

# Mandan-Hidatsa Myths and Ceremonies

Collected by Martha Warren Beckwith

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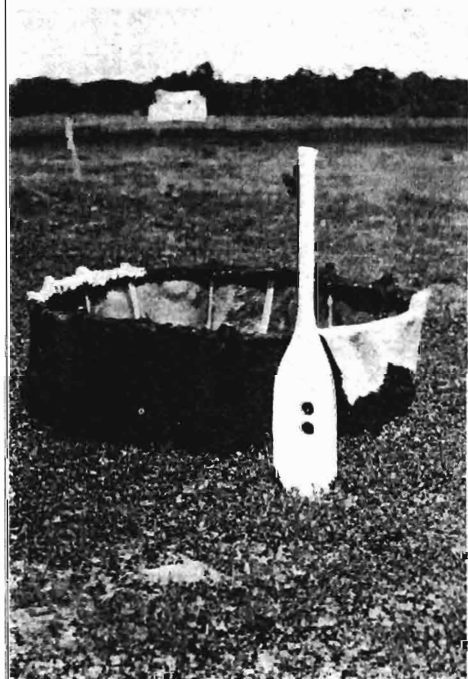
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# Mandan - Hidatsa Myths and Ceremonies

COLLECTED BY  
MARTHA WARREN BECKWITH

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Photographs by Alfred W. Bowers

Mrs. White Duck, Mrs. Good Bear,  
Mandan bull's hide boat, Eagle trapper's lodge.



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## ERRATA

- Page 21 line 9, for *Bethel* read Berthold
- Page 26 line 4, for *moles* see index
- Page 31 line 12, for *pillows* read pillars
- Page 49 line 34, for *pouch* read paunch. See Index
- Page 52 last line, probably box elderwood
- Page 65 line 8, probably bald for *gold*
- Page 85 line 4, for *chokeberries* read chokecherries
- Page 85 line 18, for *razor* read racer
- Page 104 line 1, for *blueberries* read bullberries (buffalo)
- Page 134 line 3, for *boy's* read boys'
- Page 144 note, for *Yellow Dog* read First Creator
- Page 166 line 24, for *west* read east
- Page 190 line 9, read alighted
- Page 196, line 7, *buffalo* is doubtful
- Page 221 line 27, supply cord after *navel*
- Page 232 line 8, for *coolie* read coulee
- Page 246 last line, quotation marks after *it*
- Page 261 line 5, for *Erwin* read Irvine



## 1. FIRST CREATOR AND LONE MAN

### *Version 1.*

A Mandan origin story from a manuscript written by Arthur Mandan as related by his mother, loaned by the Reverend Peter Fehrenbach of the Catholic mission at Elbowoods.

In the beginning the surface of the earth was all water and there was darkness<sup>1</sup>. The First Creator and Lone Man were walking on the top of the waters and as they were walking along they happened to see a small object which seemed to have life and upon investigation they found it to be a small bird of the duck family—the kind that is very fond of diving.—“Well!” they said, “Let us ask this creature where it gets its subsistence. We don’t see any kind of food on the waters and she must have something to keep her alive.” So they asked her and she told them that she got her food in the bed of the waters. They asked her to show them a sample of the food. She told them she would be very glad to do so and at once she dived down to the bed of the waters and up she came with a small ball of sand. Upon seeing the sand they said, “Well! if this keeps the bird alive it must be good for

<sup>1</sup> The Mandan version of the creation recorded in 1832 by Maximilian, pages 361-365, corresponds very closely with that current today as represented in these four versions from Mandan and Hidatsa informants. Of the diving episode among the Hidatsa Maximilian says: “Formerly there existed water only, and no earth: a large bird, with a red eye, dived. The man who does not die or the lord of life (Ehsicka-Wahadish, literally the first man) who lives in the Rocky Mountains, had made all and sent the great bird to fetch up earth.”

Matthews says of the Hidatsa, 47, “The object of their greatest reverence is, perhaps, Itsikamahidis, the *First Made*, or First in Existence. They sometimes designate him as Itakatétas, or *Old Man Immortal*. Some Indians says that itsikamahidis means *he who first made*, but such a rendering is not in accordance with the present etymology of the language. They assert that he made all things, the stars, the sun, the earth, and the first representatives of each species of animals and plants, but that no one made him. He also, they say, instructed the forefathers of the tribes in all the ceremonies and mysteries now known to them.”

For the Arikara versions of the same myth see Dorsey, 11; Gilmore, MASAL and IN 3: 188-193, 256-274. Compare also Arapaho, 1-6; Cheyenne, Grinell, 170; Caddo 7. For California parallels see Thompson, *Tales of North American Indians*, (1929), comparative note 47.

other creatures also. Let us create land out of this substance, and living creatures, and let us make the land productive that it may bear fruit for the subsistence of the creatures that we shall create. Let us choose therefore the directions where each shall begin." So Lone Man chose the northern part and the First Creator the southern, and they left a space between in the water which is the Missouri river. Then, after agreeing to compare results, they began the creation.

The First Creator made broad valleys, hills, coulees with timber, mountain streams, springs, and, as creatures, the buffalo elk, black-tailed and white-tailed antelope, mountain sheep and all other creatures useful to mankind for food and clothing. He made the valleys and coulees as shelter for the animals as well as for mankind. He set lakes far apart. Lone Man created for the most part level country with lakes and small streams and rivers far apart. The animals he made lived some of them in the water, like beaver, otter, and muskrat. Others were the cattle of many colors with long horns and long tails, moose, and other animals.

After all this was ended they met as agreed upon to compare their creations. First they inspected what Lone Man had created and then they went on to what First Creator had made, then they began to compare results. First Creator said, "The things you have created do not meet with my approval. The land is too level and affords no protection to man. Look at the land I have created. It contains all kinds of game, it has buttes and mountains by which man can mark his direction. Your land is so level that a man will easily lose his way for there are no high hills as signs to direct him. Look at the waters I have created,—the rivers, brooks, springs with running water always pure and refreshing for man and beast. In summer the springs are always cool, in winter they are always warm. The lakes you have made have most of them no outlet and hence become impure. The things I have made are far more useful to man. Look at the buffalo,—they are all black save here and there a white one so rare as to be highly prized. In winter their hair grows long and shaggy to combat the cold; in warm weather they shed their hair in order to endure the heat more comfortably. But look at the



cattle you have created with long horns and tail, of all colors, and with hair so short and smooth that they cannot stand the cold!" Lone Man said, "These things I have created I thought were the very things most useful to man. I cannot very well change them now that they are once created. So let us make man use first the things that you have made until the supply is exhausted and then the generations to come shall utilize those things which I have created." So it was agreed between them and both blessed their creation and the two parted.

In the course of time Lone Man looked upon the creation and saw mankind multiplying and was pleased, but he also saw evil spirits that harmed mankind and he wanted to live among the men that he had created and be as one of them. He looked about among all nations and peoples to find a virgin to be his mother and discovered a very humble family consisting of a father, mother and daughter. This virgin he chose to be his mother.<sup>2</sup> So one morning when the young woman was roasting corn and eating it he thought this would be the proper time to enter into the young woman. So he changed himself into corn and the young woman ate it and conceived the seed. In the course of time the parents noticed that she was with child and they questioned her, saying, "How is it, daughter, that you are with child when you have not known man? Have you concealed anything from us?" She answered, "As you say, I have known no man. All I know is that at the time when I ate roast corn I thought that I had conceived something, then I did not think of the matter again until I knew I was with child." So the parents knew that this must be a marvel since the child was not conceived through any man, and they questioned her no more.

In course of time the child was born and he grew up like other children, but he showed unusual traits of purity and as he grew to manhood he despised all evil and never even married. Everything he did was to promote goodness. If a quarrel arose among the people he would pacify them with kind words. He loved the children and they followed him around wherever he

<sup>2</sup> The episode of the virgin birth as related by Maximilian follows Foolish Woman's version. Compare Iowa, 481. In the Hopi emergence myth recorded by Alexander M. Stephen in the *Journal of American Folklore*, 42:3-14, the mother of the twin thunder boys is a virgin who conceives by Sun in the form of sunshine and rain (11, 13).



went. Every morning he purified himself with incense, which fact goes to show that he was pure.

The people of the place where he was born were at that time Mandans. They were in the habit of going to an island in the ocean off the mouth of a river to gather *ma-tä-ba-ho*. For the journey they used a boat by the name of *I-di-he* (which means Self Going); all they had to do was to strike it on one side and tell it to go and it went. This boat carried twelve persons and no more;<sup>3</sup> if more went in the boat it brought ill luck. On the way to the island they were accustomed to meet dangerous obstacles.

One day there was a party setting out for the island to get some *ma-tä-ba-ho* and everyone came to the shore to see them off and wish them good luck. The twelve men got into the boat and were about to strike the boat on the side for the start when Lone Man stepped into the boat, saying that he wanted to go too. The men in the boat as well as the people on the shore objected that he would bring ill luck, but he persisted in accompanying them and finally, seeing that they could not get rid of him, they proceeded on the journey.

Now on the way down the river, evil spirits that lived in the water came out to do them harm, but every time they came to the surface Lone Man would rebuke them and tell them to go back and never show themselves again. As they neared the mouth of the river, at one place the willows along the bank changed into young men who were really evil spirits and challenged the men in the boat to come ashore and wrestle with them. Lone Man accepted the challenge. Everyone with whom he wrestled he threw and killed until the wrestlers, seeing that they were beaten, took to their heels. Then he rebuked the willows, saying that he had made them all and they should not turn themselves into evil spirits any more. When they reached the ocean they were confronted by a great whirlpool, into which the men in the boat began to cast trinkets as a sacrifice in order to pacify it, but every time they threw in a trinket Lone Man would pick it up saying that he wanted it for himself. Meanwhile, in spite of all they could do, the whirlpool sucked them in closer. Then the men began to murmur against Lone Man and complain that he brought

<sup>3</sup> The number in Maximilian's version is eight.



them ill luck and lament that they were to be sucked in by the whirlpool. Then Lone Man rebuked the whirlpool saying, "Do you not know that I am he who created you? Now I command you to be still." And immediately the waters became smooth. So they kept on the journey until they came to a part of the ocean where the waves were rough. Here the men again began to offer sacrifices to pacify the waves, but in spite of their prayers and offerings the waves grew even more violent. All this time Lone Man was picking up the offerings and the men were trying to persuade him not to do so, but he kept right on,—never stopped! By this time the boat was rocking pretty badly with the waves and the men began to murmur again and say that Lone Man was causing their death. Then he rebuked the waves, saying, "Peace, be still," and all at once the sea was still and calm and continued so for the rest of the trip.

