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THE HIDATSA

TRADITION, HABITAT, AND CUSTOMS

THE Hidatsa, commonly known under the inappropriate appellation "Gros Ventres of the Missouri," differed from most of the tribes of the northern plains in that they were a sedentary and semi-agricultural people, gaining part of their livelihood, of course, by the chase. Their habitat for many generations has been along the Missouri from Heart river to the Little Missouri, in North Dakota.

Fortunately the traditions of the Hidatsa are sufficiently clear to give a comprehensive idea of their movements since reaching their present home-land, and of the time previous important glimpses may be had from their legendary lore. According to these legends, for a long time after their mythical emergence from the under-world they called themselves *Mídhokats*.[1] From time to time the Mídhokats moved toward the land of snows, away from their primal land where summer was perpetual and the birds were ever singing. They were so undeveloped a people that very little account of their wandering was preserved in the stories of the old men. They lived nearly naked, and raised corn, tobacco, squashes, beans, and sunflowers. Their efforts were directed solely toward preservation of life, and they had no songs nor ceremonies. As they drifted northward a tribe of people resembling them in appearance and speaking a language like their own was met near a lake. The wanderers inquired of the lake people:

"Whence came you?"

They answered, "We came from under the earth, far down in the country where corn, tobacco, and other things grow in great plenty."

"These must be our brothers," said the Mídhokats, "as they speak our language and came from below as did we."

Together they moved about in search of game, going ever southwestward. They found the country very level and the winter severe, so they turned southward and came to a great river, which they called *Awáti*. This is the Missouri. They moved down the stream until they arrived opposite the place where Heart river enters from the west. On the other side were a strange people, who came down to the shore

[1] Compare *midhoki*, we, ourselves.

and shouted to them in a language of which they could understand a little. Someone said, "Let us cross, and see who these people are."

Finally a few took courage and crossed Awáti, a quarter of a day's walk south of Heart river, and this place a long time after came to be known as *Hidátsa-adhutádhish,* Hidatsa Crossing. They were called by the inhabitants, the Mandan, *Minítadhi,* Cross The Water, whence the name Minitaree, by which they have sometimes been known. The newcomers asked the others whence they had come, and received the reply, "From below here, where *Ashíhtia,* Big River (Cannonball river), goes into Awáti."

Here with the Mandan the Mídhokats lived for a long time. Buffalo and antelope becoming scarce, a band of the Mídhokats (according to the kindred tradition of the Apsaroke a thousand lodges strong) together with a few of the Mandan migrated far to the west, passing through the Black Hills country and into the foothills of the Rocky mountains. Again they travelled long and returned to the Missouri. It is impossible to determine the length of time consumed in this western migration and the return. Lean Wolf, the Hidatsa, affirms, "So many lifetimes that no one knows." Hunts To Die, Apsaroke, says, "I know nothing for myself, only what was told by the old men of long ago. They did not live so long in any one place that it was a home to them, as where children are born and grow to be men. They were gone many snows, not many lifetimes of chiefs." It is probable that Hunts To Die is nearer right than the Hidatsa.

While they were away on this long journey, continues the tradition, a great flood came upon the land, destroying many creatures and people who dwelt in the lowlands to the east of Awáti. This seems to be a traditional destruction by high water and not rightly associated with a mythical deluge; however, some native informants believe this period of high water to be the basis of the deluge myth. The returned wanderers settled about the confluence of Heart river with the Missouri, a short distance north of the Mandan, building four villages, three to the north and one to the south of the smaller stream. During this period a small band seceded and went permanently to the west, and some years later came a tribal separation following a quarrel between the two chiefs, Good Fur Robe, *Itásh-ítsakish,* and Tattooed Face, *Íta-widatsásh,* over the division of a buffalo. The second band that went west and became the Apsaroke was under the leadership of the great Tobacco priest called in Hidatsa tradition Tattooed Face, and by the

Apsaroke, No Vitals.

Weakened by the loss of so large a part of their tribe, the Mídhokats moved up the Missouri and established themselves in four villages on Knife river, the largest of which was*Midahátsi-atíush*, Willow Village, on the northern side not far from the mouth. The *Amahámi* band settled some distance below the mouth of the river, and the *Amahámi*, Earth Village On Top, near and below the Amahámi. The fourth division, the *Húda*, crossed the Missouri and built a village on the eastern side, opposite the others. According to tradition the last-mentioned band mysteriously disappeared, and a woman and a child who remained behind formed the *Mídipatí* clan. From the Amahámi and the Amatihá a small group seceded and followed Tattooed Face to the west. Later the occupants of the three villages moved northward and built one large town on the west side of the Missouri, naming it Turtle Woods, *Watáhitáwidush*, and there the consolidated people began to call themselves *Hidátsa*, a corruption of the name of the large Knife River village Midahátsi-atíush. From Turtle Woods they again moved northward a short distance and built Rock Village, *Miihápatish*, so named from the great quantities of rocks in the neighborhood. This was a period of extended hunting expeditions, some of them lasting for years. Sometimes bands of the Apsaroke visited them, and parties made up of members of both tribes would move in a body westward as far as the Rocky mountains, hunting game and fighting their common enemies.

The large Rock Village was the most northerly of the permanent towns of the Hidatsa, although smaller temporary settlements were made much farther west along the river, the remains of one such being found four miles west of the present agency at Elbowoods. After many years at Turtle Woods and Rock Village the Hidatsa moved back to their old location on Knife river, building three new towns on the sites of the old ones. Here they remained for a long time, and here they were found in 1804, by Lewis and Clark, who established winter quarters several miles below them on the east bank of the Missouri. Following this second occupancy on Knife river, the Mandan came up the Missouri in 1783 and established two villages on the western side of the larger river, south of the Hidatsa. There the five villages were visited by the smallpox epidemic of 1837, when the Amahámi and Amatihá became extinct as separate bands.

In 1845 the Hidatsa moved northward from Knife river and

established, at Fort Berthold, Hidatsa Village, *Hidáts-ati*, where in 1856 they again suffered from smallpox. In 1885 this last village began to be abandoned and the remnant of a once vigorous tribe became scattered about the reservation.

In 1874, Crow Breast being then chief, the tribe became divided into several factions, one of the principal sources of dissension being the arrogance and overbearing methods of Crow Breast and his four head-men. One of the factions was composed of the adherents of Bobtail Bull. On a night when some act of the chief had particularly incensed his opponents, two young men of Bobtail Bull's band seized their guns, declaring their intention to kill Crow Breast. Bobtail Bull interfered, and the rest of the night patrolled in front of the lodge. The two at length proposed a compromise, namely, that their band should withdraw from the tribe under the leadership of Bobtail Bull. To this he agreed, and about three hundred and twenty-five of the Hidatsa moved in a body to the vicinity of Fort Buford. Crow Flies High, a gifted speaker, gradually eclipsed the chief, whose title to preeminence rested on his ability as a war-leader, and came to be regarded as leader of the band. About 1884, these Fort Buford Hidatsa returned southeastward and camped in the valley of Little Knife river, but after a single season there they moved back to Fort Buford. In 1894 the entire band, numbering one hundred and thirty-five, was escorted by troops to the Fort Berthold reservation.

The first treaty made by the Hidatsa with the Government was concluded July 30, 1825, when the chiefs of the tribe met Brigadier-General Henry Atkinson and Indian Agent Benjamin O'Fallon in council at Lower Mandan Village (Mítutaha^{n}k) and entered into a "firm and lasting peace" with the United States. In this treaty the Hidatsa are designated "Belantse-etea,[2] or Minnetarees." A similar treaty with the Mandan was negotiated the same day, and on August 4 the same commissioners met the Apsaroke at the Mandan village and concluded a treaty "for the purpose of perpetuating the friendship which has heretofore existed." To the credit of these three tribes it may be said that they have kept their agreement in a praiseworthy way.

The culture of the wandering tribes of the plains is found to be based almost wholly on the buffalo and its habits, whereas the village

[2] Probably an attempt to write the native name of Willow Village, *Midahátsi-atíush.*

tribes of the upper Missouri, although their mode of life and thought has a similar basis, are ever mindful of the fact that they depend largely upon the products of the soil, particularly corn, for their subsistence. In all their ceremonies corn is directly or indirectly made a part of the rites, and the spirit of maize is fittingly represented among their myth characters as Old Woman Who Never Dies. Strangely enough for a people depending so largely upon agriculture, pollen does not enter into their ceremonial or religious observances, and, unlike the Navaho and Apache, for example, they do not possess any knowledge of its function.

In treating the Hidatsa or any one of the three tribes composing the Missouri River villagers, it is impossible to avoid considering the other two and often referring to them. As has been seen, the Mandan were the first to reach this locality, and perhaps several centuries before the first visit of a white man they were joined by the Mídhokats, since which time the two tribes have been almost constant neighbors, occasionally at strife, but usually friends and allies. Intermarriage naturally became common, and the blood much mixed. Being related by language and possessing no antagonistic beliefs and customs, the two tribes developed along parallel lines.

About the beginning of the last century the Sioux commenced to press upon them, striking severe blows whenever opportunity offered. Then came the devastating smallpox in 1837, which almost swept them from the land, reducing the combined Hidatsa and Mandan population of nearly four thousand to scarcely four hundred. While in this weakened condition, they were first plundered and then joined by a third tribe, the alien Arikara, their former enemies. These groups, each small in itself, were mutually dependent; again intermarriage followed, and with the further blending of blood there resulted a confusion of customs and ceremonies. Another factor that has entered largely into the amalgamation is a century of contact with the frontier element - trappers, traders, explorers, and an ever-increasing volume of river traffic; for the villages were situated almost directly on the banks of the stream, the tribes were notoriously lax in the moral code and had no objection to the rearing of mixed-blood offspring, and their women were a highly valued commodity. The white blood of the earlier intrusion has become so diffused as to be observable only in a general way; the Hidatsa give one the impression of being as a people somewhat lighter in color than those of other tribes. This

may not be in any considerable degree owing to alien contact, for the earlier explorers invariably mention the Mandan particularly as being noticeably light, a characteristic indeed that afforded Catlin part of the testimony on which he based his untenable theory of their descent from lost Welsh colonists.

It is an open question whether the Hidatsa were an agricultural people before reaching the Missouri river. They affirm that they tilled the soil at that time, and that mythic personages imparted to them the Corn Ceremony. They cultivated a variety of corn like that of the Navaho and some of the Pueblo tribes: it is low and stunted in growth, and, like the corn still raised by the Pueblo tribes of Arizona and New Mexico, consists of ears of many hues — blue, red, purple, pink, green, yellow, white, and a mixture of all colors. The women planted small cleared plots in the warmth of the valleys, working the ground with a hoe made from the shoulder-blade of a buffalo. During the growing season the owner of the field took a buffalo-robe as a gift to one of the Corn priests, asking him to pray to Old Woman Who Never Dies and to the spirits that controlled the weather, that the corn might thrive to ripeness. The priest returned with the husbandman to his lodge, and there burned incense and held a stalk of corn in the sacred smoke, praying that the crop might prosper and be plentiful. He then passed the stalk to the owner of the field, saying, "Keep this," and it was hung in the sacred place of the lodge as the token of a bountiful harvest.

