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NO. 26.

A Native Prayer. O birds that sing such thankful psalms, Teach us your secret of content, Your science of forgetting; For every life must have its hills, You, too, have hours of sorrow; Teach us, like you, to lay them by, And sing again to-morrow; For there is darkness yet may lie Within a golden setting, And he is wise who understands The science of forgetting.

O palms, that bow before the gale Until its peaceful ending, Teach us your yielding lips, and with strength You graceful art of bending; For every tree must meet the gale, Each heart encounters sorrow; Teach us, like you, to bow, that we May stand erect to-morrow. For there is strength in humble grace, Its wise disciples shielding; And he is wise who understands The happy art of yielding.

O brooks, which laugh at night, all day, With voice of sweet seduction, Teach us the art of laughing still At every new obstruction; For every life has eddies deep And rapids fiercely dashing, Sometimes through gloomy caverns forced Sometimes in sunlight flashing; Yet there is wisdom in your way, Your laughing waves and whimples, Teach us your gospel of content The secret of your dimples.

O trees, that stand in forest ranks, Tall, strong, erect and sightly, Your branches arched in noble grace, Your leaflets hanging lightly; Teach us your firm and quiet strength, Your secret of extraction From slimy darkness in the soil The grace of life and action; For they are rich who understand The secret of combining The good that's hidden deep in earth With that where suns are shining.

O myriad forms of earth and air, Of lake, and sea, and river, Which makes our landscapes glad and fair To glorify the Giver, Teach us to learn the lessons hid In each familiar feature, The mystery which still perfects Each low or lofty creature; For God is good, and life is sweet, And suns are brightly shining To glad the gloom and thus rebuke The folly of repining.

THE SUN DANCE OF THE SIOUX NATION.

At full moon in the month of June each year a grand festival is held by the Sioux Indians in honor of, and as a propitiation to, the sun, to them the visible embodiment of the Great Spirit. If the hunter desires special fortune in the chase, if the warrior hopes for revenge, if a relative is sick, if any favor is wished by an Indian from the Supreme Power which he recognizes and appeals to after his own barbarian fashion, he vows if the boon is granted to take part in the next Sun Dance. Many, indeed, participate from religious fanaticism alone, without any view to their own advantage, except in a general way.

A few years ago, the Sun Dance of the Sioux nation was held about twelve miles from Fort R—. A small party of officers stationed there determined to see if it were possible to gain admission to the ceremonies. In the early morning a light wagon, drawn by four stout little ponies, climbed the steep hills behind the garrison, and gaining the flat table land of the upper prairie, halted, after a rapid drive, at Seven Mile Spring, a little oasis, known far and wide to frontier travellers as the spot where weary man and beast can find shady trees and cool fresh water. Again on the road, the gay party dashed down into deep ravines, climbed steep bluffs, pushed down into a ravine again, then on between high hills. All the surface of the country gave proof that in past ages it had been the scene of tremendous upheavals and outbursts of volcanic energy.

At last, on one of the huge mounds, appeared the form of a horseman waving a scarlet blanket, whilst his pony executed curvets and caracoles which testified to the rider's skillful horsemanship. One of the military scouts went forward to the Indian to discover the meaning of this demonstration, and found that the man had been sent out four miles to direct the "pale faces" to the camp, the Sioux having learned of the intended visit by means of the perfect system of espionage exercised over the whites all through the Indian country. Guided by this warrior, decked out in paint and feathers, the traveller soon reached a point from which they beheld a wild and picturesque scene. The valley far below, or as these wide open spaces between the hills are called, "the bottom," was covered for miles with

lines of tipis, or wigwams. The central point was the vast empty amphitheatre where the Sun Dance was to be performed. Five or six chiefs, elaborately costumed, approached the waggon as it entered the camp, and shook hands with their guests with great dignity, uttering the peculiar guttural "How," the all-expressive word of salute and welcome. Two white tents were pitched, buffalo robes, blankets and provisions sheltered therein, and half a dozen white men found themselves "at home" in a camp of six thousand and Sioux Indians. As they stood gazing at the village which placidly basked in the fierce summer sun, groups of fantastic figures continually passed to and fro from the open area, which the next day was to be at once the place of worship and the scene of torture.