Upon the island there were inhabitants under a chief named Ma-na-ge (perhaps water of some kind). On their arrival, the chief told the inhabitants of his village to prepare a big feast for the visitors at which he would order the visitors to eat all the food set before them and thus kill them.<sup>4</sup> Lone Man foresaw that this would happen and on his way he plucked a bulrush and inserted it by way of his throat through his system. So when the feast was prepared and all were seated in a row with the food placed before them, he told the men each to eat a little from the dish as it passed from one man to the next until it reached Lone Man, when he would empty the whole contents of the dish into the bulrush, by which means it passed to the fourth strata of the earth. When all the food was gone, Lone Man looked about as if for more and said, "Well! I always heard that these people were very generous in feeding visitors. If this is all you have to offer I should hardly consider it a feast." All the people looked at the thirteen men and when they saw no signs of sickness they regarded them as mysterious.

<sup>4</sup> The tests of the Hopi twin thunder boys (JAFL 42: 11-13, 15) in Sun's house by father Sun in order to prove their paternity resemble closely this Europeanized version. For discussion see Robert H. Lowie, *Test Theme in North American Mythology*, *Journal of American Folklore*, 21: 97-148; Franz Boas, 31st Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 794ff.



Next Ma-na-ge asked the visitors if they wanted to smoke. Lone Man said "Certainly! for we have heard what good tobacco you have." This pleased Ma-na-ge, for he thought he would surely kill the men by the effects of the tobacco. So he called for his pipe, which was as big as a pot. He filled the pipe and lighted it and handed it over to the men. Each took a few puffs until it came to Lone Man, who, instead of puffing out the smoke, drew it all down the bulrush to the fourth strata of the earth. So in no time the whole contents of the pipe was smoked. Then he said he had always heard that Ma-na-ge was accustomed to kill his visitors by smoking with them but if this was the pipe he used it was not even large enough to satisfy him. From that time on Ma-na-ge watched him pretty closely.

(You may put in about the women if you want to).

Now Lone Man was in disguise. The chief then asked his visitors for their bags to fill with the ma-tä-ba-ho, as much as each man had strength to carry, and each produced his bag. Lone Man's was a small bag made of two buffalo hides sewed together, but they had to keep putting in to fill it. The chief watched them pretty closely by this time and thought, "If he gets away with that load he must be Lone Man!" So when the bag was filled, Lone Man took the bag by the left hand, slung it over his right shoulder and began to walk away. Then Ma-na-ge said, "Lone Man, do you think that we don't know you?" Said Lone Man as he walked away, "Perhaps you think that I am Lone Man!" Ma-na-ge said, "We shall come over to visit you on the fourth night after you reach home." By this he meant, in the fourth year.<sup>5</sup>

When they reached home, Lone Man instructed his people how to perform ceremonies as to himself and appointed the men who were to perform them. He told them to clear a round space in the center of the village and to build a round barricade about it and to take four young cottonwood trees as a hoop. In the center of the barricade they were to set up a cedar and paint it with red earth and burn incense and offer sacrifices to the cedar. Lone Man said, "This cedar is my body which I leave with you

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Maximilian, 368.



as a protection from all harm,<sup>6</sup> and this barricade will be a protection from the destruction of the water. For as Ma-na-ge said, they are coming to visit you. This shall be the sign of their coming. There will be a heavy fog for four days and four nights, then you may know that they are coming to destroy you. But it is nothing but water. When it comes, it will rise no higher than the first hoop next to the ground and when it can get no higher it will subside.

After he had instructed them in all the rites and ceremonies they should perform he said, "Now I am going to leave you,—I am going to the south—to other peoples—and shall come back again. But always remember that I leave with you my body." And he departed to the south. And after four years Ma-na-ge made his visit in the form of water and tried in every way to destroy the inhabitants of the village, but when he failed to rise higher than the first hoop he subsided.

### *Version 2.*

Told by Foolish Woman, Mandan and Hidatsa, at Independence, July 11, 1929.

In the beginning the whole earth was covered with water. Lone Man was walking on top of the waves. He thought within himself, "Where did I come from?" So he retraced his footsetps on the top of the water and he came to a bit of land jutting out of the water. He saw a plant called "big medicine" such as grows in the marsh two or three feet high with flat white blossoms that come out in the spring. His footsteps led to this plant. One branch was broken and hung at the side. At the broken place he saw drops of blood and he thought, "This must be my mother!" As he looked about he saw an insect called "Tobacco blower" flying about the plant and he thought, "This insect must be a father to me."

He walked on over the surface of the water and saw in the distance an object which he found to be a mud-hen. As he approached there came also the First Creator to the same place.—

<sup>6</sup> In Arikara, Dorsey, 17, Mother Corn says, "The Cedar-tree that shall stand in front of your lodge shall be myself. I shall turn into a Cedar-tree."



“How do you come to be wandering about here?” asked the First Creator. Lone Man said, “How come you to be wandering here?” —“I have been considering,” said First Creator, “that you and I should create some land.” Lone Man agreed. They asked the mud-hen what food it had for its subsistence. The bird told them, “I dive under the water and there is land and I eat the dirt down there.” They said, “Dive down and bring us up a sample.” Some time later the bird came up with a little mud. Four times it dived and still there was only enough to fill one hand. Lone Man rolled it into a ball and gave half to First Creator and kept the other half. He said, “We will make a dividing point and leave a river and you may choose which side you will create.” First Creator chose the south side, Lone Man took the north. They built the land, the south by First Creator, the north by Lone Man. First Creator made some places level, ranges of hills, ranges of mountains, springs, timber and coulees with running streams. He created buffalo,—made them all black with here and there a white one. He created Rocky Mountain sheep, deer, antelope, rattlesnakes,—all the animals that used to exist here. Lone Man created mostly flat land with many lakes and ponds grown with bulrushes and with few trees. He created cattle—some white, some spotted, some red, some black—with long horns and tail, and the animals like the badger and beaver that live in the water and the duck and geese that swim on the water, also the sheep of today. Then they met on the north side of the river and reviewed the creation that they had completed. Both believed his creation to be the better. They examined first what First Creator had made and Lone Man said the land was too rough. First Creator said, “No, I did this for the safety of the creatures. When they are in danger from a hard winter they will have protection in the timber and shelter in the coulees.” He showed him the tribes of people that he had made (the Indians). But Lone Man was displeased with First Creator’s work. He showed him how level the land was on the north side of the river, dotted with lakes and strewn with boulders and treeless so that the eye could see far away. First Creator however was dissatisfied. He said, “In the winter there is no protection, in time of war there will be no place to hide.” —“No,” argued Lone Man, “they can see the enemy far away and hide in the bulrushes beside the lakes.” He pointed out



the beauty of the cattle. First Creator found them too weak to pull through the winter, with too little fur, too long horns in comparison with the protection of the buffalo against the cold. So he disapproved of Lone Man's creation. It was agreed to let the people live first on the creation of First Creator then the generation to come should live on the cattle created by Lone Man, hence that the cattle should drift back to the far east where he had created people out of his own breath, light-complexioned and well worth looking upon, who should come westward later and inhabit the land with the first people.

Of the dirt from the ball some had been left over and this they placed in the center of the created land and formed a heart-shaped butte which they called "The-heart-of-the-land," to be seen to this day near the city of Mandan near the Heart river. Still some mud was left over. This they took across the river opposite to Bird's-beak Hill below Bismarck on the north side of the river, and this butte they called "Land."

They wandered upon the land and one said, "I think I am the older," but the other said, "No, I think I am the older of us two." They laid a bet. First Creator said he would lie down (as if) to die. Lone Man had a stick strung with a sinew to which goose feathers were tied at intervals. This he stuck in the ground. (If he drew it forth before the other was dead he must acknowledge himself defeated). Lone Man wandered off and the next year when he came back to the spot he found the other nothing but a skeleton. The bow too was worn and weathered. He came back from year to year and the fourth year there was not a feather left on his bow and where First Creator lay the grass grew tall. Lone Man said, "Why leave my bow longer? He will never get up now!" He took up his bow, sang a song, and it was as new as ever. As he walked away up got First Creator and shook himself and was as fresh as ever. Lone Man looked at him and he was Coyote.

They separated again and wandered apart. Lone Man went on his way and thought, "I have nothing to carry. If I had a pipe and tobacco it would be fine!" He saw a buffalo lying down. As

<sup>7</sup> For the age contest see Dakota (Oglala), 121, (Wahpeton), 59-61. In Arikara, Dorsey, 11, Wolf and Lucky Man challenge each other to endure rain the longest and Lucky Man wins. In Assiniboine, 120, the one who gets up first is to be killed.



he approached, the buffalo was about to run away but he called out, "Do not run, it is I!" He asked the buffalo what it could do for him in this matter. The buffalo passed water and tramped about in a coulee and told him to return at this time of year and he would hear a sound and find his tobacco growing. Sure enough next year he heard a buzzing sound and there was a tobacco plant growing with a tobacco blower buzzing about it. Buffalo instructed him that the best part grew next to the bud and to dry it he should lay it on buffalo hair taken at the shoulder and put it to dry in the sun. For the bowl he should use oak, for the stem box-elder. This was meant to indicate that the land on the south side of the river was male, that on the <sup>East</sup> ~~north~~ side female. "I have nothing to light my pipe with," said Lone Man.—"Go over there to an old man on the side of the hill, he will give you a light for the pipe," said Buffalo. This old man was the burning lignite.