A season of abundance was the time of great happiness and merrymaking. As a man's corn ripened he provided many strips of meat and fat cut lengthwise from the buffalo, then asked the herald to announce to the people that on the following day he would harvest his corn, that all young men and women were invited to assist him. The next morning came maids and youths in their gayest garments, for would not the one for whom the love-charm was worn be there? In the lodge old men in anticipation of the coming feast chanted songs of thanksgiving, and with laughter and mirth the assembled villagers trooped away to the corn-field to gather the harvest. As the ears were broken from the stalks they were thrown on large pieces of old lodge-covering, which when filled were borne by the men to the scene of the feast. The strips of meat lay spread on a carpet of willow boughs, and over them was poured the corn until they were buried deep beneath the ripened ears. When the field had been stripped, men and women gathered about the pile and began the husking, young men tearing off

the outer husks and passing the ears to the maidens at their sides, who turned back the inner husks and interwove them into braids of such length that when they were held at the middle by the foot both ends reached the knee. As the men took the ears they kept alert watch for the strips of meat, and as each piece was uncovered by some fortunate youth, shouts of merriment filled the air.

When the husking was finished, a woman who had had a vision of Old Woman Who Never Dies offered a piece of the fat to the corn, saying, "Take and eat, that we may have large crops next year."

For the buffalo-hunt the chief of the village made the plans and selected some worthy man that possessed the buffalo-medicine to serve as leader. A medicine-man appointed as a special herald went about the village, crying out the name of the chosen chief of the hunt, and enjoining obedience to him on the part of all. The leader despatched scouts to search for the herd, and if buffalo were known to be scarce, he announced from the top of his lodge that he would perform the ceremony of Calling For The Buffalo.

When the scouts signalled their approach, all through the village rose the shout, "They are returning!" Their report was made only to the chiefs, who with the leader perfected the plans for the hunt and offered many prayers for its success. As each individual started out he asked his medicine to help him in the chase. When the herd was reached, the hunters divided into two long lines and attempted to encircle it, and if they succeeded, the animals, thrown into confusion, milled in a close circle, enabling the hunters to kill nearly all. A man on a good horse could fell as many as a dozen. The more successful hunters shared their game with the less fortunate, and meat and hides were loaded on horses and taken back to the village. Coming out to meet the approaching hunters, the people formed in two long lines, dependent old women well in front, and as the young men rode down between the crowded lines they threw out meat to the clanswomen of their fathers.

To exhibit stinginess on returning from the hunt was to receive the scorn and reproach of all the village. One can imagine the chuckle of the old crones as they exclaimed, "You are good, my son!" The tongues of the buffalo belonged to the leader, and were collected for him.

Before the introduction of horses, swift runners were sent out to drive buffalo through an opening in the hills, where waiting men

killed them as they attempted to rush past. It was a common custom to drive a herd over a river bluff, often a sheer precipice, in which case impounding was unnecessary. All that was needful was for the hunters to build out their V-shaped line of brush through which to start the herd in a mad rush to the edge of a cliff, over which they fell to their death. In the spring opening of the river many buffalo floated down with the ice; Lean Wolf says that at times ten or twenty might be seen going by in a day. A young man with a rawhide rope and a staff would leap from floe to floe, fasten the rope to one of the carcasses, and draw it ashore. It is said that taken in this way the flesh had a disagreeable odor, but that the people would eat it if other meat was scarce.

The white buffalo was an object of great veneration, but its killing and the preparation of the skin were not attended with such ceremony and formality as among the Lakota. To the Hidatsa the skin of a white buffalo was the most valued possession a warrior could obtain; if so fortunate as to kill one of these animals he would prepare the hide carefully and await a purchaser, who was always a priest or a chief.

The prospective purchaser, aided by relatives and clansmen, would gather robes, clothing, war-bonnets, horses, and other valuables, and when he felt that he had accumulated sufficient wealth he visited the owner for the purpose of negotiating the exchange. The sacred skin was first held in incense and then carefully spread out. The buyer threw down a robe, saying, "With this I buy the eyes," and with deliberation he gave article after article for each prominent part of the animal until he felt that sufficient had been offered. If in the mind of the owner any parts had been missed, he placed a stick under the tall and shook it, saying, "You have not yet bought the white buffalo." When the bargain was finally sealed, the former owner carefully placed the skin on the back of the purchaser, who took it to his lodge. If he had a son he would cut a strip from the hide for a headband to be worn by the boy. He then painted a broad black band across the hide and took it away to some solitary tree, where he offered it to the spirits, or perhaps more directly to his own tutelary spirit as a supplication for the welfare of his people and for his own spiritual strength.

By neighboring tribes the Hidatsa were considered as very skilful in capturing eagles. Their method was the not unusual one of going to some high hill or mountain-top and digging a hole in the ground sufficiently large for a man to conceal himself therein with comfort. This was covered loosely with brush on which a bait of meat was

laid. As an eagle alighted a bronzed arm slipped swiftly through the brush and seized the bird by the legs. The first captive was tethered as a decoy, and then as eagle after eagle lit they were caught in turn and choked to death with a rawhide rope. If a bird fought for freedom and fastened its talons in the hunter's wrist, he knew where to press the tendons of its legs to compel it to release its hold.

Being the largest as well as the most majestic of birds, the eagle was greatly venerated, and trapping him was attended with much supplication, that the eagle spirits might not be offended by the taking of their bodies.

The large earthen lodge was the typical dwelling of the three river tribes, and the houses of the Hidatsa were exactly like those of their neighbors. At first sight of one of these noteworthy habitations it seems large enough to house a whole clan, and the central roof-timbers have a height that accentuates the appearance of roominess. Before undertaking the construction of a lodge the family prepared food for a great feast, to which all were welcome. Men and women were joint workers on this occasion of labor and sociability. They first planted in the ground four upright posts eighteen to twenty-four inches in diameter, fifteen to twenty feet high, and, if the structure was to be of ordinary size, the distance apart of two and a half times the length of a man's outstretched arms. In a circle around, and four or five yards from, these pillars, ten or twelve smaller posts six to ten feet high were set. From top to top of these outer posts were laid strong supporting timbers, and in the forks at the top of the four central uprights were placed heavy beams. Long, strong rafters, peeled and closely fitted, extended from outer to central supporting beams, while shorter peeled timbers were leaned at an angle of about sixty degrees from the ground to the eaves. Over this substantial framework osiers were closely laid, then a covering of grass, and finally a heavy coating of sods, which were carefully cut, laid one on top of the other, and pounded firmly into place, making the roof water-tight. In the centre was left a large smoke-hole, over which, during stormy weather, a bull-boat was turned bottom-side up, giving protection against rain yet permitting the escape of smoke. The door was sheltered by a covered entryway, about five feet in width, built of upright puncheons.

In a shallow central pit burned a fire, at which the related families occupying the lodge prepared their meals. The floor soon hardened under the constant tread of moccasined feet and was swept clean with

a brush made of the beard of a buffalo bull. Buffalo-skins were used to separate the sleeping-quarters, in which were liberal piles of robes for bedding. The rear of the lodge was the sacred place, the position of honor. Three to five families occupied a lodge, and besides the human dwellers many of their better horses were stabled close to the outer wall at the right and left of the door.

The houses were irregularly placed in a circle. For protection against attack by marauding tribes a strong stockade of upright logs was built around the whole village, and as a further shelter for the warriors a trench was dug within the enclosure.[3]

In 1845 a feeling came over the Hidatsa that they should have a new home. Game and fuel had grown scarce and the powerful Sioux had seemingly become familiar with every vulnerable point of the old village. What was regarded as a favorable site was selected, and on the appointed day the people took up their march. At their head was the keeper of the sacred skulls, closely followed by a medicine-man bearing the sacred tribal pipe; then came the people, and on their lips and in their hearts was the prayer chanted to the spirits, beseeching their guidance. On reaching the designated spot they marched around it four times, singing, and as the voice of the people rose in the still air a great peal of thunder seemed to shake the earth, and the people cried out, "The Thunderbird looks down upon us! It is good!" They then seated themselves in a semicircle, facing the east.

Crying Dog, a priest of the Sun Dance, said, "My lodge shall be at the end of the village, facing the rising Sun, so that I may see my Father's face. He will bring happiness and prosperity to the village."

Bobtail Wolf said: "In my visions Thunderbird showed me his body. I shall take the west end of the village, so that my Father shall look upon us and bring rain, that our crops may grow."

Fat Fox spoke: "As the daylight of the morning comes, the Morning Star appears in the sky. I shall build my lodge to the northeast, so that I can pray to him to bring prosperity to my people."

"My lodge," said Bear Hunts Around, "shall represent the lodge of Old Woman Who Never Dies. It shall stand to the south whence the warm winds come, that they may cause the plants to grow. As her

[3] Vérendrye, describing one of the similarly built Mandan villages, says (1738) that it was surrounded by a ditch (presumably outside the stockade) fifteen feet deep and fifteen to eighteen feet wide.

garden prospered, so shall it be with my people."

Bad Horn declared: "My medicine is the Bear. As the entrance to his den faces north, so shall be the door of my lodge, that our offspring may grow strong as the Bear."

"I shall locate my lodge near the centre," announced Human Hand. Thrusting his lance into the ground, he cried, "This shall represent the spirit of He First Made All Things, and he will pity and help us." On the end of the lance was a coyote-tail, the medicine he had received in a vision.

Awáti located his lodge near that of Crying Dog. Flying Eagle said: "My lodge shall stand near that of Bobtail Wolf, for my medicine also is Thunderbird."

According to rank the others selected their sites, and prayed that no disease or other misfortune might come upon the village, that their children might be many, and the corn plentiful. Only the men who had performed brave deeds in battle and had otherwise proved their worth were allowed to pray to the spirits, for it might bring disaster upon the village should any one falsify to them. Lone Buffalo was not allowed to pray, since in the former village one of his clan had murdered a man, and this might happen again.

Thus was planned the last village of the Hidatsa.[4]

The tribe was ruled by a council of chiefs, variable in number. Chieftainship was not hereditary; the position was obtained and held by reason of honors won in battle. Any chief desiring to call a council could do so by giving a feast to which the common people might come, eat of the food, and offer suggestions; but they had no direct voice in governing. The Soldier Band, under instructions of the council, controlled the village. The herald passed through the winding ways, announcing the orders of the chiefs, and it was the first duty of the Soldiers to see that such commands were obeyed promptly and faithfully. For ordinary infraction of tribal laws a person suffered the scorn of the entire tribe. Murder was avenged by the victim's family or clansmen, usually by taking the life of the guilty one,[5] sometimes by exacting the payment of a heavy fine by him and his clansmen. The clan was an important organization, as it was held responsible for the

[4] Hidáts-ati - old Fort Berthold.

