

strap on the limb of a tree, or in the lodge, and the fixtures are so ingeniously contrived that, even if it falls down, the child cannot be hurt. Meantime, the little abinojee itself seems perfectly contented, and rarely if ever cries; and in this confinement it learns its first lesson in endurance.

I. DEATH AND ITS INCIDENTS.

47. THE character of the devices which are placed on the grave-post of the Indian has been described under the head of PICTOGRAPHY, Part I., p. 354. Such devices are appropriate for adults who have trod the war-path, and made themselves conspicuous for bravery or heroism.

Children and youth generally pass away from the scenes of Indian life without any such memorials; but their loss is often bewailed by mothers with inconsolable grief and bitterness. It is the intensity of this grief which lies at the foundation of the practice of adopting white children stolen from the settlements on the frontiers. Such cases are generally, if not in every instance, traceable to a request of the Indian mother to replace the child of which she has been bereaved by death. A grief that is indulged under the hopeless darkness of the aboriginal mind may be supposed to have no more natural or reasonable mode of assuagement. But this grief, when the object is a son, is often deeply partaken of by the father, especially if the lad be grown, and has developed forensic talents to succeed him in the chieftainship of the band. We have mentioned the noble sacrifice of Bianswah under these circumstances.

48. The son of Gel Plat, a noted chief of the Pillagers at Leech Lake, on the sources of the Mississippi, was killed on the enemy's border, west of that point, while he was bathing in a lake with a companion. The father, who was about sixty, and contemplated leaving this son as his successor in that large and warlike band, laid the loss deeply to heart, and dwelt upon the hardness of his fate many years. He then turned his hopes on a younger son whom he desired to instal in his place with this band; and in order to let them know his wishes on the subject, he sent out formally an invitation to all the band to attend a feast. He prepared for this, by employing hunters who brought him the carcasses of many animals; and he staked his utmost means with the traders to purchase such articles of food as the forests in that quarter did not furnish. There were eighteen kettles of eatables prepared. He then brought out his young son, dressed in the best manner, with fine clothes, and bearing five silver medals hung with ribbons around his neck, being all his regalia. He then arose and uttered his lost son's eulogy, speaking, in glowing terms, of his capacities for the hunter life and the war-path, and ended by presenting to their notice the tiny candidate for their future chief.

49. Black is the universal sign for mourning; it is the symbol for death, and is taken from night. In their pictography, the image of the sun is represented to stand for, or symbolize night, for which purpose it is crossed and blackened.

The face of the mourner is smeared with some simple black mixture that will not readily rub off. On occasions of deep affliction, the arms and legs are cut or scarified, an oriental custom with many nations. The corpse is dressed in its best clothes. It is wrapped in a new blanket, and new moccasins and leggins put on. The crown-band, head-dress or frontlet, and feathers, are also put on. His war-club, gun, and pipe, are placed beside him, together with a small quantity of vermilion. The corpse is laid in public, where all can gather around it, when an address is made, partly to the spectators, describing the character of the deceased, and partly to the deceased himself, speaking to him as if the *Ochichag* or soul was still present, and giving directions as to the path he is supposed to be about to tread in a future state.

If it is a female that is about to be interred, she is provided with a paddle, a kettle, an *apekrun* or carrying strap for the head, and other feminine implements. The Pawnees, and other prairie tribes, kill the warrior's horse upon his grave, that he may be ready to mount in a future state, and proceed to the appointed scene of rest. The mode of burial is represented in Plate 16.

50. The idea of immortality is strongly dwelt upon. It is not spoken of as a supposition or a mere belief, not fixed. It is regarded as an actuality, — as something known and approved by the judgment of the nation. During the whole period of my residence and travels in the Indian country, I never knew and never heard of an Indian who did not believe in it, and in the reappearance of the body in a future state. However mistaken they are on the subject of accountabilities for acts done in the present life, no small part of their entire mythology, and the belief that sustains the man in his vicissitudes and wanderings here, arises from the anticipation of ease and enjoyment in a future condition, after the soul has left the body. The resignation, nay, the alacrity, with which an Indian frequently lies down and surrenders life, is to be ascribed to this prevalent belief. He does not fear to go to a land which, all his life long, he has heard abounds in rewards without punishments.