Lone Man was on his way. The Mandan people originated at the mouth of this river way down at the ocean. On the north side of the river was a high bank. At its foot on the shore of the ocean was a cavern,—that is where the Mandan people came out.<sup>8</sup> The chief's name was Ka-ho-he, which denotes the scraping sound made by the corn-stalks swaying back and forth and rubbing each other with a sound like a bow drawn across a string. That is what the name denotes. Ko-i-roh-kte was the sister of the chief. The name denotes the testing of the squash seeds. When they plant squash, to test the seed they wrap the seed in dead grass and keep it moist. The brother's name was Na-ci-i. This is the name of a little animal the size of a prairie dog and quite a traveller, which has a yellow streak over the nose from cheek to cheek but changes color in the fall. In this boy's system was the spirit that travels far.

Somehow Na-ci-i got up on the surface of the land. He went

<sup>8</sup> For the emergence myth see Lewis and Clark, 1: 207, Maximilian, 366. It is today generally limited to the Hidatsa group. Maximilian says that the Mandan believe in four stories above the earth and four below. See Thompson's *Tales of North American Indians*, note 58. Compare Arikara, Dorsey, 12-17; Caddo, 7-13. The emergence myth is well developed in the southeast, as in Stephens, *Hopi Tales*, and Matthews, *Navaho Tales*. It is to be observed that movement of the tribes east or west, down from the sky (as in No. 3 of this collection) or up from a world underground, is not to be interpreted literally but as a change of tribal organization of which the migration incident is a symbol. An Oglala Sioux told me that the formula of "traveling westward" which occurs so often in tribal tales was to be so regarded.



back and told his elder that the land below was not to be compared with that he had seen. He asked the people to come up and inhabit this earth. They found a vine hanging down and that was where they came up. A good number had already emerged when a young girl big with child insisted on coming out and she was so heavy that she broke the vine and fell back into the cavern.

Those who had come up to the surface built a camp, found plentiful game and were well-to-do. About this time they saw a big boat sailing near the land. When the people landed they were light with yellow hair and eyes like an owl's. The people took a fancy to them. Ma-shi—Wonderful!—they called them. So the Mandans call the white people today. They lived with them and ate with them, then the white people left and the Indians moved farther up the river and made another camp.

Lone Man happened to come to their village and saw that these people were advanced, for they were tilling gardens. So Lone Man thought, "Those are the real people. I will manage to be born among them." A man and woman had a daughter who was a virgin. The father was a leading man in the village. Lone Man chose this virgin for his mother. So one day when they went to work in their gardens by the river bank, the girl went to the river to quench her thirst and there she saw a drowned buffalo drifting close to shore. Where the skin was broken she could see the fat of the kidneys projecting. Thus tempted, she drew the buffalo to shore, fastened it by the feet and ate of the fat of the kidney. This was in reality Lone Man and this is how she conceived by him. She came back and told her parents about the buffalo, but when they ran gladly to the shore they could find no trace of it save a loop tied to the bank. They thought no further about it, but as the months went by they began to notice that she was with child. When the mother questioned her, she said she had known no man and could not tell how she had got into this condition.

When the time came, the child delivered was a boy. The father had not believed that the girl had met no man but as the child was born there was a great light which penetrated through the chimney-hole to the skies. From year to year the boy grew stronger and more wise. He was looked upon as unusual. He grew faster than most children. As years went by he grew to manhood and was looked upon as a leader. In times of famine



he caused the herds of buffalo to come near to the lodge so that they had meat to eat. When they planted corn, when there was a drought such as there is today he would cause it to rain so that the land had moisture and the people had plenty of corn.

There were evil beings born into the tribe where he was and when they grew up they wanted to rule the village and they schemed against him to bring about his destruction. He made a boat named "Self-going" (the same word used today for the automobile) which went of itself. They would get upon this boat and cross over to an island whose chief was named Ma-ni-ke. Only twelve persons could go in this boat, if more ventured the voyage was unlucky. They would carry along offerings, as between the mouth of the river and this island there were obstacles to contend with. In one place was a whirlpool, in another the waves were high; so they offered sacrifices in order to escape the whirlpool and still the waves. At the island the chief would give them beaked shells of many colors in exchange for presents. These shells they used for earrings. *Mata-pahu-tou*,—Shell-nose-with—is the name the Indians give to these abalone shells.

One day twelve men got aboard the boat for the journey and Lone Man came along and jumped into the boat. They tried to turn him out, but he said he had heard so much about the feasting on the island that he wanted to go along. When they reached the whirlpool he was asleep. They were afraid and woke him and he got up, reached out and picked up the objects floating about which had been offered in sacrifice and said, "These are just what I want!" Then he took his bow, smoothed it, and commanded the water to be still. Thus he stilled both whirlpool and high waves. They said, "When we land on the island the people usually get up a feast and compel us to eat everything they set before us and pretty nearly kill us." So he took a reed by the river and with a stick ran through the points and inserted the reed through his system so that as he sat at the feast it would reach down to the fourth strata of the earth. He ordered the men to eat only what they wished as the plate was passed at the feast and let it come last to him and he would empty the whole down the reed. So it happened. There was a great feast. They were brought into a great lodge nearly filled with food and were forbidden to leave anything. They sat about in a half moon shape



and ate and when all had eaten their fill they placed the pot before him and he emptied its contents down his mouth. In no time they had cleaned out the whole works. (The men were also given wives, but Lone Man avoided them).

As they sailed away the chief said, "In four years I will come and visit your village." He meant to destroy them with water. Lone Man told the people to weave a kind of barricade about the village and hold it together with young cotton-trees. He brought all the people inside the barricade and when the water came the water mounted only as far as the cotton-tree barricade. In the water were what looked like people and those inside the barricade would throw over offerings and the people in the water would pass the shells over.

### *Version 3.*

A Hidatsa version told by Mrs. Good Bear (Mandan and Hidatsa) and interpreted by Rollo Jones, June 11, 1929.

It is our Indian custom to tell an old-time story when the corn is ripe. We have a man called Only Man. As he was walking along he came to himself. He stood and thought. A pipe was lying in front of him, over his head flew a raven. And he sang a song which said "Where did I come from?" He thought, "Where did I come from? How did I happen to come here?" The earth about him was sandy and he could plainly see his own tracks, so he followed them back to see where he came from. He came to a wet spot, then farther on to a great water, beside which was a plant with spotted leaves. A Buffalo Bug was jumping about in the sand. The plant said, "I am your mother, it was I that bore you; that is your father," and the weed-mother told Only Man that he was born to arrange matters on the earth.— "Go back to the wet spot and there you will find a tall weed. That is for your pipe. I am just a weed, this is all I am for. If anyone has a sore eye or stomach trouble let him take me and boil me up for medicine. Go ahead and create things in the world." When he came to himself he had a wolf blanket and a cane with feathers tied to the end. He came to the wet spot and there grew a tall tobacco weed and around it buzzed a tobacco-fly —buzz, buzz, buzz. The bug said, "I am blowing your tobacco plant,—use it to smoke." Again he sang the same song—"Where did I come from?" and he pulled up the tobacco plant.



As he was trotting along at a gentle pace another man came up suddenly. The two argued as to which was the older. They agreed "You lie here and I there and the first one that gets up will be the younger." Only Man said he would leave his cane standing and the other turned about and lay down and Only Man sang the same song—"Where did I come from?" He went on his way and traveled over the whole world from one end to the other, then he thought of his cane and returning to the spot where it stood he found it tottering and ready to fall. Grass grew where the other lay. He said, "This fellow can never get up again!" He took his cane and it became like new and he sang his song and was about to trot away again when the other man got up from the heap of dust where his body had been and said, "I told you that I was older than you!"

The two traveled to create the world. They looked for mud but there was sand alone. They came to a great lake where were two mudhens, a male and a female. They called them over and made them their servants and the mudhens dived and brought mud and the men made all creatures. They would throw the mud in the air and at once it became a bird. One bird had no place to go, so it flew over to the stoney places and became a nighthawk. Another stuck its head into the red paint, saying it was hungry, and when it pulled its head out the head was red, so they said it should have a hard time to get a living out of rotten trees. This was the woodpecker.

They made many kinds of different birds and animals and at last a grandmother frog came and said, "You are making too many animals; we must make death so that the first ones may pass away and new ones come." The two said, "You have nothing to say about our business!" and they picked up a stone and hit Grandmother Frog on the back. That is why her legs spread out so. That is how death started, and the child of Grandmother Frog was the first to die. Grandmother Frog came to the men and said, "I am sorry! Let us take it back and have no death!" but the men said, "No, it is impossible, it must be so."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For stories of the origin of death see Boas's discussions, referred to in Thompson, *Tales of North American Indians*, notes 51, 52: 31st Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, page 663; Bulletin 59, page 303; and Journal of American Folklore, 30: 486. A comparison with Boas's Tsimshian tale and variants seems to indicate that the age contest is a substitution for the dispute as to man's fate.



The two said, "Let us improve the earth, it is all sand!" So they took the mud that was left and Only Man took his lump and smoothed it over the earth and the earth was flat. First Creator took a little bit and put it here and there and formed hills and bluffs. Only Man used his cane and leveled the north side of the earth and made lakes. First Creator's idea was that when the snow flies there should be rough land and trees and springs to protect men and animals from the cold. First Creator made nothing but buffalo to roam over the land and in every herd he made a white buffalo and he said that this white one should be precious. From the coast this way Only Man created and First Creator created the south side of the earth. Thus it has been told from generation to generation.

After the creation Only Man was never seen again. First Creator turned into a coyote and from him come the coyotes today. He never knew where he came from.

*Version 4.*

Hidatsa version told by Mrs. White Duck, interpreted by Rollo Jones, June 10, 1929.

Jesus was born on the other side of the world. The man who created this American continent belonged on this side. This man was named the First Creator, *Itsi-ka-ma-hi-dsh*. The world was covered with water,—no land at all, all water. The First Creator was walking and he stood and said to himself, "This has got to be done in another way." While he was standing thus thinking a mudhen came to him. He said to the mudhen, "You go way down to the bottom and bring some sand." It dived and brought sand. So the man took some of the sand in his hand and created land and afterward walked on dry land.