[5] *Lex talionis* prevailed among practically all Indian tribes

acts of its members. Descent was through the female line, and a newly married couple took up their residence with the wife's family rather than with that of the husband. In camping the clan pitched its skin lodges in a group, among the families of which the returning hunter divided his meat.

The Hidatsa women made a crude sort of undecorated pottery, using blue clay mixed with finely powdered granite or other hard stone. Thoroughly kneaded, the plastic material was rolled into a sheet, which was then turned up at the edges and modelled into final shape by holding a smooth convex stone on the inner side and beating with a wooden spatula on the outside. After drying for some days the vessel was burned in the usual Indian fashion of firing in the open air with wood placed all around it. Should the pottery break in the firing, the mishap was regarded as evidence that the maker in some way had offended the spirits. Cooking-pots and water-jars were made in this manner, a flange being formed at the rim to hold a rawhide carrying-rope when necessary.

They also made a roughly-woven burden-basket, using as material the inner bark of the box-elder, with strong inwoven willow rods at the corners. It was carried on the back, supported with a strap across the chest. Large and small utensils were made from box-elder wood, hollowed out from solid blocks by charring and by cutting with stone knives; and spoons, ladles, and cups of the horns of buffalo and mountain-sheep. The usual parfléches of the plains Indians were made for containing and carrying the domestic belongings. The handicraft which gave the greatest pleasure to the women, and afforded them the best opportunity for displaying their artistic skill, was the preparation of the skin clothing — neatly made dresses of the skins of mountain-sheep and deer, embroidered and fringed, and shirts and robes for the men; porcupine-quills dyed in many colors were used in their decoration.

Axes were made of flat pieces of stone, a broad groove being pecked around the middle to hold the handle, which was of ash worked down thin at one end, bent around the blade, and tied firmly in place with dampened sinews. Spear-heads, knives, and arrow-points were made of flint or other suitable stone, chipped to shape with pieces of antler or bone. Lean Wolf's uncle, Roadmaker, born about 1765, told him how the stone was worked, but a belief exists that the knives and projectile points found scattered about when the Hidatsa reached the

Missouri were made by some spirit living under the earth.

The bull-boat common to the river tribes of the region was in extensive use by the Hidatsa, and is still sometimes to be seen. It was made by first forming a hemispherical framework of willow or other pliable shoots, and stretching over it a cover of one or two large buffalo-hides with the hairy side outward. Bull-boats were in constant use in the crossing of the river, and sometimes even for long trips down-stream; and indeed numerous instances are mentioned of large parties embarking on war expeditions in these rude craft. When engaged in war with the Yanktonai and Assiniboin to the north, the Hidatsa often brought their wounded down-stream in these boats. Lean Wolf relates graphically the story of an Arikara war-party, led by Sharp Nose, of which he was a member. This was in 1840, and there were a hundred boats in the party. A start was made for the country of the Sioux, where, if fortune favored them, they would capture plenty of horses and ride back to their own country; but after being out a few "sleeps" they had to drag all their clumsy craft ashore, owing to a head-wind. Meanwhile Sharp Nose made medicine, supplicating the spirits for visions as to the outcome of the foray. Apparently he received no encouragement from the unseen, and, deeming the head-wind an ill omen, he abandoned the raid, destroyed the boats, and returned to the village.

On ordinary occasions the men wore a robe of hide taken from a three-year-old buffalo cow. The neck of the skin was split down for a distance, and the resulting flaps hung over the shoulders at the front. The lower corners of the robe were cut into five fringed strips, and its bottom reached half-way from hip to knee. A warrior with honors would indicate these by pictographs on the broad back of the robe, and frequently fox-skins with raven tail-feathers attached were suspended from the shoulders. Leggings were made of the skin of buffalo, deer, or elk, and decorated with bands of porcupine-quills. About the year 1830 the loin-cloth was in general use among the males, but only a generation or two before that date their only garments were moccasins and a carelessly-worn robe. In the earliest times, says tradition, moccasins were made from the skin of a deer's head wrapped about the feet and tied at the ankle. Young men in their proud days of courtship wore elaborately decorated deerskin shirts. There is a tradition that long ago few men wore the hair long: it was cut close and singed; but later the old men permitted their hair to grow

and twisted it into a strand, which was gathered in a coil on the top of the head. This was followed by the general custom of wearing the hair long, with a bang in front curled into a roll on a heated stick. At the temples hung a small braid decorated with porcupine-quills. Tattooing was sometimes practised, an animal or a bird being depicted; this, they believed, added to one's spiritual strength.

The dress of the women was made usually of two mountain-sheep skins, one in front and one behind, the tails left hanging at the top, and the skins of the heads being also retained. The dress reached to the ankles, and the fringe and deer-hoof rattles at the bottom swept the moccasins. At the shoulders the sleeves were decorated with porcupine-quills, and as with many tribes they were left open under the arms for the convenient nursing of children. Their leggings, of tight-fitting deerskin, extended from the moccasins to above the knees; they were fastened along the outer sides and decorated with diagonal stripes of black or red paint as an indication of the husband's coups. A woman who had good gardens and a well-kept lodge was permitted to wear a belt, about six inches wide, made of deerskin on which feathers were thickly sewn.

When a child was born the parents made a feast, and some prominent person, an old man or an old woman, was called in to give it a name. There was no ceremony connected with piercing the ears, a duty which the grandmother performed. When a young man reached maturity and had accomplished some brave deed, he was privileged to take the name of his father, grandfather, or other near paternal relation. The person whose name he assumed received presents from the young man and was compelled to choose another name for himself; no longer could he use his former one.

When the youth was old enough to understand a man's duties, his father would instruct him in honorable precepts. He would say: "Poor as I am., it is my duty to rear you well. When you are alone, pray to the spirits. Look at people who have many horses, and follow their example. Watch for the things that are disgraceful, and avoid them. Have respect for the aged. If you meet an old person in a narrow place between the lodges, step aside for him. Do not rush past, for if you do and brush against him roughly he will turn and say, 'There is a foolish boy!' and that is not good. When you are able to kill buffalo, it is time for you to marry." The boy's grandmother would say to him: "I hear a good many bad reports about you. I hear you are growing foolish.

You are not respecting the old people. You do not stay home at night, but go about from village to village saying bad things; and instead of caring for your father's horses, you neglect them and let them go without water. You must stop these things and cry to the spirits to make you a good man." The brother of the youth's mother was privileged to admonish him severely and without pity, pointing out his shortcomings with sharp sarcasm and ridicule.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CEREMONIES

Ítsihkawahídish, He First Made All Things, is the most important of the Hidatsa deities. He made the earth, and with the help of *Adhapúshish,* Spotted Hair, created the streams, hills, and trees. He is remembered in all prayers and invocations. He is known also as *Itákatétash,* Old Man Who Never Dies, and all other spirits are subordinate to him, including *Kádhutétash,* Old Woman Who Never Dies; *Adhapúshish; Máhupa-wía,* Mystery Woman; *Mahásh,* Spring Boy; *Atútísh,* Thrown To The Rear Of The Lodge; and *Kádhitawapíshish,* Grandmother's Child.

Judging by the prayers occurring in the principal ceremonies as well as in minor religious rites, Kádhutétash, the spirit of perpetual life and goddess of all growing things, is more often supplicated than any other character in the Hidatsa pantheon. Máhupa-wía symbolizes the female principle, fecundity in all living organisms, plant and animal. Wives invoke her aid, and mothers make her offerings and pray that their daughters may be fortunate in childbearing. She is also supposed to be the wife of He First Made All Things, and is omnipresent. Yet Máhupa-wía appears never to have been completely developed into a myth character, for she is never invoked in ceremonies, has no myths woven about her, and is in no way symbolized.

Not only are the personages in the Hidatsa mythology supplicated; all animals and birds are the living representatives of corresponding spirits of the infinite. The latter, however, are differentiated from the mythcharacters proper, for to Ítsihkawahídish and like deities all men apply for aid in a general and rather indefinite way, while on the other hand they expect specific acts of protection or beneficence only from those spirits of birds and animals which they have in some way obtained as their medicine, or tutelary spirit.

The living man is of four parts, the flesh-and-blood body and

three spirits, in their language *idháhi,* "shadows." These are, first, the shadow that follows the body in the day; secondly, the spirit that is active in dreams and visions, leaving and acting independently of the body; thirdly, the mentality, always present with the body. After death the three unite to become *dók-idháhi,* human shadow," the spirit-man. The flesh does not enter the after-world, but *dók-idháhi* bears the semblance of man and is possessed of everlasting life. It hovers about the place of its separation from the body during four days, then by tortuous under-world trails reaches the land of the spirits, where they dwell in a large village. The Hidatsa have no conception of future punishment other than they know in this world, that of adverse tribal sentiment.

The earthly record of an individual, be it good or bad, must be borne to the perpetual hereafter. This belief, even if but vaguely existent, encouraged men in the days of intertribal warfare to gain the greatest possible number of honors. At a distance from the great village of spirits is a smaller one where dwell those who are by their own acts outcasts, — murderers and suicides. Children were taught that such people are exiled in the future world and can have no part in its happiness. The spirits of the dead sometimes return to earth in the form of whirlwinds; when such a wind met a person in the open or blew down through the smoke-hole of a lodge, people would cover their faces with their blankets, exclaiming, "Pass on by! I do not wish to go with you!" The spirits that control the winds and weather are East Wind, *Húts-úshatakoa;* North Wind, *Hútsiawashitákoa;* South Wind, *Hútsi-úwatakoa;* West Wind, *Hútsi-pátsitakoa.* Prayers were made to South Wind to bring the chinook, and to East Wind for warm days. Usually these prayers were directed to He First Made All Things, who was believed to communicate them to the other spirits.

There were two classes of medicine-men among the Hidatsa, the healers and the war-leaders.[6] Both received their powers through visions produced by fasting, when some spirit or animal would be revealed to them, to which they would pray for guidance and success. In these fastings they learned the songs, the mode of dressing and painting, and the manner of worship which their respective tutelary spirits demanded.

It was the belief that spirits in the likeness of every animal

[6] *Akuwápúsh,* He That Heals; *Akudídi,* He That Guides.

species dwelt in the sky. From them the animals below received their mysterious powers and attributes, which they in turn transferred to the medicine-men. The animal spirits were believed to select men who bore resemblance to themselves, to whom they would impart their spirit-strength. When a spirit had found a man worthy of its protection and power, it "put something in his heart" to cause him to go into the hills to fast, that he might have a vision and receive the medicine that the spirit wished to give.

The war-leaders avowed their ability to forecast by making medicine for the success or failure of the war-parties they led, and according to tradition they rarely made mistakes. Hence, a successful war-leader became a power among the people, but ascribed no honor to his own skill or generalship, attributing his success to his supernatural power.

