

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

206. Some wear frontlets, and this ornament is constructed of various materials, and in various shapes and patterns. They wear a small portion of the hair on the top and back part of the head long, and braided in two or three braids; the balance of their hair is generally cut similar to the fashion of the whites. They do not show any part of the head. Their ornaments are worn in battle; these consist chiefly of necklaces of animals' claws, bracelets, and rings.

207. Since the introduction of fire-arms among them, those who can obtain the gun and rifle prefer to use them, instead of the bow and arrow. The war-club, tomahawk, and knife, are still used as weapons. The scalping-knife does not differ from the common knife used by the Indians in hunting.

DEATH AND ITS INCIDENTS.

211. It is characteristic of an Indian to suffer in silence, and die composedly.

When an individual in this tribe dies, the relatives, if able, procure a new suit of clothes, in which they dress the corpse; then, if practicable, procure a coffin, and bury the dead as soon as the necessary preparations can be made. They do not address the dead as if living, or capable of hearing.¹ They usually bury a pipe and some tobacco with a male adult, and sometimes deposit a war-club in the grave of a warrior.

212. Graves are usually made in dry ground, and dug from two to four feet in depth.

No tumulus or barrow has been erected by this tribe to the memory of their chiefs, in modern times. Indian graves are usually excavated imperfectly, always shallow, and sometimes not deep enough to prevent effluvia from the body, and to protect it from wild beasts. They usually place some protection around graves, by setting boards or poles in the ground, meeting at the top over the grave. In addition to this, the graves of chiefs and distinguished men are sometimes enclosed with pickets.

213. Graves are dug east and west, and the dead buried with the head towards the east; the reason given for this is, "That they may look towards the happy land in the west."

214. The dead are sometimes deposited in a sitting posture. An excavation is made, and the body placed in it, facing the west, with the head and chest above the surface of the ground.

215. This tribe do not embalm the dead. They clothe the corpse in full dress, and when a coffin cannot be obtained, they sometimes substitute bark.

¹ In this respect differing from the Algonquins.—H. R. S.

216. Sometimes parents scaffold their dead children in order that they may have them in sight. Sometimes the dead are disposed of in this manner, in compliance with their wish expressed while living, and sometimes the dead are scaffolded as a matter of convenience, to avoid the trouble of digging a grave in frozen ground.¹

217. White flags are frequently placed at the head of graves, and sometimes the United States flag is placed over the graves of chiefs and distinguished persons. These flags are supposed to remain until worn out.

218. It does not appear, from the traditions of this tribe, that they ever collected and re-interred the bones of their dead.

219. It is probable that this tribe never used charnel-houses.

220. Incineration of bodies is never practised by the Winnebagoes.

221. Black is the garb of mourning. They make great lamentation for the dead, but do not scarify themselves in token of mourning. When a family bury a member or relative, they black their faces and bodies, sometimes put on sackcloth, and do not wash or comb their hair until they make a sacrifice. This is done by procuring goods, and hanging them over the grave of the deceased, when their friends are invited to meet. After singing and dancing about the grave, the party is divided, and the goods in some way gambled for, either by a game of ball, moccasin, or cards. It is customary to visit the grave of a relative four times. Mothers carry images or bundles of clothes to represent a child lost by death. Men do not suffer their beards to grow long, in token of mourning for the dead.

222. Fires are kindled at the graves of the dead, and continued four nights; the object is to light the spirit on its journey to the spirit-land.

223. Grass and rubbish are cleared away, and the surface of the ground around a new-made grave is swept in a circle from six to twenty feet in diameter. This is done to prevent evil spirits from creeping up to the grave. A roof constructed of bark, boards, or some other material of wood, is made over the grave, and sometimes a post some six or eight inches in diameter, and three feet in height, is set at the head of the grave. On these posts they paint hieroglyphics, representing, not the epitaph of the dead, but the achievements of the warriors who dance at the grave and relate their exploits while the record is being made.²

¹ For a representation of scaffolding the dead, see Plate 3, Part I., and Plate 16, Part II.