He met a man that they call Only Man,—*Matsedu watsa*. This Only Man was running and he came to himself. He thought, "Where did I come from?" So he followed his tracks back. There was a big weed,—his tracks led to it. One of the branches was broken and there was blood coming from it. So he thought, "I have come from this place." He had a wolf-robe and his pipe. When he came to this weed a bug that they call Buffalo-bug was there. So Only Man laid down his pipe and sang, "This earth is holy." Then he said, "How is this?" The weed said, "I am your



mother, the Buffalo-bug is your father." Now when he was following his tracks back he had passed a wet place. The weed told him to go back, for at the wet place was a plant of tobacco for his pipe. When he turned back there was another weed and a fly called Squash-blossom fly was around and the fly said, "I am growing this weed for your pipe." So after Squash-blossom fly finished he took the weed and went back. This Only Man's pipe is in the New York Historical Society.

As he returned running back he met the First Creator. They said, "We will bet each other!" So the First Creator said, "I am older than you." The other said, "No, I am older than you!" They bet each other. All the land was nothing but sand. Only Man said, "if you are older than I where were you born? Where did you come from?" First Creator said, "I don't know but I think I came from the waves. I must be a splash from the ocean-wave. First thing I knew I was running from the water-waves." Only Man had a cane with feathers bunched on the top. He said, "I'll stand this cane here." First Creator said, "I'll lay myself down." So he lay down and Only Man set his cane and went away. And four years after he came back and said, "I will go and see that fool who lay down!" His cane was all worn down and there were the feathers still tied to the cane. First Creator was only dust and ashes. Only Man shook his cane and it was made new. First Creator rose up and shook himself and stood just as he was and said, "I am older!" Only Man sang, "This earth is holy."

First Creator said, "It looks bad without anything in this world. Let us make something." From there they started to create the world over again. They were right at the mouth of Heart river. Only Man created toward the north, First Creator toward the south. He said, "Go ahead and do the best you can. You create the animals, I will create men and women." Only Man picked up a dead wolf and created a man they call a white man and the cows we are milking today,—made them spotted and all colors. He used his cane to create these things. He made the land level and formed lakes. First Creator created toward the south. He made the buffalo that have passed away all of one color with only a few white ones here and there. He made plenty of springs and trees. Then they met at the mouth of the Heart

river. What mud they had left they set up in a sharp-pointed heart shape. This was the center of the earth. They said, "The future generations will call it 'Heart butte.' " When First Creator saw the things that Only Man had made he said, "You are foolish to make these things. Only when they get out of meat will they use that which you have created." So now all the good meat is gone and we use the spotted beef. Then First Creator saw the human being that Only Man had made and he said, "You have made a queer kind of men,—they will always be greedy!"



## 15. YELLOW DOG <sup>72</sup>

There was a large village of the Gros Ventres. In this village lived a man named Yellow Dog. The Moon's son was at this time married to the chief's daughter. He was the same man as the Old Woman's grandson in the story. He went later to live with Morning Star and is sometimes identified with Morning Star. The girl was very beautiful, but she had refused all suitors until she married this Moon's son. Moon's son wished to help the people, who were starving for lack of game. There were no ponies in those days and the buffalo roamed too far away for the women to carry the meat from the hunt back to the village. Moon's son proposed to camp in a new tent away from the village in a broad valley through which ran a stream, and to get his helpers to carry back the meat from the hunt to the people in the village. They in turn were to provide corn and tobacco. The town crier was told to announce this to the people. His helpers were the stars of heaven. He would go far out into the country hunting and his helpers would butcher the herd, leave the head and bones lying, and pack the meat back to the tent. This tent stood facing the south. The people brought thither the corn and tobacco for the feast and were supplied with meat. Every four or five days Moon's son went out hunting. The village had plenty and everything was going well.

Now Yellow Dog dressed finely, took a stick in his hand and sat up on a lodge facing the new tent and sang a love song.<sup>73</sup> This displeased the people and they complained that he was mak-

<sup>72</sup> See Wilson, PAMNH 15: 198-199. Two close Crow versions occur (Lowie, 99-107).

For the first part of the story see Arapaho, 269-272; Wichita, 30-36.

The last part of the story is a version of the wide-spread myth of letting out the animals, of which the trickster is invariably the hero. "Yellow Dog" is here another name for Coyote. It seems to be Coyote's part in the story to defend human beings against the wrath of the spirits of the upper world who have been outraged by them. For analogues see Arapaho, 275-277; Assiniboine, 101-105; Blackfoot, 50-53; Gros Ventres, 65-67; Kiowa, 21-26; Shoshone, JAFL 37: 62-64; Iroquois, RBAE 43: 469. For distribution see Thompson, *Tales of North American Indians*, note 75.

<sup>73</sup> For the custom of dressing up for courtship see JAFL 2: 220-222.

ing love to the hunter's wife. Others said, "He is not courting her but one of the girls in the village whom he wants to have hear him sing." He wore a strip of buckskin painted red about his neck and dangling down his back like a travois. His medicine was a dog. Perhaps he was a dog incarnated into the tribe. Whenever the wife came within the limits of the village he would rise and sing his song, and she was attracted by him. [Here Bear's Arm dances and sings the Dog song.] The people began to gossip. They could not exactly accuse him, but when she came to her father's lodge she would say, "Yellow Dog seems as if he would dance his head off!" and the people saw that she took notice of him.

While the woman was alone in the tent no one was allowed to go near the tent. One hot day Yellow Dog came down from the top of the lodge, hid himself, and got secretly away from the village. He came to the creek and crawled over through the grass to the tent. The girl had taken off her dress and was putting a few stitches in it. He had painted at his best with yellow ochre on his forehead, and on chin and cheek bones red paint in imitation of dog tracks. He embraced the girl and rubbed his face against hers and at last she gave in. After he had gone, she went down to the creek to the place where was the pool of water which she used for a mirror and there saw the print he had left on her face. So she washed herself thoroughly down to her toes and, returning to her tent, awaited her husband.

He returned at night with his helpers. As they neared the tent he told the men not to unpack the meat as he smelled something unclean. When his wife came out he declared that a man had been with her and that she had ruined everything. He was about to leave her and all his helpers would scatter in the heavens. She ran to the village, asked for a sacred pipe and filled it with tobacco, and returning, placed the pipe in front of her husband.<sup>74</sup> He swayed to one side. A second time she placed it, a third, and a fourth time. I have seen with my own eyes the path he left, which all his hunters followed, when he moved this way and that

<sup>74</sup> Compare a Winnebago incident in which a chief lays a pipe in the path of a war leader to prevent his setting out on an expedition, since a war leader dare not step across the pipe (RBAE 37: 160).

to avoid the pipe. It is this side of Mandan, perhaps the same village as that called "The-village-where-a-great-serpent-devoured-a-man." The zigzag trail extends about the length of this room, then it is lost. Here the woman returned weeping to her village and they say that at this point the star hunters returned to the sky.

But the husband did not return to the sky. He went to the game all over the country and told them to go to Dog Den and he went in there also. He took First Creator in with him, because he knew that First Creator would naturally side with the Indian people. He said, "This Yellow Dog has done wrong by me. Let us see what he can do to save the people!"

The game grew scarce. The people sent out young men to scour the country but they found nothing. The people were rationed. They were angry with Yellow Dog and refused to give him any share in the food. At first his friends shared their portion with him, but at last they brought him no more and he grew weaker and weaker. The whole camp set out and journeyed four days and the fifth day made a permanent camp. News went about that Yellow Dog was left behind. There he lay with his back to the fireplace too weak to move.

Now appeared First Creator [Coyote] to help Yellow Dog. He promised Yellow Dog to send him his wife to bring him food. He must go and live with his wife near the chief's tent. He must ask for a small piece of fat and make a rubbing motion with this in his hands and throw it, and the king of the wolves would come out of the fire painted red from his waist up and would say "Hurry up, Yellow Dog!" This was to be a sign. He was to take buffalo dung and scatter it all over the plateau. The next day the plateau would be filled with buffalo. As he scattered the dung he must shoot and say "This is a young buffalo bull!" and this bull would be only wounded and would run to Dog Den and say that the band had been far away when the order went out and that he alone was saved. Then Coyote would pull out the arrow. Four times Yellow Dog scattered the dung for the people and each time there were a hundred more buffalo and all the people had plenty. Each time Coyote pulled out the arrow from the wounded buffalo. Then Coyote told Yellow Dog to go to

the outskirts of the village and he would find a mouse and its young and he was to bring her to the village and tell her there was plenty of food for her and no one would harm her. From this time the mouse has lived with men in villages. No matter how many are killed some remain.

Coyote reproached Moon's son and said, "You cannot starve these people. They are getting food in some mysterious way." Moon's son sent out Fox and said, "You go down to the camp and see if they really have food." Fox came within the outskirts of the camp. On the way he smelled the aroma of food and felt better, for he was starving. Coyote had told Yellow Dog to set a trap for Fox. Fox smelled the bait and said "What are you, friend?" — "A piece of old buffalo meat." — "Just the kind I want." Fox was caught. The next morning Yellow Dog took him from the trap and shook him and revived him. The people pitied him he was so thin. They tied a piece of meat around his neck and sent him back to Dog Den. So Fox came back and told the animals that the people had plenty and they were only starving themselves. Coyote spoke right up and accused Moon's son of having a bad heart. Moon's son sent out another fox. He was trapped, fed, and painted with ochre in sign of honor and returned to the den. A third time he sent out chickadee, saying, "I kept you here to count the months of the year." It seems that the months of the year are counted on the chickadee's tongue.



The Chickadee's Tongue

So the people fed him, painted him with ochre and sent him back with fresh meat tied about his neck. The fourth time a mouse-catching creature [bat?] was sent out. He was so hungry that he clung to the people's hair. When this bird came back well fed Coyote spoke right up and said, "You people ought to make an effort to get out of here. If you should die perhaps he can not bring you

back to life." "True enough!" said Moon's son, and he released them.