The healers learned from their spirit protectors the songs and the vegetable products to use in curing the sick. The recovery of their patients was no doubt due largely to mental suggestion, as the treatment employed was rarely such as could afford any material aid. Massage was frequently employed among the Hidatsa, and its value was recognized. In the treatment of pneumonia a peculiar black earth was heated and applied every few minutes to the chest of the patient until relief was obtained. Although in this they practised a method that any physician might approve, there is little doubt that in their view some inherent power of the black earth was at least as important an element as the heat. Though the healers had great opportunity for accumulating property, they did not take unfair advantage of it, for their guardian spirits would not approve of this.

Any one by making presents could procure the right to use the songs and to exercise the power of a medicine-man, but the latter did not relinquish his rights. In times of drought a medicine-man took his pipe, marched through the village, then climbing to the top of his lodge stood and invoked the spirits to send rain.

The two following instances, which happened within his memory, are related by Lean Wolf to illustrate the operation of medicine:

Red Shield, a great chief, once led a war-party. In the fight two of his bravest warriors, Black Horn and Brant, were wounded, and the arrows were still imbedded in their bodies after their return to the village. Red Shield in great grief said:

"What shall I do if you two die? You are my bravest men."

Brant said, "Black Horn may die, but I shall live."

To this Black Horn retorted, "You are foolish. The buffalo, the horse, and the bear have adopted me as their child. I have seen their medicine used on men more severely wounded than I."

"Did you see them in your visions?" asked Brant.

"I did, replied the other.

"You have often seen things in your visions!" bantered his friend.

Black Horn replied: "When I was a young man, as I took my father's horse to water he stepped on a lizard and cut it in two. The body grew together before my eyes. The lizard said, 'You saw me make my medicine, so you shall have it.' If *he* could recover, *I* shall certainly not die of these few wounds."

Brant, after praying to his medicine, the head of a brant, asked them to make a clear path to the water. He then burned incense and held his head in it, and stood up, the blood flowing from his mouth and the arrow wound. Walking like a brant and uttering sounds simulating the cry of his bird he waded into the water up to his waist. He dived, and when he came up the water was red with blood. Again he dived, and when he rose the second time the arrow-point was in his hand! He walked into the village where Black Horn was lying, and said:

"You see, what I told you is true."

Black Horn answered, "What you say seems to be true. Father, bring me my medicine."

His father returned with a rattle, and Black Horn told him to sing, and beat him from head to foot with it. He then walked out of the lodge, throwing his body like a lizard. When he was outside, he pulled out the arrow that had been so firmly fixed in his body, and returned.

Says Lean Wolf, "My father, Red Owl, told me this story:

"On a certain raid against the Assiniboin and Cree, the chief of the Hidatsa was unhorsed. The brother of Bear Medicine, a brave man, said he would die with the chief, and made a stand against the enemy while the others retreated.

"On their way back, Bear Medicine adopted a young man as his brother in the place of the one who had been killed, and these two, becoming separated from the others, journeyed on alone. Passing through thick woods, they saw a raven's nest in a tall tree, and concluded to stop there for the night and capture the young ravens for supper. Bear Medicine climbed the tree and threw down the young birds, but as he started to descend he slipped and fell, striking the ground with enough force to stun him for a short time. The young man,

thinking Bear Medicine was dead, cried over him. Soon Bear Medicine regained his senses, looked up, and said, 'Do not cry, my brother. It is well. We shall be poor no longer.' He got up, and after rubbing the bruised spots took a flint and made fire; then they roasted the young birds and ate them. While they were smoking, Bear Medicine said, 'When I fell from the tree I had a vision that I was falling from the top of a skin lodge. It was painted a reddish color. I fell right in front of the door, and a man inside said, "Enter, my child!" He showed me many curious things and told me how to cure the sick. He said the first one I am to cure will be a person who has been scalped.'

"They started on, but a blizzard overtook them and they sought shelter in a wolf's den. Bear Medicine placed his brother close to the young whelps where it was warm, and himself sat at the entrance. In the morning the young man said, 'Brother, these wolves have called me their brother, and have given me the name Wolf Moccasin.' Then they left the wolf den and took with them a buffalo calf which the mother wolf had left there, and roasted it for breakfast.

"When they reached home they learned that a young woman was lying wounded and scalped, but still alive, and that eight horses had been offered to any one who could cure her.

"Bear Medicine sent word that if they would add a black bobtail horse he would make her well. The parents said the black horse was of no value, and that they would add another in its place, but Bear Medicine had seen a black horse in his vision and insisted on having it; so the black horse was included, and another besides, making ten in all.

"When the price had been agreed upon, Bear Medicine called Wolf Moccasin and his friend, Red Owl, to his lodge. He cut his forelock rather short and placed several raven feathers in his hair. He sang and put his hand to his mouth, and coughing like a bear produced some yellow paint, which he smeared on his face. Then he slapped his sides, and again putting his hand to his mouth brought forth red paint, with which he painted his face around the eyes to resemble a bear. He dressed in his finest clothes.

"Red Owl and Wolf Moccasin also put on their best shirts and leggings of deerskin, and painted their faces red, with streaks of white on the hair. Throwing buffalo-robes over their shoulders, they started out, Bear Medicine singing, 'My father says, "When the wind blows I will go with it!"' He was in the lead, carrying a cluster of choke-

cherry stems covered with blossoms and leaves. They entered the lodge of the sick woman, and robes were spread for them to sit upon. My father thought, 'How can we save this woman, when she is so near dead?' For she was very thin, and was breathing fast. Her nostrils were closing together, a sign that she was near death, and though Red Owl had a great deal of confidence in his friend's powers, he thought he was attempting something impossible.

"Bear Medicine called for a lodge-stake, and when it was given to him he drove it into the ground in front of him, then pulled it out, and in the hole placed the choke-cherry branches. He burned incense, and stretching out his hand toward the sick woman, began to sing, 'When the wind blows I will go with it!' The woman's eyes had been rolling wildly, as though they had no strings to them, but before the song was ended she was gazing straight at Bear Medicine. When he had finished the song, he said, 'In five days you will be walking!' My father was astonished at his friend, and the people all murmured their surprise at this bold statement.

"After this declaration the healer burned buffalo-chips, and with extended hand sang, 'Young woman, sleep; I sing.' When he had finished, the young woman fell asleep, and every one was glad, for she had not rested for a long time. While she slept they brought food to the healers, and the people spoke only in whispers. After a time the young woman awoke and asked for something to eat, and they brought food, but before they could give it to her, Bear Medicine said, 'Give it to me first.' He buried his face in the blossoms and leaves, snuffling and snorting like a bear. When he lifted his face he put his hand to his mouth and took out a handful of choke-cherries. These he gave to the woman, and she ate of them, and said, 'Good.' Then Bear Medicine fed her a little of the meat.

"The people's hearts were glad, and they brought in presents — robes, parfléches, and leggings — and piled them about the young men. Time after time some spectator would say: 'I will bring you presents if you cure her. Try harder! Hold nothing back!' Bear Medicine asked his brother to help him, so Wolf Moccasin sang his songs and took chokecherries from his mouth, which he gave to the woman to eat. Red Owl did the same, singing the song his father had taught him, 'The bear comes out of the woods.'

"The parents of the young woman begged the medicine-men to stay until she had recovered, and beds were made for them in the

lodge. They sang over her daily, and washed the wound in her head, while her mother bathed her body. On the fifth day she walked, and on the tenth day she was well."

CORN CEREMONY

The Corn Ceremony, *Kóhat-átiake,*[17] was performed in the spring or early summer as a supplication to the spirits to grant bountiful harvests and strength to the tribe.

A man who in the preceding autumn had witnessed the ceremony in a dream, climbed to the top of his lodge, made a vow to the Corn Spirit, *Kádhutétash,* Old Woman Who Never Dies, declaring in a loud voice, "Hear me, O Kádhutétash! I shall give a great feast in your honor, that I may live to see another season, that my people may become strong and prosperous, that our harvests may be bountiful, and our children grow abundant as the flowers of spring!"

The people all would hear him and through the village would echo a murmur of approbation. The announcement might be made by a man on a war excursion. Having uttered the vow he could not retract, for it was dangerous to deceive the spirits, and such a course would bring everlasting disgrace upon him. He then began to collect robes, clothing, horses, and other things of value, to be given away as presents or exchanged for medicine bundles. When everything was in readiness he took a present and a pipe to a man whom he believed to have greater supernatural strength than himself, and requested him to act as priest in the ceremony. If the man accepted and smoked the pipe, he became the Medicine Maker,[8] and he soon went to the lodge of the Singer,[9] who knew all the songs and secrets of the ceremony, and, offering him a robe and the pipe, invited him to participate. The Singer signified his willingness by smoking. When the Medicine Maker had left, the Singer dressed and painted. Taking a piece of charcoal, he made three motions as of painting his face; the fourth time he drew a mark across it, singing:

Madhídits, madhídits.
I am walking, I am walking.

[7] From *kóhati,* corn; *átiake,* lodge-like.

[8] *Akumahupáhe,* He That Does Supernatural Things.

[9] *Akumápáhe,* He That Sings.

The word signified that he was still following the instructions given by Old Woman Who Never Dies to the first priests of the Corn Ceremony. He then placed a necklace of corn-ears about his neck, singing:

Tsidhi.
Yellow (corn).

Taking an ear of corn in his hand, he chanted:

Miduhíts, madhídits.
I am standing, I am walking.

Putting on a cap of the head-skin of his medicine animal, of the kit-fox for example, he sang:

Íhoka-dhídits.
Kit-fox is walking.

When he was ready to depart, he addressed Old Woman Who Never Dies, singing:

Bíakasha, nítawidátsi awákáts; mahúsh, hidhówadhets.
Young Woman, your fire-smoke I see; I am coming, it is here.

He then went to the lodge of the Medicine Maker, where those who were to participate in the ceremony were seated. They had been invited because their medicines were various birds supposed to be the children of Old Woman Who Never Dies, and were therefore particularly appropriate for this ceremony. Their medicine bundles were laid in the centre of the lodge. The Medicine Maker burned incense, and all started for the lodge of the man that had made the vow, the Medicine Maker in the lead bearing the head of a deer, the others following abreast with the Singer in the middle.

At their approach the devotee came forward with a pipe, and as the line stopped he offered it to the Medicine Maker, who took several whiffs and returned it. The man who had made the vow retreated, the line started its march, and when they reached him he again offered the pipe to the Medicine Maker. This occurred four times.

In the honor place of the devotee's lodge a very fine buffalo-skin

had been spread as an altar. Upon it the Medicine Maker placed the deer-head. The Singer sat behind it, and at his right were the Medicine Maker, the votary and his wife, and the other participants. Buffalo-robes had been spread in front of the positions taken by the assisting medicine-men, each of whom deposited his medicine bundle upon his particular robe.

The wife of the votary, bare above the waist, concealed her upper body with a buffalo-robe, which she threw aside as the Medicine Maker raised the deer-head and touched it to her body. Each of the medicine-men then touched her body with his bundle and laid it in front of the altar on robes spread for that purpose. This rite was to impart to the woman the strength and power contained in the medicine bundles.