² For descriptions of the grave-posts, or monumental structures and devices used for the dead, see Plate 50, Part I.

man takes the ball or stick between his thumb and forefinger, and slips it from one moccasin to another several times, and leaves it in one of them and then stops, something like thimble-play. The party that have been singing have to guess in which moccasin the ball is; for which purpose one man is chosen. If he guesses where the ball is the first time, he loses. Should the ball not be in the moccasin that he guesses the first time, he can try again. He has now two moccasins for a choice. He has now to guess which one the ball is in. If he is successful, he wins: if not, he loses. So they have only one chance in two of winning. When one side loses, the other side give up the moccasins to the other party to try their luck awhile at hiding the ball. They have no high numbers in the games. They now play cards mostly for bets and amusement. Some play away every thing they possess, except their wives and children. I never heard of their having gambled them away.

211. When an Indian dies, he is wrapped up in the clothes he died in, and is laid upon a scaffold. If his friends think enough of him to cover him decently, they do so by throwing new blankets, white, scarlet, &c., over him. Calico is also thrown over the dead body in some instances. As many as two blankets are thrown over a corpse, but these do not remain. When the corpse is abandoned, these are all taken off but one. The rest are kept to make a great medicine-dance with, for the repose of the spirits. A few words are addressed to the spirit of the departed, and all present burst into a flood of tears and wailing. The character of the address is for the spirit to remain in his own place, and not disturb his friends and relatives: and promises are made on the part of the mourners to be faithful in keeping their laws and customs in making feasts for the departed spirits. The practice of burying implements with the dead is not practised by the Indians, except it is by particular request. This is done for the spirit to make use of the implements the same as in this life — to make a living by them. Implements of note have never been dug up in this country.

212. Graves are generally made on the highest land they can find. Sometimes these are situated on lowlands. The corpse is put in, sometimes with all the limbs drawn up, sometimes extended. The wood and earth are put over the grave, the pickets lying slanting both ways until they meet at the top. These pickets are put all around, about two rods square. This is about all that is done, except that a flag is sometimes put up at a grave, and remains there until worn out.

213. The corpse is placed in any direction and position, as the Indians are not mathematicians, nor precise in any of their works. It is natural to suppose their burying-grounds would be very irregular.

214. The Sioux do not bury in a sitting posture, except when they have been to
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war, and one of them has been killed; in which case they set him up and dress him in all the finery they can obtain.

215. The dead are wrapped in the dress they die in, and sometimes there are other fine dresses put on over that.

216. Some are put in barks, some in boxes, and others are only wrapped in skins or blankets. Beasts of prey seldom ever touch them. The little red squirrel they say sometimes devours the corpse, and therefore the Indians will not eat that animal.

217. Flags are hung up over chiefs and warriors. For other Indians, a piece of white cotton is used instead. This custom is ancient.

218. The custom of the Sioux or Dacotahs is, to gather the bones of the dead about one year after they have been put up in a scaffold, and mourn over them for the last time as the final honors for the remains of the body. The ceremony is public wailing, and much grief is displayed.¹

219. The Sioux have no charnel-houses.

220. Incineration of bodies is not practised.

221. They scarify themselves, and cut their long hair off to about half its original length. The men black their faces and bodies, wear old clothes, and go barefoot. When they possibly can, the women cut their hair, scarify, wear old clothes, go barefoot and bare-legged, and tear the borders off their petticoats. The dead are lamented by wailing to the height of their voices. They can be heard two or three miles in a calm evening. For one year they visit the place of the dead, and carry food,² and make a feast for the dead, to feed the spirit of the departed. The Sioux do not carry images of the departed, but the Chippewas do. The Indians have no beard.

222. When a person first dies and is put upon a scaffold, they sometimes light a fire somewhere near. The rubbish is all cleared away from under the scaffold, and every thing is kept clean around the place.

223. They make no mounds. Sometimes they put up grave-posts, and paint characters on them, denoting the number of enemies killed, prisoners taken, &c.

¹This custom Mr. Fletcher did not observe among the Winnebagoes.

²Vide Plate 3, Part I.