The people began to move back to their own village. The old went ahead and the others followed with the packs of meat. Moon's son said to Coyote, "I am not going back to my father but I will go to Morning Star and live there. The people are to make me no offering but I want them to remember me in the stone club. They may offer smoke to it because it is blessed and holy. If it is neglected it will not be well for the people." Now Moon's son (Grandmother's grandson) lives in the Morning Star. The people give offerings to the spirits, but not to Morning Star.

## 2. THE FLOOD.<sup>10</sup>

Told by Mrs. White Duck, interpreted by Thomas Smith,  
July, 1929.

The people were once living inside of the earth. There the game was scarce, so they wanted to come up on the earth. And they found a hole into which a root hung, so four men climbed up to the surface of the earth. They killed lots of buffalo, made jerked meat, took the paunch and dried it and carried it all down to where they came from. The rest were glad to see the dried meat and they all decided to come up. They caught hold of the root and climbed up hand over hand. After the four men and their sister and many others had already reached the surface, a woman heavy with child tried to climb up and broke the root, so no more could get up.

They moved from that place up to Devil's Lake and put up their camp. There was plenty of game so they hunted and had all they wanted. You can see the signs of their camps around the lake today. Some of them went out hunting and killed a buffalo cow with a young calf. They butchered the cow and took out the entrails and packed them on the calf and led the calf home. Little Calf felt very badly. They picketed it outside and after a few days it got away and ran to a hill called Dog Den about east of Max. The calf went into the hill and told what had been done to her. The buffalo did not like it,—they were angry. Some of the people went to work to catch a bird called Fat Bird. They pulled out all its feathers and pulled out a wing and stuck it right across the bird's bill through the hole in the bill. The bird too went straight to Dog Den. When he told his story the buffalo were angry and said, "We shall have to do something!" The four men who came out first had their sister with them but the parents

<sup>10</sup> In the Wichita story of the deluge and the re-peopling of the earth, pages 290-294, four "monsters" called "Standing in water" attempt to outstand the flood but are one by one obliged to fall; that at the west gives way last. A man and a woman are saved on a high point of land. The woman sleeps and a corn stalk grows beside her. They go up on a lodge and are instructed in the art of hunting and in the uses of corn. Compare Wichita, 294-297, and Pawnee 296.



did not come up. As soon as they came out of the ground the sister cried because she was alone, but the father called back that she would be all right up there,—“any place you plant the corn it will grow.” That is how the corn originated; nine different kinds of corn originated from this woman. I have planted them all myself.

There was water in the bird's feathers that they pulled out and the animals said they would pull them out and raise the water. A little boy listened and heard the animals talking and said to the brothers, “There's going to be a hard time coming.” They said, “No! This sister of ours can plant corn any time, and we four hunters can change ourselves into summer, winter, spring and fall buffalo.” So they paid no attention to the warning. The boy turned into a magpie and flew back and forth spying and said, “The hard time is coming now!” So next day it began to rain and it rained for four days and at the end of that time the water was all about them. The men climbed up on the roof of the lodge, but the sister lay right down with her robe about her. The boy came back and asked, “Where is my mother?” He said he would get her out. He called, “Mother, come up! I want you!” So the ear of corn came out at the smoke-hole. That was their mother.<sup>11</sup> The men on the lodge became the buffalo. The boy made a cord of buffalo hair and tied the ear about his neck so as not to lose it.

So they asked if any hill was above the water. Magpie told them of the hill called Bird's Bill straight south-east from Mandan, the highest hill that was visible, and he said they might reach it by swimming. The water was now getting so high that they had to swim all four of them heading for the hill. They swam and they swam and they swam. The one called Summer-buffalo, the fat one, said, “I'm all in!” The place where he went under is at the land called now “Flat-water.” The three swam on until at length Winter-buffalo said, “I'm all in!” He went under at a place called now “Long-water.” They swam on and on again until the third one went under,—Fall-buffalo. The Spring-buffalo was lean but he was the one to reach land at Bird's

<sup>11</sup> In the Arikara emergence story, Dorsey, page 13, Nesaru turns an ear of corn into a woman who leads the people out from under the earth.



Bill. By the time he got close to the Missouri he was pretty tired, but the Magpie flew overhead and said, "Try harder! don't give it up!" When he got to the Missouri the water was so swift he almost went under, but the Magpie boy raised up his head until he felt better. Four times he raised his head and by that time the buffalo had reached Bird's Bill Hill and Magpie dragged him to the land. He was vomiting water and half drowned.

At the top of the hill they found some Indian houses and some old folks living there. Magpie took the corn and shelled a little and roasted it and gave to the Spring-buffalo-man. He ate and felt better. They joined the people living there. Although while he was swimming he was a buffalo, now he turned into a man again, the ear of corn was turned again into a woman and the magpie into a boy. He went up on the hill and sat thinking and as he sat there he smelled corn roasting, so he knew that there were other people living in the neighborhood. As the water was going down he thought he would go out and look for them. He went out in the shape of a buffalo and walked along, walked along, to the place they call Washburn now and there two men saw the buffalo coming and shot two arrows and wounded him. He went into the brush and lay down; they waited until morning to go out and find the buffalo. He got up, pulled out the arrows and went off, so that when they came they found only the arrows on the ground and were angry. He meanwhile came to a large camp of Mandans and went up on top of an earth-lodge. A young man saw him and went into the lodge and said, "Sister, I want you to make corn-balls. There is a stranger on the roof and I want to invite him in. As she roasted the corn he recognized the smell of corn roasting which he was following. She had beautiful hair and as she roasted the corn she rubbed it on her hair to make it sweet. The young man invited the stranger in and asked "Where did you come from?"—"Oh! I came from a long way off."—"I should like you to stay here and make your home with us and I will have you for a friend."

For a long time he stayed there with his friend. The Mandan asked him if he would not like to have a girl. He said "Yes." So all the girls were to run a race and the two men were to watch from the top of the house. When they raced he said he would

have none of them. The next day he asked to have the older girls play ball—"Nothing there I want!" he said. Next day he had the still older girls come out and kick the ball. The sister with the beautiful hair came out to play. She was a fine player and kicked the ball high. He said, "That is the one I want!" and he married her. When the people were hard up for meat he was able to make the buffalo come. So that is the end of the story. (Not corn alone but also beans originated in this story. When we lived down at Fort Bethel pretty nearly every family had different colors of corn).



## 16. BLACK WOLF AND WHITE OWL <sup>75</sup>

Told by Ben Benson, June 18, 1931.

There was a man named Black Wolf who had a son by the same name. He went eagle trapping. His son was unsuccessful and the father waited for his luck to change before closing the season. Day by day he waited. The boy would hear a sound as of something coming toward the pit and when he came out it had disappeared. In the evening he would go back to camp. At last when he got into his pit he fell asleep and when he awoke it was dark. When he put up his hand to investigate he felt a big stone closing in upon him. He could find no way out and began to cry, then he fell asleep. So it went for some time, he alternately crying and sleeping. Finally when he awoke he found himself far away in an unfamiliar coulee amidst lakes and timber. He followed a man who was wearing fur and walking toward a place from which smoke was curling. They came to two dwellings made of poles covered with dried grass. A voice from one of the dwellings said, "How did you make out?"—"He is here outside our dwelling." He entered and the head man said, "Sit here next to your friend." The other said, "Prepare a meal." A servant cooked jerked meat by pounding it soft and roasting it over the fire. The man ordered his own meal cooked and carried to his dwelling. Over in the other tent it sounded as if he were dancing about the fireplace and singing—

<sup>75</sup> For the attack on the giant elk see Crow, Lowie, 203. The story seems to belong to the south-west (Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, xliii and note 144). Lowie found it among Sia, Navajo, Apache, Beaver. See also the Mandan story of the Medicine boys and the beaver (VCFL 10: 59).

For the Thor trick of slaying a formidable foe—generally red-haired—in the disguise of a woman come for marriage, see Arapaho, 131; Blackfoot, 129-132; Crow, 141-143; Dakota, Riggs, 149; Kiowa, 78-80.

For the flight and pursuit see Arapaho, 126-135. For the Dogden scene see Crow, 128-132; 165-168. In one version the wife is Red Woman and her brother is left-handed. In the other Cedar-forehead is leader of the wife's seven brothers. In a Menomini story of Mad'ekiwis and Chickadee (PAMNH 13: 350 ff.), a girl is niece to the Thunderers. The story is evidently related to the Winnebago story of the Thunderbird War Club (JAFL 44: 162-165). This may explain why it is connected here with the elk story, which, according to Thompson, is regularly followed by an attack on Thunderbirds. See also the Oglala story and discussion (JAFL 43: 401).

Black Wolf, if you do not bring that thing yonder with a forked horn you are no better than a woman.

"What does he mean by that?" asked Black Wolf. The servant said, "There is a big lake in a certain direction and in the middle is an island. On this island is an elk with prongs on its horns. It is very hard to get near this elk. It has the power of lightning and, besides, on one side of the lake is a crane and on the other an owl and when some enemy approaches, the owl or the crane give a signal and the elk goes under water."—"If that is the case," said Black Wolf, "I will start tomorrow and see what I can do."

The next day was fine. He made his way to the lake, peeped over a hill and saw the elk lying on the island. Beside him he saw where the earth was being thrust upward by a mole. He said, "Grandmother, I have come for your aid." — "What can I do, grandson?"—"I want you to dig a tunnel under the ground to the island in the lake just under where the big elk rests."—"That is all right," said the mole. "When it comes to digging I am pretty good at it. Wait here until I come back." Shortly she returned with the tunnel completed. He followed the tunnel and came to the end where the mole had left a thin layer [of earth] just under where the creature's heart lay. Then he returned to camp and examined the weapons and chose a bow and arrows. The next day was also fine. He peeped over the hill and saw the elk lying in the same place. Crawling through the tunnel he came directly under the elk and could hear the beating of its heart. He shot an arrow right through the heart. He could hear the creature struggling and sending its arrows in every direction and knew that the creature had been killed. Then he ran back to camp to bring the word and they hurried back with him lest some one else take the horns, carrying old robes to gather them up in. When they came to the island, pieces of horn were scattered all about and the servant said, "You have done this man a great service. He used to live on the fat of this elk and I would chip off a bit of horn and bring it to him. Although those broken bits look like horn, it is really the fat and tallow in the horn that you see." The servant saved the butt of the horn for himself. He would break off a small chip and put it into the water and the fat would dissolve and make a greasy substance.