The devotee and his wife then seated themselves at the side of the lodge on the left of the Singer, who bade the devotee bring a live coal from the fire in the centre and lay it on an earthen dish. From a wicker bowl-case, symbol of Old Woman Who Never Dies, the Singer took a handful of sage, and with a slow motion to each of the Four Winds lowered it to the coal, making four circles over it, and let it fall. The Medicine Maker waved a large bundle of sage over the smoke. All were silent. The Singer took up the dish in which burned the incense, and passed it back and forth over the medicine bundles, singing:

Íyehokataki tsakíts.
Sage is good.

When he set the dish down, the people all stretched their hands toward it and rubbed themselves as though receiving its power. The devotee filled a pipe and handed it to the medicine-man at the end of the row, who after inhaling a puff or two passed it to the one seated at his left. When all had smoked, the Singer raised one of the medicine bundles, perhaps the Raven, and sang, as its owner came forward:

Pedhitská dídahuts.
Raven is walking.

The Raven man took the bundle from his hands and danced backward and forward between the altar and the fireplace, holding it

in both hands and swinging it from side to side, both he and the Singer chanting:

Pedhitská hákadia.
Raven is dancing back and forth.

The Medicine Maker brought offerings of choice bits of meat and pretended to feed the Raven bundle, which the owner then gave back to him, returning to his seat while his wife gathered up the presents offered to his medicine by the votary. The Singer thus called in order each of the medicine-men, and learned the songs as he had learned the Raven songs. When all these songs had been repeated, the votary and his wife brought food and placed it before the altar, and the Singer chanted the prayer to He First Made All Things:

Madhídits, Ítsihkawahídish.
I am walking (in your path), Ítsihkawahídish.

The votary brought a dish containing several choice parts of meat and laid it before the Singer, who sang:

Bíash, madhídits.
Old Woman (Who Never Dies), I am walking (in your path).

Lifting the dish, he extended it to the Four Winds and then threw the meat among the medicine-men, accompanying these acts with the songs:

Madúhtsi; déhkiwats; kówits.
I take; I offer; it is done.

This was allegorical of the feeding of her birds by Old Woman Who Never Dies. The people scrambled for the food, chirping like black birds, ravens, and chickadees. The votary and his wife distributed the remainder of the food among the spectators and participants, and when the feast was finished, the owners of the medicine bundles advanced to receive them, the singer chanting successively:

Madhídits; kówíwats.
Awató'hawakits.
Awahídawakits.
Awatsótawakits.
I am walking;
I have finished.
The land is green.
The land is yellow.
The land is gray.

The Medicine Maker took a bundle of sage and waved it to the Four Winds and toward the door, as though ridding the lodge of evil spirits, and the Singer brushed himself with sage, removed his cap and his necklace of corn-ears, and then washed his face with water brought by the votary. His last song was,

Kadhakówits; huts —It is done ; come —

signifying that the vow had been fulfilled, and supplicating the Corn Spirit to answer the prayers for a bounteous harvest.

SUN DANCE

The Sun Dance, *Dahpiké*, [10] of the Hidatsa was in its main features similar to that of other tribes. It was primarily a supplication for success in war, a prayer that the enemy might he delivered to the suppliant, who believed that the sacrifice made would prove him worthy of supernatural aid. The man giving the rite, however, did not cease with asking for personal strength in war, but sought beneficence toward all his people.

A man might have had a vision in which he had seen the Sun Dance being performed in his behalf. He would then go out alone, as if fasting, and declare to the sun:

"In the coming summer I shall build your lodge. I shall stand in the holy place. I shall kill buffalo and take the hides from them for you. I shall dance for you, that I may have visions to help me in war, that my people may grow strong, that no disease may come, that the buffalo may be many, and that there may be abundance of rain."

[10] Compounded of *dáhpi*, robe, and an obsolete word meaning to gather, referring to the covering of the lodge with buffalo-robes.

He bade his wife: "Tell your relations that I shall perform the Sun Dance." She would spread the news, and the men would devote their efforts to procuring buffalo-hides, which they would bring to the women to cure, the Dancer providing feasts for them.

When everything was in readiness he took a robe to one of his father's clansmen, a man experienced in performing the ceremony, who represented the sun.[11] Before him the Dancer placed the robe and offered him a pipe, saying, "Father, I have come to you for guidance. I wish to obtain the medicine of the Sun."

The older man, accepting the gift, replied, "I am glad, my son, that you have come to me; I will aid you in this thing."

In making the public announcement that the dance was to be given, the clansmen of the Dancer's father asked for the scalp and the left hand of an enemy. These must be procured especially for this purpose; sometimes they were offered freely, again they were withheld until a high price was given.

In selecting the sun-pole the declaration of the virgins seen in the Sioux rite was not observed, nor did the striking feature of the Sacred Woman appear as in the Blackfoot ceremony to the sun. Before the raising of the pole a fresh buffalo-head with a broad strip of the back-hide having the tail attached was fastened to the crotch with thongs; when the pole was in place the buffalo-head faced the setting sun.

After the building of the sacred lodge, men who owned medicine bundles brought them into the lodge of the Priest, and the Dancer furnished each one a robe on which to lay his bundle. He selected a bundle, perhaps the skin of a red fox, for which he gave a horse. The Singer took the skin, held it to the incense, touched in turn the bodies of the Dancer's wife and the Dancer, and replaced it in front of the former owner. Thus were bought a number of medicine bundles, for which was paid whatever the owners asked**,** in addition to the robe on which the medicine lay. The Singer had already learned the songs and the manner of painting which accompanied the medicines, and thus was able to teach the Dancer the secrets of each medicine procured. Some medicines were credited with the virtue of affording protection against the enemy, or luck in horse-racing, or success in scouting and hunting. When the Dancer had bought what he desired, the men went out, each one carrying away the robe on which lay his medicine.

[11] He is known as *Akumahupáhe*, He That Does Supernatural Things — the Priest.

The thrilling part of the ceremony began after the construction of the sun-lodge, when the Priest took the scalp and the hand and raised them to the Four Winds, saying, "I have often taken scalps like this from my enemies. May you have the same good fortune, my son." He then gave them to the Dancer.

The young men who were to fast and to have their flesh pierced began to come into the sun-lodge, each carrying his medicine bundle and an armful of sage. They passed to the south side of the lodge, laid the sage on the ground, and hung the medicine bundles on short sticks thrust into the ground in front of them.

The Dancer took the bundles he had bought and piled them on a buffalo-skull, and as the singers were beginning their songs of mystery in slow measure, incense was made. The Dancer trembled with excitement as the Priest took white paint and after holding it in the incense smeared it over the body of the devotee and drew a white circle around his face. He then hung a medicine hoop on the young man's back by a cord around the neck, and on his head placed a band of jackrabbit-skin, the head of which drooped over his left ear. Next an eagle down-feather was tied to the scalp-lock, pointing backward, and a whistle of eagle-bone was hung around his neck. From the left wrist hung the dried hand of an enemy, and from the right wrist the scalp.

While the Dancer was being dressed, the fasters opened their medicine bundles, burned incense, and began to paint and adorn themselves in the manner taught by their guardian spirits. Others, having no medicine, smeared themselves completely with white. Each had a whistle of eagle-bone hung from his neck and carried a shield and a lance. The singers also were painting themselves and placing raven-feathers in their hair. They arranged themselves in front of the suspended buffalo-skin, extended their hands toward it, and rubbed their bodies and limbs as if receiving some power from the buffalo.

South of the entrance the medicine-men ranged themselves, and the old women who prepared the spot for the Sun Dance, together with the medicine-women, sat at the north. They came not merely as spectators, but to pray and fast. The relatives of the fasters entered, bearing food, and each faster took a bowl to a clansman of his father and offered it to him.

Then came the piercing. Those who chose approached the Priest and the Singer. Should any young man have gone to a clansman of his father, a murmur of disapproval would have filled the lodge. Two slits

were made in the skin of each breast or shoulder, and through these incisions was passed the end of a rawhide rope, which was prevented from drawing out by a wooden pin in a loop at the extreme end. The ropes hung from the nostrils of the buffalo-skin at the top of the pole. Then the Singer and the Priest swung the half-suspended man four times, his feet barely touching the ground, and at the fourth swing released their hold, when he started to encircle the pole, his eyes fastened on the buffalo-head. He pulled back, trying to break loose, but dared not touch the rope with his hands; any attempt to relieve the tension in this manner would have called forth a yell of derision from the spectators at his lack of endurance. When he finally broke loose he fell to the ground, and the Priest placed him on his bed of sage, where he remained fasting, two, three, or four days.

The Dancer was not pierced, but danced toward the pole and back, springing from the ground with rigid legs, his feet close together, his eyes fixed on the buffalo-head, blowing his whistle in rhythm with the beating of the drum; his mind was intent on the desire to become a great warrior, and he prayed silently for visions. Thus he continued until he fell from exhaustion, and there he lay until the vision appeared, remaining until the end of the fourth day if necessary.

The fasters, as they reclined on their beds of sage, had dreams and visions which they related to the Priest, and if these visions seemed sufficient the faster was told to leave the lodge, since his supplications had been answered. Near the doorway the medicine-men were still fasting, seeking for visions. If any felt that his prayers were not being answered, he cut off the first joint of the little finger of his left hand as an offering to gain the favor of the spirits.

Some of the young men who were not dancing with those inside might ask that their shoulders be pierced; after this was done, with rawhide ropes attached to the slits they dragged buffalo-heads through the village.

If it was seen that a participant was becoming too weak to break away, or had fallen several times, finally without strength to rise, he was cut loose. At the end of the fourth day only a few were left — those most sincere in their purpose and belief.

The Dancer, exhausted, was now taken to his own lodge. If he or any of the other fasters wished to continue the torture longer than the fourth day, the lodge was permitted to stand for them, otherwise it was torn down, only the sun-pole and the buffalo-skull being left to mark

the spot.

CEREMONY OF THE BOWL

In addition to the Sun Dance, the Hidatsa had two four-days ceremonies of supplication by ordeal in which the principal features were piercing and fasting. The more important of these was *Midháha-kidutiku,* Taking Up The Bowl, based on the legend of the sacred bowl, which symbolizes Old Woman Who Never Dies and figures so prominently in Hidatsa mythology.

According to the legend as passed down by the chief Roadmaker, uncle of Lean Wolf, in the days when the Mídhokats were encamped near a beautiful lake to the northeast, one of their young men was fasting on the shore far from the village, and crying to the spirits to pity him. Just before the sun went behind the world, he saw something on the shore where the waves lapped the sand, and when he came closer he perceived that it was an earthen vessel marked with the track of a brant around its rim.