The tents of those who were to take part in the dance were ranged in a circle. For three days each man must be secluded in his little hut, without food or water, and subjected to a continual steam-bath. This is prepared by immersing large stones in boiling water, and permitting the steam to evaporate in the closed hut, the occupant being rolled in heavy buffalo robes to facilitate perspiration. The first day of the festival is devoted to the "cutting of the pole." Certain Indians, deputed for the purpose, take charge of this ceremony, which is preceded by "making medicine," a sacred mystery which no white man is allowed to witness. After this observance is concluded, all the men of the tribe assist in collecting the logs and brushwood which form the outer wall of the arena. The active ponies dart hither and thither in the bushes, the riders cutting branches with their belt knives, and fastening them in some way to their person, until they resemble a moving forest on their way to camp. Stakes are driven into the ground describing a large circle, an opening being left at one side; and the brushwood is woven in between these stakes so as to form a dense wall around the enclosure. The pole, forty feet high is selected from a number of others by certain Indians, and then cut down and transferred to the grounds by two maidens. After the top has been gaily trimmed with feathers, greens, and flowers, four ropes are attached a little more than half way up, which, when stretched out, reach the ground about twenty-eight feet from the base of the pole.

Before the dance begins cries go throughout the camp summoning all the people to come to look at the "holy thing, the beautiful thing." Then the dancers are led from their huts covered head to foot with buffalo robes to look at the scene of their trial the next day. Before the true Sun Dance commences the Indians engage in many wild and curious ceremonies which are preliminary to the main performance, and work themselves into a state of the fiercest fanaticism. These exercises consist in the main of dancing, beating the tom-tom, singing and grotesque physical contortions. Early on the morning of the second day the camp was astir, and the amphitheatre crowded with eager spectators. The white visitors were presented to the great chief, Spotted Tail, who had not shown himself before. He received them with dignity and ordered seats to be prepared for the accommodation of the strangers. Many times they wished themselves far distant from those comfortable blanket cushions before the cruel services of the day were over.

The ceremonies were opened by twenty-five warriors on their horses, gorgeous in finery and war paint, filing into the arena, and gaining the flat table land of the upper prairie, halted, after a rapid drive, at Seven Mile Spring, a little oasis, known far and wide to frontier travellers as the spot where weary man and beast can find shady trees and cool fresh water. Again on the road, the gay party dashed down into deep ravines, climbed steep bluffs, pushed down into a ravine again, then on between high hills. All the surface of the country gave proof that in past ages it had been the scene of tremendous upheavals and outbursts of volcanic energy.

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ut instead of the ordinary evolutions of a military drill, the performance consisted of singing and dancing to monotonous music made by the measured strokes of a drum, and the beating with sticks upon a dry beef hide stretched on the ground. At a given signal Chief Spotted Tail arose with as much dignity as any feudal lord among his vassals, walked slowly round the circle and inspected the men, carrying in his hand a stick three or four feet long, on the end of which was fastened a scalp of long auburn hair, evident-taken from some white woman. As he passed round the circle he used the scalp and stick as a baton, and as he moved it to and fro the line of braves would advance or retreat, dancing, singing and hooting incessantly. It may be here remarked that Spotted Tail, who presided over this orgie, and directed the movements of his warriors by waving a white woman's scalp, holds the commission of lieutenant in the United States Army, and every month draws from the people's treasury the sum of \$150.

At another signal the braves suddenly broke their lines, rushed to their ponies picketed near by, and in an incredibly short time they came tearing up the valley, formed in solid column, the thundering of hoofs shaking the earth beneath them. As they approached the wide entrance to the arena, the column separated into two parts; these again into two, and again and again, until the eye failed to follow the intricate convolutions, and the moving mass resembled a gaudy kaleidoscope. Upon the conclusion of this cavalry review, during which the braves performed the most difficult feats of horsemanship, the Sun Dance proper began.

Forty-seven Indians had volunteered to submit themselves to this inhuman rite. The dancers were brought into the arena one at a time, each attended by his relatives. As he entered he raised his hand in adoration of the sun before he advanced to and embraced the sacred pole. Their only clothing was a brush-cloth. One fine stalwart youth was so overcome by the prospect of his approaching torture, that, as he embraced the pole and leaned his head upon his folded arms, his whole frame trembled and heaved with emotion. Instantly he recovered his stoicism, and took his place in the row of dancers with an unmovable countenance. At a sign from Spotted Tail the dancer lay down on his back, his head touching the foot of the pole. Two slits about four inches long and half an inch apart were then cut in each breast; the skin between the wounds was torn from the flesh and a strong, hard wood stick thrust in; and to the ends of this stick the ropes fastened to the poles were securely tied. When thus prepared the dancer sprang to his feet, the blood streaming down from his wounds; slits were also made under the shoulder blades, and in the backs of the hands and sticks thrust through. In this condition, with a whistle between his teeth, upon which he blew unceasingly, the victim, or rather the fanatic, began to dance, amid the most unearthly din; drums beating, whistles screaming, six thousand throats hooting, yelling and singing, and he keeping his eyes fixed upon the sun during the whole time of his ordeal. If he lowered his eyes or turned them aside from the dazzling blaze, some Indians reflected the rays into his face from small looking glasses. While he dances his hands are outstretched, and at intervals he rushes backwards, and throws his whole weight upon the rope which is fastened to his breast. This he must continue until the skin gives way and the sticks are torn from the wounds. Before this is accomplished the skin is raised from the flesh over the entire breast, and the blood flows freely from the ugly wounds. In some instances nine hours have passed before the dancer could tear himself loose, but on this occasion the longest time of endurance was two hours and a half.