Again Black Wolf heard the man singing and dancing about the fire and saying,

Black-wolf, if you do not bring the head of Four-striped-hair, you are no better than a woman.

—"What does he mean by that?"—"Far up north dwells a man whose hair is in four stripes—a very hard man to kill." Black-Wolf said that he would see what he could do. The next day he took his bow and arrows and started north. The servant said that he would get there in three or two days. In the evening of the first day he came to a timbered valley and saw a dwelling. He entered and found an old woman. She said, "It is my grandson, Black Wolf's son."—"Yes, Grandmother."—"How is it that you are wandering up here?" So he told his mission and she said, "These two men are the White Owl and his servant, the Common Owl. They have been after Four-striped's hair for a long time. Four-striped loves me dearly, but I do not care for him. In the morning I will help you." In the morning the two went to bathe and when she came out of the water she was no longer an old woman but a beautiful girl. She went around Black Wolf rubbing her body against him until he turned the very image of his grandmother. She said, "Now you start on your journey. There are four broad valleys; the fourth is Four-striped's home. There is a big village. The people will take you for me and they will take you to his dwelling. He has a cruel sister who is always on guard over her brother. As soon as she knows you have come she will come down the smoke-hole and inspect your body. Be prepared. Take with you some yellow corn and a measuring worm. She will ask you to pound the corn for the meal and will give you pebbles instead of corn. Put your corn with the pebbles and they will turn into corn also. Next she will ask you to do some embroidery on skin with porcupine quills. Lay the quills on the skin and the worm will do the work for you. When Four-striped takes you, do not let him sleep. I will prolong the night into four.<sup>76</sup> The fourth night when he sleeps take your knife and cut off his head."

Then Black Wolf went onward. He met a Coyote on the way

<sup>76</sup> See Crow, Sims, 299, where Coyote lengthens the night by means of a shield.



who said, "If you succeed in getting the head I will help you to run with it through a whole valley." He met a Fox and the Fox said, "I will help you to run through another valley." He met another kind of fox and this fox said, "I will help you to run the third valley." He met a wolf and the wolf said, "I will help you on the fourth valley." When he came to Four-striped's dwelling the sister came to test him. First she examined his body and she said, "It is almost true that you are a woman," but when she came to the calves she said, "The calves are the calves of a man." She gave him the pebbles to grind and the skin to embroider, and all went as he had been directed. But as the sister went back through the smoke-hole she said, "Be on your guard for I have my doubts about him still." He had been directed after cutting off the head to cut a hole at the side of the mouth and run a raw hide through to carry it by, then wake up the mother-in-law and direct her to make a place by the side of the tent, pretending to be menstruating, then to make a feint of going there to sleep, and run for his life. All this he did. The four animals helped carry the head until he got back to his grandmother's. As he ran he could hear a voice far up in the heavens crying, "You think that you will live after taking my brother's head and leaving his body to chap in the cold!" He ran inside the tent. "How was it?"—"She is almost upon us!" The old woman went out and circled the lodge and as she did so she rubbed it with a circular motion with the flats of her hands and the lodge turned into a flat stone just the shape of the dwelling.<sup>77</sup> The sister came with her stick, which she used like a crowbar. She flew around in the air chipping bits from it until the stone grew thinner. The old woman said, "I believe she will break through!" She rubbed inside as she had outside and the walls thickened again. The sister persisted outside, the old woman patched within. Then the old woman brought rain that cracked the stone and when the sister put in her stick into the crack, she closed the crack so that it held the stick like a vise. Now this stick was a part of the sister's body. She hung there in the rain soaked to the skin. The rain turned to snow and they could hear her teeth chattering. At last they heard her no more; she was dead. They went out and cut her

<sup>77</sup> For transformation by rubbing see Winnebago, JAF<sup>L</sup> 22: 296, 298.

down and he gave her head and that of her brother to White Owl to eat. The scalps he reserved.

Black Wolf stayed a long time with the man and his servant. One day he was homesick and went up on the hill and sat thinking of home and he told the servant what was the matter with him. The servant said to White Owl, "Black Wolf wishes to go home in the morning." White Owl consented, saying, "He has fulfilled all my desires and may start in the morning." He gave Black Wolf a piece of wild grapevine, a flat yellow stone, a piece of volcanic rock, and a hide filled with stone implements for smoothing arrows. [He presented him with two skins as symbols of himself and his servant.] He said, "When you start out, remember that you are a man and be brave and resist all temptations. Almost at the top of a slope of a valley you will meet a beautiful woman. Remember that you are a man and try to pass her by. She will try to attract you. You will soon meet another pretty woman; pass her also and the third. The fourth girl you may do as you please with—go with her or leave her, for she is harmless. The first is a white-tailed deer, the second a black-tailed deer, the third an elk. The fourth is a buffalo, but she is partly human like yourself." He explained that these women were colleagues of Four-striped's sister and that the four objects he was to carry with him were to defend himself against these women.

The four women came to him and did their best to harm him. They brought moccasins and said, "I have come to you for marriage." When the last maiden said this he went with her until they came to Dog Den. This is a great hill east of Max, to the south-west of Drake. It is the only prominent hill in all that country. Here she had her home. Each night for four nights he used the four objects to protect himself and after that he had no more trouble.

The woman had seven brothers. One had a small cedar growing on his forehead. When they came in they brought something in on their backs. It was a dead human being and they would dance about it, pulling off each other's arms, legs, and head and then replacing them. They were gods of war. They used to go out and lure two war parties together, then after the battle they



would pick up the dead men, carry them to their den and make merry. One day when they came in they said, "Sister, we smell something; what can it be?"—"It is your brother-in-law; I love him dearly. You can not have him." They tried to persuade her to let him join in the dance, meaning to kill him and eat his flesh. He said that he would dance. He dressed up, painted his body with yellow ochre and daubed black here and there on his body. He took the two skins, the fawn's and the owls, and, jumping out of his bed, threw them among the dancers and they turned one to an owl, the other to a fawn. The owl clawed the back of the fawn until it bled. The hunters were frightened and ran outside, leaving their heads and legs. When they got cold they begged to come in again, and he took the two skins and let them come in. So they blessed him and gave him power to become a great leader and a prosperous man.

There was peace now in the lodge. The seven brothers cooked their meals and were in fear of the two symbols of the white owl and the common owl. When they heard the hooting of an owl they were afraid and said, "There must be danger near." Black Wolf now desired to go home. She told him to go, but he must not take a wife until he found a woman who looked just like her. If he took anyone else she would be jealous; the new wife would die, or even a second or third wife. The fourth wife would resemble her. He said, "In that case, if you marry again, four times your husband will die." When he had returned home he disregarded his wife's saying and took a wife. This wife died and a second and third wife also. The fourth time he found the image of his former wife at Dog Den and this woman became his wife.<sup>78</sup>

Thus all those things promised him by White Owl were fulfilled. He was successful in war and prosperous and happy the rest of his days. As for his losing three wives and the woman her husbands, such cases are known today. And as for Dog Den, old Indians believe that spirits live there and that once all the animals, even the mouse, were called in there, but afterwards got turned loose again.

<sup>78</sup> The curse upon remarriage occurs in Lowie, *Crow*, 212.

### 3. THE SACRED ARROW.

A Hidatsa story told by Bear's Arm, interpreted by Arthur Mandan, July 8-10, 1929.

#### *Part 1. Charred Body.*

The story about the sacred arrow is a mystery story. It is one of my father's medicines. Only those have a right to tell the story of the origin of the sacred arrow who own that medicine.<sup>12</sup>

Charred Body had his origin in the skies. There was a big village up there and this man was a great hunter. He used to go out and bring in buffalo, elk, antelope, until the buffalo became scarce—they scattered out far from the village. So one day he told his close relatives, "The buffalo seem to have gone far away from here and I am tired of hunting them so long. Some day they may multiply again, but now I am going to build a mound to sit on and look over the country."<sup>13</sup> He made a practice of going up to this mound at intervals of three or four days to survey the land and listen to its sounds. One day toward nightfall he heard buffalo bellowing. He was excited. He could not tell from what direction the sound came. He was in the habit of changing himself into an arrow, shot from a bow and thus making in one day a journey such as a man would ordinarily make in ten days. The next day he went out to the mound, changed himself into an arrow and went in every direction but found no buffalo. Back on the mound he again heard the buffalo and they seemed so

<sup>12</sup> The story resembles in some points the Hopi emergence legend already cited (JAF 42: 7-27) in which "Witch" kills the Hopi chief's daughter "perhaps with an arrow." Coyote is closely associated with the transaction. The twins are the children of Sun who descends as the form of sunshine and rain to a virgin. They are full of mischief, are tested by their father in order to prove their paternity and are given Thunder and Lightning as weapons with which to kill the monsters who afflict their mother's people, after which achievement they bring the buffalo.

<sup>13</sup> In imitation of a bird, as in Benson's story of Split Wing Feather. Found-in-Grass in the Arapaho version, page 350, turns into a stone upon such a mound, which itself becomes solid, and people leave offerings at the place. He serves thus "as symbol of a man watching from the top of a hill and is called an image . . . of the Supreme Being who has everything in the bag . . . for people."



close that he thought it strange he could not place them. The next day when he went out to the mound he took an arrow and stuck it into the ground and as the ground opened up a crack he worked the hole a little larger and, to his surprise, could look down through the hole. There below he saw buffalo as if the whole earth were covered. It was breeding time, the season when chokecherries are half ripe, and the bulls were fighting and bellowing. This was the sound he had heard.

He went back to his lodge and told his relatives that he had seen the buffalo, thousands upon thousands, but as if he went down below it would be difficult to pack the meat back, he had decided to go down ahead and build a dwelling and his brothers and sisters-in-law should follow after. They could themselves see by looking down the hole that there would be buffalo enough for all.