51. I was present with an interpreter in upper Michigan in 1822, when the interment of a warrior and hunter took place, at which the corpse was carefully dressed, as above described, and after it was brought to the grave, and before the lid was nailed to the coffin, an address was made by an Indian to the corpse. The substance of it relating to this belief was this: — “You are about to go to that land where our forefathers have gone — you have finished your journey here, before us. We shall follow you, and rejoin the happy groups which you will meet.”

52. When the speaking and ceremonies were concluded, the coffin was lowered into the trench prepared to receive it, and thus “buried out of sight.” This mode of inter-

ment is common to the forest tribes of the north, and appears to have been practised by them from the earliest periods. They choose dry and elevated places for burial, which are completely out of the reach of floods or standing water. Often these spots selected for the burial of the dead are slightly and picturesque points, which command extensive views. They bury east and west. They are without proper tools, and do not dig deep, but generally make the place of interment secure from the depredations of wild beasts, by arranging the trunks of small trees in the form of a parallelogram notched at the angles, around it, or by stakes driven in the ground. In other instances a bark roof is constructed, which will shed the rains. Such is the mode of the various Algonquin and Appalachian tribes.

53. The raising of "heaps" of earth over the grave, in the form of small mounds or barrows, appears to have been a practice in ancient periods as a mark of distinction for eminent persons. But whatever was its prevalence at other epochs, while they were in the west and south-west, and before they crossed the Alleghanies, it fell into almost entire disuse in the Atlantic and Lake tribes. There are some traces of it in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Western New York. Rarely the resting-places of Indian heroes were marked by heaps of stones. In Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, this species of tumuli, formed of earth, is found to be common; and the tradition of the Muscogees respecting the custom is well preserved.¹ But by far the most striking theatre of this rude mode of sepulture is the Mississippi Valley, whose plains and alluvions have been literally sown with the dead. Vide TUMULI PROPER, OR SEPULCHRAL MOUNDS. Part I., p. 49.

54. The tribes of the Mississippi Valley, where the population was more dense, and the means of subsistence more abundant, were not satisfied that their great warriors and orators should be so quickly "buried out of sight." And the small sepulchral mound, as well as the more lofty village or public tumulus, were, at the epoch of the maximum of their power, frequently erected. They also, by dwelling in large communities, had occasion for the *altar* mound, and the *redoubt* mound, the latter of which was used exclusively to defend the entrance or gates, through walls and picketings, which enclosed an entire village. We have called attention to this point in Part I., p. 49, and endeavored to show that there is no mystery in the origin and present appearance of these ruins or remains; that the various species of mounds and defences were perfectly adapted to the former condition and populousness of the tribes; that their pipe sculpture, and other evidences of art, are not typical of a higher degree of civilization, or social condition, and that their manifestations of incipient skill, power, and civilization, resulted from the flush of barbaric success and ample compensative means, which marked the ancient Indian confederacies of this valley, before later and fiercer hunter hordes drove them from their seats, and scattered them. We have also

¹ History of Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi, by Albert James Pickett, 1851. Vol. I., p. 164.

withdrawn from this consideration those apparently intrusive evidences of "old world art," which are anomalous, and can by no means be deemed as elements of ancient Indian civilization. We should not consider it extraordinary that the ancient tribes who dwelt on the fertile bottom-lands of the Mississippi and the Ohio, should have erected the rude defences, mounds and tumuli, which are now found to be overgrown by the forest in various places. Thousands of persons of these tribes, who raised the zeal maize, and hunted the deer, elk, and buffalo, to fill the wigwams with signs of gladness, could live and flourish at a single village or location; and when their chief died, two or three hundred hands could be employed to carry sacks of earth for a sepulchral "heap" or mound. It was not so among the northern bands, who shivered in cold and storms half the year, and could rarely sustain themselves if numbering more than twenty heads of families at a place.