One rather slender youth gave tokens of exhaustion in a short time after being fastened to the pole. He tottered from side to side, and was in such a state of nervous excitement that the pulsations of his heart could be distinctly seen at a distance of several feet. His mother, an old squaw, shrivelled and wrinkled, came forward and took her place beside him; she began to sing first a war song and then praises of her son's bravery, and exhortations to fortitude, finally promises of gifts and honors if he came triumphantly forth from the ordeal. The young man persevered for a time, but it was a most painful exhibition.

Many of the dancers became faint before their vow was fulfilled, and could not throw themselves against the rope with sufficient force to break away. But to fail is life long disgrace; the brave who succumb to physical anguish must have his hair cut close to his head, and must be banished and disowned by his tribe; so

the dancers persist, stimulated now and again by a looker on stepping up and spitting on them. When it became apparent that a dancer would not by his own efforts succeed in breaking loose, one of his friends clasped him around the waist and dragged him backward, until the thongs burst from his flesh and he fell exhausted on the earth. Then the ragged skin was trimmed off and his wounds dressed with pieces of charcoal. After a short rest he would join in the dance around the outer circle, which is continued until all who have volunteered have undergone the torture. The dance is continued from two to three days. During this time the dancers are kept entirely without food or drink; but at the conclusion of the ceremonies a grand feast is celebrated. Ponies, blankets and skins are then given to the dancers, and they are treated with all imaginable honors. As an exhibition of human fortitude under privation and intense physical agony, the Sun Dance of the Sioux is perhaps unequalled in this age of the world.

An Exception. "Is it true," said an old toper to a physiologist, "that the human body is composed of eighty-five per cent. water and fifteen per cent. solid matter?" "Ordinary that is the case, but there are exceptions." "Indeed." "Yes your body forms one of them." "How so?" "Well, you see, while it is true that the ordinary human body contains liquid and solid matter in the portions you have mentioned, the liquid is not always water. Your case, as I before observed, is one of these. I should say your body is composed of ten per cent. solids and ninety per cent beer and whiskey."

Manners of Husbands. The honeymoon cannot last forever; and to all men there comes a point in their lives where they have to decide whether the amenities, and courtesies, and sweetness, which characterized the early days of their affection, shall be continued, or whether it shall be given up, and harsh sentiment, and speech, and thought, and feeling shall prevail the life. To some of us, perhaps this time has come, and we have not decided rightly, and harshness has crept into that which had been perfect melody, and there has been chronic discord in our family circle. Reform your conduct, husbands, if you have lapsed from that sweet era. Forebearance is the keystone of married life. There can be no discord, there can be no large divergencies from usefulness, so long as the husband forbears and the wife forbears. The temper should be kept under perfect control.

Probably there is no quality more efficient in dispelling ignorance than the courage which dares to confess it. The child learns fast, chiefly because he has no self-conscious fear of being thought uninform. He asks all manner of questions without any qualm of misgiving, and exposes his own deficiencies without any feeling of shame or distress. It is by his free and eager enquiries that he improves so rapidly. Were he afraid to show his ignorance, no one could help him out of it. The enforced school-lessons would comprise nearly the whole of his education, and even they could not be adapted to his individual needs. As it is, every genial and kind hearted person with whom he comes in contact is interested in adding to his stock of knowledge. The same privilege might be enjoyed by the adult did not a feeling of shame prevent him from seeking knowledge in the same natural and simple way. But, as the years pass, he comes to feel that the confession of ignorance will expose him to ridicule, or contempt, or censure, and he therefore hides it under whatever pretext he can find.

Old Nursery Favorites. There was Tom, the Son of the Piper, Jack Sprat, and Merry King Cole, And the Three Wise Men of Gotham, Who went to sea in a bowl; The woman who rode on a broomstick, And swept the cobwebbed sky, And the boy who sat in the corner, Eating his Christmas pie.