The chief of the village was named Long Arm. He was regarded as a holy man. He usually knew what was going on from day to day. Charred Body told him one day of the land he had found, so beautiful and plentiful in game. Charred Body said, "I want to leave this place and go down there, but it will not be possible to pack meat back up here or to drive the buffalo up here from the earth. So I shall go down there to live and take with me all those near relatives of mine who are bound to me like the threads of the spider-web and we will make our home there." Long Arm said neither yes nor no; he uttered no word. The hunter went back to the hole, transformed himself into an arrow and flew through the air to earth.

He came down so swiftly that as he landed on the ground the arrow point struck into the earth and it seemed as if he were stuck there for good. The place where he landed was near Washburn by a creek that the white people call Turtle but which we call Charred Body creek. There was an evil spirit in the creek whose moccasin tops were like a flame of fire so that when he went through the forests the cottonwood trees were burned down. He would undo the flap of the moccasin when he went to windward and wave it back and forth over the ground; when he tied it up again the flame ceased. This spirit feared the man from heaven lest he establish villages or take away his land or even



kill him, so he caused a windstorm and set the prairie on fire and the flames charred the arrow here and there. Hence the name "Charred Body" is derived. Since Arrow could not pull himself out he decided to make a spring; thus he loosened himself. So he decreed that the spring should flow as long as the world should last; you can see even today where the spring is.

Charred Body established thirteen lodges. First he looked about and found a good site and established one lodge, then another, until he had thirteen lodges built. Then he went back into the heavens and told what had happened and how the old man with flame about his foot had tried to kill him, how he had found the spring and how good the game was. He made it sound very attractive. He said that he went by the arrow and hence could take down only as many families as there were parts to the arrow. He would take his nearest relatives only, with their children. The groove at the end of the arrow to put the string into was one lodge. The three feathers were regarded as lodges; that made four. The two sinews bound about it were two others, making six. The three points of the arrowhead were three other lodges, making nine. The three grooves circling around the arrow in a spiral made twelve. The arrow itself was the thirteenth; there were thirteen lodges all told<sup>14</sup>. The spiral is considered as lightning, hence the arrow's power. If it does not come in contact with a bone it will penetrate the buffalo right through.

He called his nearest relatives and embraced them, and in embracing them he gave them the power of the arrow and encouraged them to follow him. First he went down, then all came after and he assigned them lodges. When he first came down, the mysterious bodies down here knew that he was also mysterious and tried to kill him, but when he pulled himself out (of the hole made by the arrowpoint) they knew that they had no power against him. Before coming down the people had made preparations and they brought seeds of corn, beans and so forth and began to plant corn on the ground by the river

<sup>14</sup> The original thirteen villages are reported by Maximilian, page 334. The relation between parts of the arrow may be compared with the division of a medicine root which, in a Pawnee myth (Dorsey, page 299), determines the limitation of power to those medicine men who share the pieces.



and to build scaffolds for drying the corn and the meat. So they lived happily for a long time. You can see today the remains of their thirteen villages, but obscured by high water and the ploughing of farmers. I have heard that the white people have found arrowheads in the thirteen villages.

After a number of years, First Creator happened to come to the village. He asked some boys playing outside who was the chief. They showed him the way to the large lodge in the center which was Charred Body's lodge. He asked Charred Body how he came there and Charred Body told him. He said it was well and that he wished to make friends with Charred Body; when there were two they could talk matters over and act more effectively (than one), three were even better, but two were strong. They must therefore love one another. So they became friends, ate and talked together, and First Creator stayed in the lodge several nights before he went on again.

When he came back he reported that there was a big village east of them whose chief had a beautiful daughter. It was the custom in that village after noon for the maidens to go along a wide path to the river for water and for the men to line up along the path and do their courting.<sup>15</sup> The married women would go along the path outside the row. When a young girl came opposite a man who liked her he would clear his throat and if the girl looked at him it was a good sign. The next day he would ask a drink and if she gave him a drink it was a still better sign. So people took notice and if a girl gave a man a drink it became a matter of gossip, the parents came together to find out whether the two were industrious and able to run a household, and if everything was favorable they were married. Now the chief's daughter had a strong will and never looked at the young men. When they tried to catch her eye she paid them no attention. "Now, my friend," said First Creator, "you are very handsome,—not too slender, too tall or too short. Your hair is long and beautiful. No one could find a blemish upon you. You would certainly make a hit with the girl, so let us go

<sup>15</sup> For courtship at the place of drawing water see Arapaho, 15, 23, 29; Crow, Lowie, 196; and the stories of "Burning of the Earth" and "Split Wing Feather" in this collection.



over and try our luck. If you can get her and be son-in-law to a great chief you will be a renowned man."

So it was agreed and when they came to the edge of the village to a place where the moles had dug up a mound of earth, they began to dress themselves up. Charred Body mixed the dirt with water and daubed the mud across his chin from ear to ear and upon his cheeks, brought his hair together in a big pompadour in front and stuck a plume in at the place where he tied it up. This feather the wind waved to and fro. His robe he wore open with his bow and arrows inside. Today we say of a person who combs his hair to the side in a pompadour that "he wears his hair like Charred Body."

They went to a certain lodge in the village and were kindly received. When First Creator told them who Charred Body was they said, "We have heard about him and how he had a beautiful land in the skies and liked the country down here." When he said that they had come courting the people said, "It is well." They went down to the path by the river and stood opposite each other and Coyote said he would give a signal when the chief's daughter came so that his friend would pay no attention to the others. She came dressed in tanned white deerskin with a robe of elkskin from which the hair had been scraped, light and pliable as a plume. Charred Body stepped in front of her and she swerved. He turned also and she swerved again. When he was almost in front of her he said, "I wish to drink out of your cup." She said, "What you have done is not according to our custom; you should not have moved from the line but just cleared your throat, and I shall give you no drink!" then she added, "Do you make those streaks across your face in imitation of the charring?" He was angry, took out his bow and arrows and, as she turned to flee, shot her twice in the back and killed her. A tumult arose and the two visitors fled back to their own village.

Coyote warned Charred Body that he had done an evil deed and that this would not be the end of it. The chief was not likely to sit still and do nothing. He had owned the land before Charred Body came there and Charred Body must therefore build barricades and protect himself. Charred Body paid little attention



to him. "I go by the arrow and it can pierce through them," he said. "Even then," said Coyote, "you are often out hunting and while you are away they may send out scouts and kill all in the village. More than one village may combine against you. You may think that you can fight them single-handed but you have done a bad deed and this will cause your mind to stray and while it is occupied with other things they will overcome you. So whatever you do, don't let anything distract your attention or you may be destroyed."

Day after day Charred Body would go and sit on the top of a hill where he had a mound and look over in the direction of the village where he had committed the crime. He told the young men to cut up sticks for arrows and sort them out into bundles and put them under his bed. When they came back the sticks would be already made into arrows. Soon all the young men were supplied. But he was always in deep thought, first because of the crime he had committed and second lest the village come against him. One day Coyote offered to go over to the village and find out what they were planning. He said that he would take cornballs and pemmican and spread them on the outskirts of the village and if anyone was wounded he would give him the food and tell him it was good medicine for wounds. He would pretend that he had left Charred Body because of the crime he had committed. On the way he met a warparty already on the way in such numbers as completely to surround the village. All who had strength to pull the bow had come along, only the old people and children remained. When he had passed them, on the other side of the hill, he saw Meadowlark and sent him on an errand to fly to Charred Body on his mound and tell him to prepare four barricades as a great force was coming against him to avenge his crime. Meadowlark carried the message, but as soon as Charred Body got back to the village to prepare the barricade he forgot all about it. The enemy had employed a holy man to make him forgetful; the holy man raised his hand against him and Charred Body forgot what was to happen. Three times Coyote sent Meadowlark with the message and three times Charred Body forgot it as soon as he reached the village. The fourth time Meadowlark told him to make some sign on his body to attract his at-



tention. Charred Body stuck a bunch of grass in his hair and went back to the village.<sup>16</sup> Again he forgot the message. He went into his lodge but his head itched; he told his wife to scratch his head and she found the grass and said, "This is the cause of your itching!" He gave a groan and sent word to the people that the next day the enemy would come against them, they must prepare a barricade, get arrows ready and be brave even to death. He went out and cut bog brush, put it under his bed, and commanded it to turn into June bushes. When he took it out it had become June bush and he peeled the bark and made more arrows.

Coyote (in the enemy's camp) said, "You have been sending out scouts but their reports are not clear. I will go myself to see what is going on." He started on a run, fell with his foot out of joint, and claimed it was too painful to put in again and that he was now too disabled to fight with them in the attack against the village. He said, "Way down on the river they are performing rites for medicine, so I will go there and bring back cornballs and pemmican." He caused an announcement to be sounded at a distance (he must have been a ventriloquist) which said—

All you who have medicine bags and mysteries,  
come and join in this ceremony to be performed.

He told them that he had an adopted son in the enemy's camp who was mysterious in battle. He could not be shot by an arrow and they must keep away from him. "You will find him dressed with a bladder covering his head daubed with white clay. His body will have streaks lengthwise and crosswise. His quiver is a coyote's hide. He will wound many of you but I will bring a hide for the wounded to lie on and feed them with cornballs and pemmican." As soon as he was out of sight he threw away his crutch, set his foot again, turned into a coyote and ran around another way into the village and became a man again. He asked after Charred Body and learned that some boys had chased a yellow weasle into the lodge where he was making arrows and it had scattered and trampled the arrows. Charred Body had been angry and struck four times at the weasle, the fourth time it ran out and Charred Body after it. "I told him whatever happened

<sup>16</sup> See Crow, Lowie, 74, 125.



not to allow anything to distract him!" said Coyote, "but never mind, I am here. Don't turn into women!" Charred Body's sister was at this time with child and Coyote told her to go inside a cellar-hole and he would cover her over so that she would not be burned.

When the battle took place there were four among the enemy's band who had supernatural power. One had no head but only a big mouth from shoulder to shoulder into which he sucked his enemies; another was an old woman with a basket which wherever she turned sucked in people or birds of the air; a third was the man with flaming moccasins; a fourth was a beaver (called Tail-with-a-knife) whose tail was sharp on both edges. These four helped the enemy. Tail-with-a-knife chopped down the barricade, Flame-around-his-ankle encircled the village and set it on fire. Coyote was in the thick of the battle dressed as he had described. When he saw that all was lost he disappeared in a cloud of smoke.

