanks, one snake and *a* or *b*; 2, two blanks and two snakes; 4, four blanks; or as they appear in the figure; 6, three blanks and six (*b*), or one blank, two snakes and two (*a*); one blank, six (*b*) and two snakes counts nothing but the player may pick up the stick called six and throw it upon the others to turn them, counting

according to the result. Other combinations give no score. The player continues to throw so long as the above combinations result; failing, the turn passes to the next. As a rule, there are but two in the game.^[45] The number of points in a game and the wagers are a matter of agreement between the players.^[46]

Certain games well-known to neighboring tribes were not recognized by our informants as having been played by the Blackfoot. Among these were the plum stone, or button dice, the moccasin game, the hoop game, the 102 stick game, the cup-and-ball, the snow snake, ice-gliders, and winged bones. Most of them had been seen, but in the hands of aliens. Odd-and-even seems to have been known to the Northern Blackfoot, but was not in favor.^[47] We have found no traces of ceremonial associations with these games. While mention of the wheel games is made in several myths, this seems purely circumstantial, except that the Twin-brothers are credited with originating the netted wheel.^[48]

The small spoked wheel of the Blackfoot is practically identical with that of the Gros Ventre. According to Culin, this beaded type has been observed among the Crow, Nez Perce, Thompson and Shushwap tribes, suggesting its origin, if not with the Blackfoot, at least, with some of their neighbors. The particular form of button used in the Blackfoot hand-game seems to belong to the west of the Rocky Mountains, to the coast and southward in the plateaus. The beating upon a pole is

found among the Nez Perce, Kootenai and perhaps elsewhere. While the Gros Ventre had the Blackfoot names “long and short,” their buttons and method of play were more like those of the Arapaho. The stick dice (travois game) when rigidly compared as to form and marking, bear close parallels among the Gros Ventre. Hidatsa, and Chippeywan with less correspondence west of the Rockies. On the other hand, the Blackfoot indifference to seed and button dice tends to class them with western tribes. Neither the Blackfoot nor the Gros Ventre seem to have used the large hoop and double darts of the Dakota, Omaha, and Arapaho. Thus, in a general way, the Blackfoot fall into an ill-defined group comprising tribes on the head-waters of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers. They seem on the whole, to incline more toward the Plateau and Shoshone area than to the Siouan or Algonkin. Of greater interest, perhaps, is our failure to find any game associated with the stalking of buffalo or any other ceremony. So far as we can see, all games are to the Blackfoot either amusement or gambling and a résumé of our account will show that many of the former also reflect the gambling conception.

[42] Vol. 2, p. 132.

[43] For other brief accounts for the Blackfoot see Grinnell, 184; Maclean, (b), 56.

[44] See Grinnell, 183; Maclean (b), 55, Maclean, (d), pp. 21276-7; Culin, 448.

[45] Culin, 56-57.

[46] The section on games is entirely based upon information gathered by D. C. Duvall, chiefly among the Piegan, supplemented by data from the other divisions.

[47] Maximilian, 254.

[48] See Vol. I of this series, 24, 42, 60, 64, 132.

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TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Some illustrations were moved to facilitate page layout.

[The end of *The Social Life of the Blackfoot Indians* by Clark Wissler]