He took it to his lodge, for he thought it must be a vessel of mystery. That night he had a vision, and the bowl spoke to him in the words of a woman, saying, "My child, I am Old Woman Who Never Dies. Hold me sacred, and I will bring you good fortune, for I have many friends among the spirits. The corn and the buffalo-paunch are my food. I shall teach you the songs and rites of a ceremony that will cause your people to prosper and bring rain upon your crops. Make offerings to me of buffalo-paunches, and hang them before me on cottonwood stakes. Prepare a pipeand tobacco for Ítsihkawahídish and Adhapúshish, who aid me in making medicine, for they are men and like the smoke. All the birds and animals living on this lake are of my medicine. Let no man who has blood on his hands enter the lodge where this ceremony takes place, nor permit any women to be present."

Then she revealed to him the rites of Taking Up The Bowl.

A man who desired this ceremony performed climbed to the top of his earthen lodge and appealed to Old Woman Who Never Dies: "Bowl, I cause you to be taken up, that my children may grow strong. Let the rain come upon us." Or he might go to the hills and utter this prayer, crying like a child. Already he had provided offerings, and food, robes, and clothing.

When all was ready he sought the Keeper of the Bowl, and offered

him the pipe, apprising him of the object of his visit. The Keeper told him that he was doing right to take up the bowl, and accepted the pipe, lighted it, and prayed to the sacred vessel, which was kept in the honor place of his lodge: "Bowl, we are about to take you up again with prayers and fasting. Open your ears that you may hear our songs. Give us your aid."

He silently repeated songs and prayers until the morning of the ceremony, when he went to the suppliant's lodge, where, after purifying the interior with incense, he prepared a canopy of buffalo-robes in the honor place. Beneath it he laid a robe upon which was placed a bowl-case — a basket of osiers and box-elder bark — the symbol of Old Woman Who Never Dies. A woman's dress of mountain-sheep skin was placed over the case, and was partially covered with a newly tanned elk-hide, soft and white. On top of this was a war-bonnet of eagle-feathers dyed red, and at each side were placed presents of robes and clothing. In front hung several buffalo-paunches on cottonwood stakes.

To the right of this altar a bed of sage was laid for the sacred vessel, which was completely enclosed in the inner skin of a buffalo-paunch stretched tight over the top, so as to form a drum. Small bunches of sage were inserted under the sinews that bound the skin. The drumsticks were about two feet long, with one end bent into a circle. The vessel thus prepared was symbolic of Ítsihkawahídish and Adhapúshish.

Toward evening the people assembled, and, with the keeper of a sacred pipe in advance bearing this talisman, marched four times around the village, singing, "The rain is coming, it is here." They entered the lodge of the suppliant, and while the Keeper of the Bowl burned incense of sage, sweet-grass, and fir needles, the pipe-bearer laid the sacred pipe before the altar. The singers, eight or nine in number, gathered about the bowl, the medicine-men sitting at their right, and those who had come to fast ranging themselves to the left of the altar, each laying down an armful of sage, which was to serve as his bed during the four days and four nights of fasting.

The ceremonial dress was a buffalo-robe worn hairy side outward, and the participants painted themselves blue with clay from which pottery is made.

When all had entered, the singers chanted a wordless song, the burden of which was that the mystery-power had come. They stood up imitating the various birds that belong to the bowl, — ducks,

geese, brant,and smaller birds, — while the fasters, rising, wailed to Ítsihkawahídish and Adhapúshish, as though they were lost children crying for their parents. Several other prayer-songs, without words, were sung, after which the Keeper of the Bowl sang "*Hi-hi-wa-hi*," signifying that the spirits had come. The singers swayed from side to side, and at the end of the song settled down, mimicking the actions of waterfowl and giving their cries.

The Keeper of the Bowl burned incense, and, taking some of the food previously brought in by relatives of the fasters, held it to the Four Winds and then offered it to Old Woman Who Never Dies with the prayer:

"Old Woman Who Never Dies, your mystery-powers are good. Now eat. Our young men have provided this food, that you may make them strong."

The fasters now divided the food, and each of them took a bowl of it to one of the medicine-men, a clansman of his father. When the latter had finished eating, the faster placed his hands on the medicine-man's shoulders and stroked his arm to the wrists, as though receiving some power or virtue from him. His relative then sang to the spirits, imploring them to aid the faster.

The fasters next carried food to the spectators and the medicine-men, while the suppliant provided for the singers and the Keeper of the Bowl. Before eating, each one offered the food to the Four Winds and the altar. After the others had eaten and smoked, the suppliant and such of the fasters as chose came to the Keeper of the Bowl and the singers and were pierced as in the *Dahpiké.* Slits were cut in the flesh of each breast and the inserted rawhide ropes were fastened to the cross-timbers of the supporting posts of the lodge.

The devotees in a frenzied dance made violent efforts to free themselves. Buffalo-skulls were sometimes hung by thongs passed through slits in the thighs or shoulders, and other fasters were pierced through the flesh of the shoulders and suspended, their feet clear of the ground.

The singers encouraged the dancers and kept their spirits at the highest pitch by wild singing and drumming. The fasters endured the torture as long as they were able; if they failed to tear themselves loose, or fainted with the intense pain, the Keeper of the Bowl and the singers cut the thongs and laid the exhausted dancers on their beds of sage, where they remained until the end of the ceremony, fasting and

praying for visions.

While women were not permitted inside the lodge during the ceremony, some of them came and slept in the outer entrance, hoping to have dreams that might be favorably interpreted. They departed at the first sign of dawn, that their presence might not be discovered.

MINOR CEREMONIES

Among the minor ceremonies of the Hidatsa was*Amadhásh-átiake,* the Earth-naming Rite. According to the legend the spirits of the animals performed all these ceremonies before they were given to the Hidatsa, and the Earth-naming Rite was received from them by a man called Raven Necklace, who went into the woods in the early spring and found an owl's nest in a hollow tree. He began to shake the tree in the expectation of throwing out the owlets. The old owl said: "Raven Necklace, my children are cold; do not disturb them," and for his kindness in heeding her prayer she taught him the Earth-naming Ceremony, the purpose of which was the usual one of supplication to the spirits to bring rain, to keep sickness from the tribe, to insure success in war, and to make the people strong and vigorous.

All the animals and birds and the spirits were represented in this ceremony, and every man who possessed the medicine of one of these was invited to participate. As the man who caused the ceremony to be performed had to make a gift to each of these men, a long time was needed to acquire sufficient property.

Another was the Thunderbird Ceremony, *Tsakák-átiake,* based on the legend of Packs Antelope, a hunter who had gone astray from his people for a time and dwelt with the Thunderbirds, but later was rescued from them by a water-monster and sent back to his people with the medicine-power of both the Thunderbirds and the water-monster. The purpose of the ceremony was to bring back those who had gone astray as Packs Antelope had done, and to make the devotee a great warrior and medicine-man.

The Buffalo Ceremony, *Mité-kéiku,* designed to call back the herd in time of scarcity, was founded on the interesting legend of the Buffalo Woman.

A herd of buffalo were travelling north, when one of the cows trod on a thorn. She limped along until the leg became so swollen that she could not proceed, and coming to a little course where there was water

and grass, she stopped. Soon a bull calf was born to her, and the two kept close to the coulee, for nearby was a large camp. But the calf grew venturesome, and the mother feared that the people would see him and find their hiding-place; so, possessing a mysterious power, she changed herself into a woman, and the calf into a boy.

The Buffalo Woman built a lodge in the coulée, and as she was still lame and unable to walk far she sent the boy out to gather bark and grass, which she transformed by her magic into meat, and from it made pemmican. One day she gave the boy a cake of pemmican and two split tongues, and said, "Go up to the village, and when you come to where the children are playing, join them. You will recognize the chief's daughter by the calf-skin robe she wears. She is about your age, and the prettiest child there. Call her to one side and give her this tongue and pemmican. If the children ask who you are, say that you live up the river in a coulée with your mother. Bid them not to tell the people in the village anything about you."

The boy came to the village and played with the children, and just before he left he called the girl aside and gave her the tongue and pemmican. She took them home, and her mother, seeing the meat, said:

"Where did you get this, my child? There is nothing like it in the country."

The girl replied that a little boy had given it to her, and the mother at once told her husband.

"It is good," he replied. "Perhaps our daughter will be the means of bringing to us a mystery-man of great power." It was a time of starvation in the village.

Three times more the boy came bringing pemmican and tongue, and on the fourth occasion he asked the girl to accompany him to his home. She was bashful and somewhat frightened, but her mother reassured her: "My child, no harm will come to you. Four times this meat has been brought. The spirits above will protect you."

So she went with the boy, and when they came to the lodge in the coulée, the Buffalo Woman said, "I am glad I am to have such a beautiful daughter-in-law." Then she fed her with choice meat and sent her back to the village with a skin bag filled with meat, cautioning her not to disclose the secret of its source.

Calling the wise men of the tribe together, the chief told them of the strange occurrence, and asked their advice. They said:

"Let things go on as they are until we see what happens."

The fourth time the girl went to the coulée, her mother accompanied her. Seeing the wrappings on the foot of the Buffalo Woman, she asked:

"What is the matter with your foot?"

"I stepped on a thorn," was the reply, "and have been lame ever since."

The chief's wife bent down and pulled out the thorn, then she washed and dressed the foot. Three times she visited the Buffalo Woman, and the wound healed. In her gratitude the Buffalo Woman expressed a desire to live in their village and to have her son marry the girl, and the chief's wife gladly consenting, they packed their belongings on their backs and started for the camp.

Their little lodge was erected on the outskirts of the village, where they would be undisturbed. In the evening the Buffalo Woman said: "My son, I wish you would go to the North and find your father. See if you cannot bring back the buffalo to these starving people. Let us go out, and I will change you into a buffalo."

When night fell she went out on the prairie with her son and her daughter-in-law, and said to the youth, "Fold your blanket around you tightly, and roll on the ground like a calf." He did so, and instantly he was changed into a buffalo calf. She commanded, "Roll again, and you will be a strong young buffalo." Again he rolled, and it was as she had said. "Your horns are soft, she told him, so you must roll again." He did so, and when he stood up he was so large and powerful that the girl shrank close to the Buffalo Woman in awe. The mother said, "Once more roll, and you will be strong enough to withstand all hardship." This time when he stood up his beard almost swept the ground.

Then he left his mother and his wife and travelled northward for many days, at last reaching the country where the buffalo lived in great villages like people. Here he found his father, and said to him:

"Father, my mother sent me from the far South where we live among the Hidatsa. I have come for you. We have many eagle-feathers and pretty things which we wish to give to you and your people."

"It is good," replied the father; "we will come."

Then the father called all the buffalo together and told them to prepare for a journey. To his son he said, "Go back. In four days we will come."

When the young buffalo reached home, his mother re-formed him

into a man, and told the chief to bid the people bring all the eagle-feathers they had, and tie them to straight sticks, which they were to place at the northern end of the village. On the fourth day they were not to stir from their lodges. These commands were faithfully obeyed, and on the fourth day in a raging snowstorm a large herd of buffalo rushed through the village.[12] The buffalo had come back.