These were some of the old favorites, but they have been supplanted by the "Pansy" and "Chatterbox" stories, "Little Lord Fauntleroy," and "Five Little Peppers." The old fashioned pills and physics have been superseded, and wisely, too, by Pierce's Purgative Pellets, a mild, harmless and effective cathartic. They are pleasant to take—so gentle in their action that the most delicate child can take them, yet so effective that they will cure the most obstinate cases of constipation, stomach, liver and bowel troubles. They should be in every nursery. As a gentle laxative, only one for a dose.

Some commercial travellers were one night chaffing one another in their room in the George Hotel, Glasgow. Among them were two roadsters in the tea line, one of whom declared his intention of next day soliciting an order from the late Mr. Smeal, the Quaker tea-merchant in the Gallowgate; "You may save yourself the trouble of calling there," said No. 2, "for Mr. Smeal has dealt with our house for years, and he is a man who never changes when well served." "I will bet a sovereign I get an order from him before I leave his place," said No. 1. The bet was duly booked in the presence of all in the room; and next day No. 1, made his appearance at Mr. Smeal's and in the blindest tones, solicited an order. The Quaker in his blunt way told him that he had no order to give him; but the man of samples would take no denial. "Give me a little order," he at last urged. "I do not care how small it may be, so that it is an order, as it is to settle a bet." "Well then," said Mr. Smeal, losing all patience, order you to get out at the door,—which the traveller at once did and went back to his hotel and claimed his bet.

ALL SORTS. Fool moon—The honeymoon. Light Literature—Lampoons and squibs. Proverb for the borrower—It is never too late to lend. To the sluggard every year is sleep year. Highwaymen: elevated railway companies. The hotel chambermaid thrives by her inn-dustry. Advice to persons thinking of divorce: Never dis-pair. It is the man with the rheumatism who is every inch a king. A competing hotel out West says generously of another that "it stands without arrival." "What struck you most in Italy?" a newly-returned traveler is asked. "The sun," says he. We have heard of some people who say they could live on music. Then it must be on note-meal. It was a young housekeeper who set the cake she had baked for a picnic out of doors one cold night to be frosted. This is the beginning of a new novel. "He was at one time a son so prodigal that all the calves fled at his approach." "Aunt, vat makes de little baby cry so? Do it want iz mudder?" "Yes, dear, and its fodder, too." When you hear of a money-drawer rifled, you will not be surprised to know that its contents have gone off. A Sacramento paper speaks of a senator with a "half-jauzy air about him." Many of them do have a sort of demi-jointy air about them. A country rector called rather early in the morning upon one of his parishioners. One of the children saw him coming, and ran into the house to tell his mother. The little fellow soon returned to the front and resumed his play. The clergyman inquired, "Is your mother at home?" "No, sir," replied the child; "she is out at present." "Tell her when she returns that I called," said the clergyman. "I did tell her," replied the little boy. To put oneself in the way of being insulted again and again, when we have proved the innate brutality of such a person, is to act like a fool and to merit the return we shall meet with. It is to offer a premium to insolence, and to offend against that self-respect which every man should preserve as the very crown of his moral life. "I can't very well express—which it—what there—I do not—you are very—I am not, sir, insensible—the fact is," said the diffident man, suddenly called to his feet for a speech at a public dinner, "I can't make a speech, and I can't say anything you would understand or would wish to hear; but, if it pleases you to see me blush and perspire, I will stand here on one leg and perspire for the next ten minutes." They let him off. "What did he say to me, the beggar?" said the prisoner in a fine burst of indignation. "He stopped an' stud still in the middle of the street, an' he niver opened his mouth; he tuck off his coat just an' he trowed it down on the ground like that, an' he tuck off his hat an' he trowed it down on top of it just, an' he tuck up his sleeves an' clapped his hands, the wan in the other, like that; an' that's all he said, the blatherin, son of a gun! An' phwat more wud ye want him to say before ye struck the top of him in wid a pavin' hammer?" That gave him an days.

Dairy Schools For Canada. An important decision has just been arrived at by the Dominion Government, which has approved a suggestion of the Minister of Agriculture to establish a number of dairy schools throughout the country for the purpose of improving the methods of butter making now in vogue, and restoring Canada to its old position as a large exporter of fine butter. This resolve of the Government will be highly approved of, especially amongst the farmers who will immediately benefit by this wise decision. There is an unlimited British demand for butter to be satisfied, and with improved methods the future trade should be enormous. Professor Robertson, the talented instructor in this branch of agricultural science, will no doubt take in hand the work of the schools. As the writs for the Dominion general election to be held on the 5th prox. are made returnable on April 25th, the first session of the new Parliament will open at a later date than any previous session at Ottawa. The latest opening was in 1880, the date being April 15th. The first session of the present Parliament, however, was opened only two days earlier in the year than this.

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