55. Burial among the wild hordes of the prairies assumes a feature that marks it as a peculiar habit of the tribes. They scaffold their dead on eminences where they may be descried afar off. The corpse, after it has received its wrappings, is placed in a rude coffin, which is generally garnished with red pigments, and rendered picturesque to the eye by offerings to the dead, hung on poles; and, if it can be got, a flag. (Plate 59.) Burials, or deposits of the body in caves, were often resorted to.

56. No trait has commended the forest tribes of the old area of the United States more to the respect and admiration of beholders than the scrupulous regard with which they are found to remember the burial-grounds of their ancestors; the veneration and piety they exhibit in visiting, at all periods, these spots; and the anguish of their minds at any marks of disrespect and disturbance of the bones of their ancestors. Gifts are made at graves so long as it is supposed there is any part of the perishable matter remaining; and oblations are poured out to the spirits of the departed after other rites are discontinued.

57. These sepulchral and the defensive ruins of more populous and advanced tribes are found alone in the forest country. The prairie tribes, west of the Mississippi river, erected no tumuli or works of defence. They never remained in one location long enough to surround themselves with the feelings and circumstances of a home; and when the Spaniards introduced the horse, an element was prepared which operated as fuel to their erratic habits, and confirmed them in their Indo-Arabic traits of roving. The forays by which this animal was first obtained of the Mexican Indians by the prairie tribes, constitute a new feature in their history. A coterminous country extends from the plains of Texas and New Mexico, east of the foot of the Rocky mountains, till the prairie country embraces both banks of the Missouri, and reaches to the plains of Red river, and the Saskatchewan, west of the sources of the Mississippi river. No tumuli occur in this region; no remains of ancient ditches, or attempts at rude castrametation. The latter are, in all the region of North America, north of the Gulf of

Mexico, the disclosures of forests and valleys; and it is hence that it becomes manifest that forests and valleys are most conducive to arts, agriculture, and civilization.

58. The prairie, by its extent and desolateness, appears to exert a deleterious influence on the savage mind. Some of the grosser and more revolting customs of the prairie Indians respecting interments, are no doubt traceable to their wild and lawless habits. Nothing that I have observed respecting burials among them reaches so absolutely a revolting point, as a custom which has been noticed among certain of the Oregon tribes, and which is perhaps not general. An eye-witness, writing from the mouth of the Columbia, describes it as follows:—"I have just returned from a visit to the Chinook Indian country, where I witnessed a most revolting ceremony, that of burying the living with the dead. One of the chiefs lost a daughter, a fine-looking woman, about twenty years of age. She was wrapped up in a rush mat, together with all her trinkets, and placed in a canoe. The father had an Indian slave bound hand and foot, and fastened to the body of the deceased, and enclosed the two in another mat, leaving out the head of the living one. The Indians then took the canoe, (which was employed in lieu of a coffin,) and carried it to a high rock and left it there. Their custom is to let the slave live for three days; then another slave is compelled to strangle the victim by a cord drawn around the neck. They also kill the horse that may have been a favorite of the deceased, and bury it at the head of the canoe. I was desirous of interfering and saving the life of the poor victim; but Mr. Harris, the gentleman with me, and the two Indians, our companions, assured me that I should only get myself into serious trouble; and as we were at a great distance from the settlements, and our party so small, self-preservation dictated a different course from the inclinations of our hearts."

K. GAMES OF CHANCE.

59. ONE of the principal amusements of a sedentary character, which our tribes practise, is that of various games, success in which depends on the luck of numbers. These games, to which both the prairie and forest tribes are addicted, assume the fascination and intensity of interest of gambling; and the most valued articles are often staked on the luck of a throw. For this purpose, the prairie tribes commonly use the stone of the wild plum, or some analogous fruit, upon which various devices indicating their arithmetical value, are burned in, or engraved and colored, so as at a glance to reveal the character of the pieces. Among the Dakota tribes, this is known by a term which is translated "the game of the plum-stones." [KUN-TAH-SOO.]

In order to show the scope of this game, five sets of stones are represented, in Plate 17, under the letters A, B, C, D, E, F. Each set consists exactly of eight pieces.