MYTH AND LEGEND

ORIGIN MYTH

Long ago the people came from under the earth by a great body of water far to the south.[13]

A young man in a vision was directed to the root of a tree that hung down from above. Having the gopher for his medicine, he took the form of that animal and climbed up the root, burrowing until he reached a beautiful upper world. He returned and told the people of the wonderful things he had seen, and they began to climb up, but when half of them had reached the surface a very large woman attempted to ascend and broke the root. There was great sorrow on both sides at this calamity, for the people that had struggled up saw no more of those that remained below.

Those now in the upper world had brought with them corn and beans and seeds of the squash and tobacco. On looking about they saw in the distance a herd of Buffalo and some Elk grazing. The men killed a few of the animals, but the Buffalo and Elk ate some of the people, especially the boys. When the hunters returned with the meat, a white Raven croaked to them, "It is bitter." This was because the animals ate human flesh, just as the Raven did. He First Made All Things was on the earth improving it and teaching the animal people new ways of life. He told the white Raven, the Buffalo, and the Elk that they were doing wrong to eat people, and he blackened the Raven with charcoal

[12] For a similar incident in Arikara lore, see Volume V

[13] Old men, questioned as to the situation of this body of water, insist that the place of emergence is not at any lake northeastward of their present home. It has been often stated that the mythic origin of the Hidatsa was at Devil's lake, North Dakota; the confusion arises from the fact that in their early wanderings they lived for a time on the shores of a northern lake.

as his punishment, telling him that if he persisted in evil he would be destroyed. The Elk had fine white tusks along the upper jaw. He First Made All Things pulled them out, leaving only one at each side, and he removed all the front teeth from the upper jaw of the Buffalo.

He First Made All Things hewed a boat out of a log and painted it blue with clay that he found along the shore, and told the people to go into it, instructing them to cross the water and bring back certain beautiful shells that were shaped like a shallow vessel with a long lip. Then he gave the command, "Power that moves the boat, go!" When the people reached the other shore they found men, from whom they obtained many shells, paying for them with food, and giving them also a woman. They returned to their own people and left the boat on the shore. Children who had been playing nearby when the command was given said to the boat, "Power that moves the boat, go!" whereupon it sailed away and was never seen again.

For many years they moved northward, coming at length to a place where the earth was burning. Little Fox made holes in the ground, in which the people hid, and the fire passed over them harmlessly. Then they came to a forest, and at the time when the grass began to grow a great snowstorm swept down upon them. After the storm had ceased they moved still farther north and met a people who spoke their language. With them they lived; then both tribes turned to the southwest and travelled until they were checked by a broad river, which they called Awáti.

THE SACRED SKULLS

Three eagles flying from the west down the north side of the river saw the camps of people, and determined to be born as men among them. As they passed over the country of the Assiniboin, one, pleased with its aspect, alighted, while the other two soared on. Another descended near the villages of the Hidatsa and became a man among that tribe.[14]

Being spirit-men, Shiwahúwa the Assiniboin and Big Bird the Hidatsa knew of each other, and there came to the former a longing to see and talk with his friend. So travelling down along the river

[14] The third eagle unaccountably disappears from the tale. Some versions mention only two birds.

he arrived at length opposite the Hidatsa villages and called across to the people assembled on the bank, but his words were strange to them. Then he sang, and by that song Big Bird knew his old-time companion, and entering a boat with his wife he crossed the stream. The friends had no difficulty in recognizing each other.

Once in the lodge of Big Bird his guest began straightway urging him to make his home among the Assiniboin.

"I have come for you," he said. "Here you are dwelling under the earth, and you never travel about. I can move my lodge every day, and always have a new, clean home. Even in winter my lodge is filled with pure air, for it is made of skins, and fresh air enters freely. You, living under ground, must breathe the same air over and over. My food is fat buffalo, choke-cherries, turnips, and berries. I have all my heart desires. Come with me."

Big Bird listened intently, and answered:

"My brother, all the food you have described, I have, and more. In the summer I open the door and the air is cool and fresh. In the winter my lodge is warm. If your lodge is made of skin it must be hot in summer, and strong winds may overturn it. I have children among these people, and I am satisfied. Since you say that my way of living is not good, I wish you to taste one of my favorite foods."

As he finished, Big Bird gave his guest a ball of yellow-corn pemmican, and Shiwahúwa found it excellent. Then the Hidatsa placed before him dishes of parboiled corn, sunflower seeds, a mixture of corn, beans, squash, and sunflower seeds with buffalo-fat, and tea of pennyroyal. Then filling a pipe he presented it to his visitor.

"You were ignorant of all these things," chided the Hidatsa, "yet you wished me to go with you! Now I ask you to remain with me. What have you to say? "

Removing the pipe from his lips, Shiwahúwa replied:

"Your food is better than ours, and your tobacco superior to our dried bark. On this very day next year I shall be here with my people. Have these things prepared for me, and especially the corn pemmican, the drink, and the tobacco, which I like more than anything else."

On the appointed day appeared Shiwahúwa and his people.

A conflict[15] arose between them and the Hidatsa warriors, and

[15] No satisfactory cause is assigned for the battle. One narrator says that Shiwahúwa came with the intention of taking the life of Big Bird; another that he forewarned the

every one of the strangers was killed, except their leader, who was laid prostrate, seriously wounded. Over the field of battle came Big Bird and his wife, hurrying with the three things Shiwahúwa had liked so well. He drank the fragrant tea, ate the corn balls, and smoked. Suddenly he fell back dead.

Big Bird cut off his head and placed it in an ant-hill, whither he afterward went daily and addressed the skull:

"I have lived among these people and aided them in their life. You and I are brothers, and I hope you do not hold against me what my people have done to yours."

One day a voice answered: "I will aid you."

Then Big Bird carried the skull to his lodge and laid it in the honor place, and commanded that when he died his skull should be kept with the other, and always handed down in the Midipati clan.[16]

LEGEND OF HOME BOY

In the days of Tattooed Face and Good Fur Robe, there lived in one of the villages near Heart river the son of Black Coyote. He was a handsome, well-formed young man, with long brown hair, and his beauty and elegant dress won the admiration of all the women; for his soft thick buffalo-robe was decorated with eagle-feathers, and at the shoulders dangled pure white weasel-skins. From his lance, too, fluttered many eagle-feathers. While he was in appearance the ideal warrior youth, he had never been on the war-path. He would stroll through the village singing, or perhaps climb to the top of his father's lodge to gaze upon the young women as they passed. His actions were so peculiar as to bring upon him the ridicule of the men, for it seemed to them that he should desire to win honors in strife, and on account of his reluctance to join the warriors he was derisively called Home Boy.

Hidatsa that there would be fighting when he returned.

[16] These two skulls constitute one of the most sacred tribal possessions. Until the disintegration of the old native customs, the custodian of the skulls was always a member of the Midipati clan, and the lodge in which they reposed was not entered on trivial errands. Fire was never borrowed from that lodge, and those who entered were required to sit down quickly. In 1907 the shrine containing the skulls was disposed of by Wolf Chief, its custodian, and it is now in a private collection in New York City.

On the south side of Heart river, where it emerges from the hills and flows across the valley, rises a high butte. Men would often go there to fast, but never stayed more than a day or two, for something in that place seemed to frighten them. One day Black Coyote called his son to him and said:

"You have no deeds; you are nothing. It is time you distinguished yourself in some manner, for you are a strong young man. Go up on that hill and fast for a time; perhaps the spirits will help you."

So Home Boy went to the hill and stood upon its summit, crying to the spirits. During the night he heard sounds as though the enemy were coming. He could almost feel the ground tremble under their horses' hoofs, and terrified he fled back to the village. In the morning the people went to the hill to verify his story, but they saw no broken ground or trampled grass.

His father said: "You are a coward! What do you suppose people will think of you if you always remain in the village, doing nothing? To-night you must go to the hill again, and stay there no matter what happens."

So Home Boy went again to the hill and cried. Again he heard the enemy coming, and, turning, seemed to see a party of mounted warriors charging upon him. The one in advance discharged an arrow, which pierced him, and as he fell the others swept by and struck him with their coup-sticks. Then the spirits promised Home Boy that he should kill many enemies and count many coups. He returned to the village in the morning.

Shortly afterward the village was attacked by the Sioux, but Home Boy took no part in the battle; at night, however, after the enemy had withdrawn, he went out and dragged the bodies of their slain into a row. Taking the eagle-feathers from his lance he laid one on the dead body of each warrior, and said, "Here is something for you to take on your long journey." Then he lay down in the middle of the row. In a vision as he slept there the spirits of the dead came and told him to arise and to be nor afraid, for they were to make great medicine for him. One of the warriors then took his bow and shot his arrows through Home Boy. This made him invulnerable.

But when war-parties formed, Home Boy still remained behind, and the finger of scorn was ever pointed at him. One day he and his friend were sitting on the housetop watching the people assemble for the Dahpiké. Suddenly Home Boy leaped up and said with determination,

"To-day I will dance in the lodge of the Sun!" His friend looked at him in wonder, for only warriors of note participated in that ceremony. But he went with Home Boy to the sun-lodge, and watched his sober face as he marched in carrying his lance.

The people were at first astonished at his temerity, then they began to laugh and to nudge each other, saying, "Look, Home Boy is going to dance; he must be growing foolish!" He boldly stepped up to the bowl of white clay with which the warriors painted themselves, and with which they smeared stripes across their arms to represent the coups they had struck. Home Boy painted himself, and placed a wisp of grass in his hair, a symbol worn only by scout leaders, to represent the hills from which they had viewed the enemy's country.

His mother and sisters drew their blankets over their faces and went out. His father said, "I have tried to rear my son from child hood according to our traditions and customs, and to make him a brave warrior, but now before all my people he has disgraced me." And drawing his blanket over his head, he too went out.

The warriors sat in four rows according to the rank their deeds gave them. Home Boy with a wolf-skin thrown over his shoulders and lance in hand stepped into the front line, as though he had a perfect right to be there. As the warriors danced out of the lodge, making a circle and reentering, Home Boy danced with them. He stepped on the black stone at the foot of the sun-pole, thus swearing that he spoke only the truth; and though he had performed no deeds in war, he told of his visions, while the people all laughed at him.

A short time after the dance a war-party was about to start, and as they marched around the village singing, Home Boy joined them and sang with them. The chief said, "Young man, you always sing with these war-parties, but you never go out to fight. You are making us ashamed."

His friend, who was one of the party, drew him aside and said, "You must go with us, or you can never hold up your head in this village again."

Home Boy replied, "My friend, I am going. I shall not join you now, but I shall be with this party when it reaches the enemy. Four days from now you will hear from me. Procure some buffalo-meat for me, the muscles of the foreleg, the shoulder-blade, the tongue, and an intestine stuffed with chopped meat. When you camp the fourth night, watch which way the wind blows and listen carefully and you

will hear me howl like a Wolf. Then bring out the four pieces of meat, and throw them to the big white Wolf you will see outside, but do not come too near it. Say, 'Here is some food for you, Wolf.' Early in the morning join the scouting party and you will meet a lone Wolf coming toward you. Say to those with you, 'There is Home Boy. He has seen the enemy, and I have seen them second.' They will laugh at you, but do not heed them. Remember what I say, and do these things."

The second day after the war-party had left, Home Boy told his mother to make him some moccasins, for he wished to go on the war-path. His mother begged him not to go. "You have never been away from the village since you were born," she said, "and you will surely be lost." But his determination was firm, and he went out of the lodge, leaving his mother to begin work on the moccasins. When Black Coyote came in his wife told him of their son's intention, and the father replied: "Let him go. I have done everything I could to rear him well, but he has brought shame on our household. Perhaps he will die somewhere. It is well."

The morning of the fourth day the son went to his mother and said, Are my moccasins ready?" She gave them to him, and Home Boy said, "Mother, come with me until I ford the river; then you may return home." She went with him, and when they reached the stream, he leaped into the water and disappeared, and a moment later a white Wolf emerged, dripping, at the other side. She waited long for a glimpse of Home Boy, but in vain; and she was puzzled, but remembering all the queer actions of her son, she came to the conclusion that he had done something wonderful. The Wolf looked back once, and then trotted away.

Home Boy's friend sat that night in the brush shelter feasting with the others on the buffalo they had killed, and he laid aside certain portions of the meat, saying, "This is for Home Boy."

The others laughed, and said ironically, "Yes, that is for Home Boy!"

Soon they heard the wolf-howl outside, and the friend jumped up, saying, "Home Boy has come!" and picking up the meat, ran out.

The chief, who had brought his beautiful young wife with him, in the belief that she and Home Boy were lovers, now turned to her and said sneeringly, "There is your sweetheart howling outside." And they all laughed.

When the young man came back into the lodge, the people asked,

"Did you see your friend?"

"Yes," he replied, "Home Boy was out there;" but they laughed at him derisively.

The next morning when the scouting party went out, Home Boy's friend accompanied them. The sun was half-way to the zenith when they saw a Wolf running toward them along a ridge, now and again looking backward across his shoulder. The young man with the scouts said, "There is Home Boy. Whatever he sees, I claim second honor." The others smiled, and cheerfully assented. They saw the Wolf run into a little coulée, and suddenly on the rim appeared Home Boy, dressed in a beautiful war-shirt and fringed leggings. His face was painted and his hair tied with strips of wolf-skin.

The scouts were filled with astonishment and wonder. In answer to their questions, he said, "Nearby is a large war-party camped in a circle. They are so close you had better return to the main body." When the scouts were some distance from the camp, they began to run zigzag as a signal that they had seen the enemy. The warriors came out and piled up buffalo-chips, and, forming in a half-circle behind the heap, stood singing and awaiting the return of the scouts. Home Boy ran at their head, his long brown hair flowing in the wind, and the tail of his wolf-skin streaming behind him. When he reached the buffalo-chips he kicked the pile over, signifying that he would count coup on the enemy in the battle. The warriors were amazed, and murmured in awe-stricken tones, "Home Boy is here!"

He told them that a great number of the enemy were encamped but a short distance away, and that they had better prepare at once for battle. His report caused great excitement, and the chief spread a buffalo-robe on the ground and invited Home Boy to speak with him privately. "There are timber and water here," the youth told him, "and it is a good place to fight. My plan is to take warriors who are swift runners and strong. I will leave a number of these men at three points between here and the enemy. With the fourth party we will make the attack and surprise our foe; then we will retreat to the third body, and they will cover our retreat to the second, and so on to this camp, where we will make a stand together." The chief called a number of the older men and told them of the plan; they approved it.

To Home Boy was given the command, and he started out with the best warriors, leaving the inexperienced men and the old fighters in camp. At selected points he left reserve forces, and at the last stop

he told the chief that from there to the enemy's camp the distance was great. "I shall take only my friend with me," said Home Boy, "for the way is long and some of you might tire and be unable to retreat." So the two set out alone and reached the enemy's camp after dark. "Whatever I do," said Home Boy, "follow right behind me and you shall have second honor."

They lay in the brush all night. Early in the morning one of the women of the village came out to work on a hide while the air was cool. Home Boy stole upon her through the grass and rising beside her pierced her with his lance, and his friend counted second coup.[17] The death-cry of the woman aroused the village, and Home Boy said, "Start back as fast as you can, and after I have scalped the woman I shall follow you." Waving the bloody scalp and picking up the bone hide-scraper which the woman had dropped, he started after his friend, while the warriors of the village followed in hot pursuit. Soon his friend began to tire, and Home Boy said, "Swing your head from side to side, and blow like a Wolf." When he did so the young man began to feel refreshed. But his feet grew heavy again, and Home Boy said, "Put your hands in front of you, and lope like a Wolf." That again brought renewed strength, and when for the third time he became exhausted, Home Boy said, "Pretend you have a tail, and put it between your legs as a Wolf does when he is pursued." This gave the young man strength enough to reach the third party of warriors, where a sharp fight took place. Home Boy fought bravely, and went forward to meet a single advancing warrior, whom he killed with his lance, and his friend close behind counted second coup.

Then they retreated to the spot where the second party waited, and another engagement occurred; again Home Boy killed an enemy, and his friend counted second coup. And so it was until they reached the main camp on the river, where, in sight of all, Home Boy killed one of the bravest warriors of the enemy. Here the fighting was very severe, and the enemy were soon driven back.

[17] It was a common custom among the northwestern tribes to strike a blow at the enemy in just this manner. While to our minds the killing of a defenceless old woman is hardly an act to be boasted of, even by a savage relating his war-record, we must take account of the Indian's point of view, which is, that it was a dangerous and a daring feat for one or two men to enter the lines of a hostile camp many days' journey from their own country. It was no easier to kill a woman from ambush than a man, and of course chivalry was never a salient feature of Indian character.

After the battle was over, Home Boy gave the scalp of the woman he had killed to the chief and the hide-scraper to his wife. The chief was ashamed when he remembered what he had said of Home Boy the evening before, and invited him to sit beside him, while his wife brought food to Home Boy and held a horn of water to his lips.

When the war-party started homeward, the hero told his friend that he himself would go alone. He watched the others out of sight, then started off and reached the village on the night of the next day, coming in while all were asleep. He hung his lance and robe where he usually kept them over the head-rest of his bed, and lay down to sleep. When the father awoke in the morning and saw his son lying there, he said to himself, "I suppose he was lost in the hills, and came home after wandering about." But his mother, as always, was glad to see him, and prepared food for him, and when he had eaten he lay down to sleep again. Soon the returning war-party was heard across the river. The people gathered at the bank, and some paddled across in bull-boats to welcome them. They told of their triumphs, but above all praised the bravery and leadership of Home Boy. His parents heard, but thinking they were still ridiculing their son, covered their heads and went back into their lodge. As was the custom, the clansmen of the father came to the lodge and sang the praises of Home Boy, but instead of bringing out gifts as was usual when a young man had returned from his first war-party with deeds of valor to his credit, Black Coyote sat inside in deep humiliation.

Soon an old woman entered and pulled a blanket from the bed of Home Boy's mother; another took a robe from the pile on which Black Coyote sat. When he saw these signs, he called in Home Boy's friend and said:

"Is it true, my child, what these people are saying?"

"Yes, he answered, it is all true."

Black Coyote's eyes were filled with tears, and he pulled the blankets from his son and said, "My son, tell me truly, did you do these things?"

"Father, look at my lance," said Home Boy. When Black Coyote beheld the lance covered with blood, he was convinced, and knew it was all true.

A few days later, when quiet was restored, the chief told his wife to clean the lodge well and to make it smell sweet with incense. Then he sent her to invite the young man, as he wished to speak to him. When

Home Boy entered, the chief said:

"Young Wolf,[18] you have brought great honor to me. You scalped the enemy in the village and brought the scalp to me. All your brave deeds are good. I said that you were foolish when you danced in the sun-lodge, but I did not know your medicine then. My wife is handsome and good. She looks with favor upon you; whenever you come near she is pleased. Take her for your own."

Home Boy replied: "Old Man Wolf,[19] your speech is good. I fought that day to prove to you that what you had said was wrong. I killed the enemy in the village that your name might be in the mouths of all. As for this young woman, I admire her only with my eyes. I will come and eat with you and talk with you, but she must throw away any affection she may have for me. I will be a warrior under your leadership and help you in many battles. You shall be known as a great chief among us."

Home Boy fought and lived for many years. He continued to bear the name of Home Boy, and it became a good name, for he won his eagle-feathers many times over.

GRANDMOTHER'S CHILD AND THE SNAKES

Wandering over the prairie one day, Grandmother's Child saw a running deer suddenly fall dead. Curiosity led him to inquire into the cause, which he found to be a Snake, who killed his game from a distance. The boy gave greeting, and, questioned as to his own method of killing, kicked the fallen deer; and as it sprang away, alive once more, brought it down with an arrow. The Snake, pretending friendship, took the boy to his lodge, and for food gave him the spleen of a deer, in which each of the Snakes had secretly buried his fangs. But Grandmother's Child laid it on the coals, and not only burned out the venom but caused acute pains in the teeth of his enemies.

"Let us exchange stories," they proposed.

"Good!" he answered. "Lay your heads across this log and I will begin. When the spring sun is warm, when the blood is tired, and we

[18] Young Wolf, *Tséshadáka,* a name applied to any young warrior who goes out on the warpath.

[19] Old Man Wolf, *Tséshitáka,* the name applied to a war-leader.

walk a long way and then stop on the sunny side of a hill, do we not feel like sleeping? When the spring rain comes, and the drops fall fast and strike the lodge, what a strange sound that is, and how it makes us wish to sleep! Some of the Snakes were asleep and did not hear him continue: After a full meal, when the wind blows and the lodge-cover flaps, do you not feel sleepy, even in the daytime? When you stop beside the stream at night, and the moon rises in the east, and you hear the water lapping, lapping, lapping, do you not grow sleepy?" Others were dozing, but he went on: "When you camp in the woods, the boughs rub together, and the leaves rustle, rustle, rustle, and you are very sleepy." Only a few were awake to whisper, "Yes," and he concluded: "When the breeze soughs, and the long grass of the prairie sways, sways, sways, you sleep."

There was no response — all slept. He drew his knife and cut off their heads, one after the other, but the last one awoke just in time and slipped down a hole, uttering the warning, "Do not sleep in the daytime!" Nevertheless, the boy lay down and slept, and soon the Snake crept forth and entered his body, crawling up through the intestines and throat into the head. There he remained until the bones of Grandmother's Child fell apart, fearing to show himself lest the wonder-worker come to life and destroy him. When the bones were dry and bleached he crawled out, but instantly Grandmother's Child stood there. He seized the Snake by the neck, and with a stone rubbed his sharp nose blunt so that nevermore should the snakes be able to bore their way into the bodies of men.

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