Meanwhile Charred Body was still chasing Yellow Weasle. It seems that there was a transformation of the earth so that Charred Body found himself far to the north. Yellow Weasle said, "Look back and see your own village!" He looked and saw the smoke. He wanted to get back as quickly as possible. His eyesight would be too slow, for he would have to stop at the end of each sight, so he used his thinking power, transformed himself into thought, and wished himself back at his village.<sup>17</sup> There he found the place in flames.

Now after the battle the enemy had withdrawn and were relating their exploits. It seemed to them as if Coyote had fought in the battle, and Coyote heard their words as he came limping back with the hide, cornballs, and pemmican. An old bear was appointed to discover whether Coyote had been in the battle. The way he did this was to lift up his paw and put it upon a person, then put his paw to his nose and smell it. When Coyote entered the paw was raised to test him, but Coyote put a cornball into the paw saying, "You greedy fellow, you want this all for yourself!" Then he had the wounded brought in and laid on the robe and gave them cornball and pemmican. He said, "(However wounded

<sup>17</sup> See *Hidatsa and Mandan*, Maximilian, 364.



you may be yourselves) you have destroyed the village and enticed Charred Body away." And he said "These people were just like relatives to me and I want to go back there and walk through the place where young men and maidens formerly walked and think about their sports and laughter and mourn there for them." So they consented and he went on his way.

Close to the village he saw Charred Body walking among the dead. As was the custom in those days, Coyote walked up to him put his arms about his neck and wept over him. Then he told him where he had hidden the sister and they went to the cellar to see if she were alive. When they lifted up the hide she came out, but when she saw the desolation of the village she wept and the men with her. Coyote proposed that they have a lodge to live in together. He faced the north, raised both hands as if for a blessing while the two others stood back of him with their hands also raised and their eyes shut, and he said, "I wish for an earth lodge facing south furnished with bedding and all things necessary and with a scaffold in front." When they opened their eyes, there it stood just as Coyote had said. There was no food, so Coyote said, "There is all kinds of food on the hoof; let us go out and see what we can take." They followed up the creek and shot a buffalo, cut it up, left the backbone, head and shoulders and took the best pieces. The kidney, backgut and liver they washed to be eaten raw. These raw parts are considered a tonic today to keep one from sickness. The woman at the lodge cooked for them. She began to slice the meat and roast the ribs close to the fire and they felt themselves at home once more.

## PART 2.

### *Spring-Boy and Lodge-Boy.*<sup>18</sup>

After they had lived thus from day to day bringing in game until there was plenty, Coyote went away to the enemy's village to see what the people were doing, promising to return again. It is an old custom with both Mandan and Gros Ventre that when a sister is alone in a house, a brother must not enter out of respect to his sister. Only if some one else is with her is it right for him to enter. Hence Charred Body did not think it right to stay alone with his sister, so he went off hunting by day to bring



in choice bits of food for her and he told his sister on no account to let anyone into the house if anyone should come around asking for the door. "No one can come in if you do not take out the crossbar," he said. One day when he came back from hunting he saw his sister standing outside looking as if she were laughing and he took the meat inside and waited for her, but she did not come in. This is what had happened. While he was away on the hunt she had heard a voice crying "Tuk! tuk! tuk! my daughter, where can the door be?" She forgot what her brother had said and undid the door for the stranger. There entered a headless monster. He said, "Place me on the west side between the pillows." She said, "Grandfather, what will you have to eat?" He said, "The best is the fat of the stomach. When I eat this fat I must have a pregnant woman lie on her back and then I place the hot fat upon her and eat in this way." The woman was frightened and only half cooked it. He held it himself to the fire and the flames wrapped his hands but he did not seem to feel it. He made her lie down on the floor and placed the hot fat upon her. The woman screamed and twins were born as the woman died. The monster took one by the leg and threw it into the center of the lodge and said, "Lodge center, make this boy your slave!" the other he threw into the spring and said, "Spring, take this child for yours!" Then he took the doorposts which were forked and set them up outside and placed the woman against them and held out her lips with two sticks as if she were laughing. Then he gathered up all the food and was gone.

18 The story follows very closely that recorded in 1877 from the Hidatsa in Matthews, pages 63-70, which Matthews considers already very old. In Matthews's version the two men are the "demi-gods Long Tail and Spotted Body" who with their sister-wife are "the only beings of their kind in the world."

For the boys' adventures see Arapaho, "Found-in-Grass," 341-387; Assiniboine, 168-169; Blackfoot, "Rock" and "Beaver," 40-53; "Scar-face," 61-65 "Blood-clot," 56-58; Caddo, "Thunder and Lightning," 31-36; Crow, Lowie, 74-98, Simms, 303-306, cf. "Old Woman's grandchild," Lowie, 52-74; Dakota, Riggs, "Fallen Star," 83-94; (Wahpeton), 85-88; Gros Ventres, "Found-in-Grass," 77-82, cf. "Clotted-blood," 84-90, "Moon-child," 90-94; Iowa, 427-441; Omaha, 207-219; Pawnee, Dorsey, "Star-boy," 56-58, "Handsome Boy and After Birth Boy," 142-155 (Skidi), "Long-Tooth-Boy," 88-94; Shoshone, "Old Woman's grandson," 184-188, (Northern), 280-283; Wichita, 88-102; and Reichard in *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 34, page 306; Lowie, *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 21, pages 139 ff; Thompson, *Tales of North American Indians*, note 152.

The story must be regarded as composed of folktale variants to a myth of the Thunder-boy twins like that recorded in the Hopi emergence story cited above.



When Charred Body knew that his sister was dead he made a burial scaffold for her and by means of a rude lattice he placed her body upon it and cried bitterly.<sup>19</sup> In the evening he came home and was preparing an evening meal when he heard a wee voice from the center of the lodge say, "Brother, give me something to eat." Twice this happened, then he investigated. He cut a splinter and wrapped fat into it and using this as a torch he looked into the dark spot from which the voice came and found a baby boy. He brought the child to his knee. This was the child who had called him "brother." (Among these people, a mother's brother is called "brother"; a father's brother is an "uncle.")

When Coyote drifted back he found to his amazement that their sister had been killed and he mourned her loss. One day he said, "Can't we do something for our brother here? Let us take this baby up and wish that he grow to a certain height." This is the song that Charred Body sang,—my father used this song in ceremonial rites. First he took sweet grass and with a coal from the fire made some incense and smoked him, then he raised him up and sang (but I do not know the song right) "I want my child to grow this high!" Coyote did the same. Charred Body raised him again and sang and he became like a boy of twelve. Coyote got up and raised him and sang, "I want my brother to be the height of a man," and he became like a boy of eighteen. And at the same time, since the boys were twins, the Spring-boy attained the same age also.

Since the boy was now grown he was left to look after the lodge when the two went hunting and every time this happened Spring-boy came out and played with him. The name of Lodge-boy was A-tu-tish, which means "Near-the-edge-of-the-lodge," and the Spring-boy was Ma-hash from Ma-ha, meaning "spring," and the pronominal form. He was dark and his brother was light and a little taller than Spring-boy. The two men kept buffalo tongues strung up and wondered why they disappeared so rapidly. "Are there two of you?" they asked, but the boy denied it. They had him bite the tongue and com-

<sup>19</sup> Scaffolds for the dead were observed among these people by Maximilian, pages 392, 404.



pared the mark left by Spring-boy's teeth and they were different. At last Lodge-boy confessed that he had known all the time what happened when his mother was killed by the stranger and he was taken by the leg and given to the edge of the wall as a slave and his brother had been thrown into the spring. The brother did not recall this. Spring-boy seems to have been a kind of maverick—he did not belong to anyone. He had a long tusk and lived on water creatures and was influenced by his wild life in the spring. If anyone tried to catch him he would tear him to pieces with his tusk. They arranged a plan to catch him. The boys used to play with gambling sticks and a round stone with a hole bored through. The men fixed up two buffalo hides as a kind of armor with a lace down the back to hold it tight. In the game there was to be a dispute and when the boy got down on his knees to look and see if the ring lay on the stick, Lodge-boy was to jump on his back, tangle up his hair and thrust in a stick to which a bladder was fastened. If he ran for the spring they could catch him by the bladder. Then they prepared a sweat-lodge with hot stones and water ready, transformed themselves into arrowheads and went up on the lodge. Lodge-boy called for his brother. Spring-boy came trotting up, quick and agile, and encircled the lodge to see if there was anyone about. He complained of smelling his brothers, but Lodge-boy told him that was because they had been there before going out hunting. He came into the lodge and was surprised to see the bladder; Lodge-boy told him it was used to separate the marrow from the bones. He asked about the sweatbath and was told it was for the men when they came home from hunting.<sup>20</sup> They began to play and when Spring-boy knelt down to see how the ring had fallen, Lodge-boy jumped upon him, wound his legs about his body and the two boys rolled on the ground and Spring-boy's tusk could be heard snapping at his brother. The two men dashed in, dragged him to the sweatbath and began to switch him, crying, "What kind of a person are you? You are a human being and should behave like one." Spring-boy cried out, "I am coming to myself!" They drew him out and examined his mouth, but the tusk still showed. Three times they returned him to the bath

<sup>20</sup> See Maximilian, page 401, for a description of the Mandan sweat-bath.



and poured on water and switched his flesh; the fourth time the tusk had disappeared and he lay exhausted. So they fastened up his hair and thrust sticks through it to which the bladder was attached. The moment he was released he ran to the spring and jumped in but was unable to go under because of the bladder. After the fourth time of trying to get under water he surrendered. They gave him water to drink, inserted two fingers into his mouth, and he vomited up all the water creatures which he had eaten and was restored to the ways of men.

Now there were four occupants of the lodge. Several days passed before Spring-boy came entirely to his senses. The men he was accustomed to call "your brothers" and one day he said, "I wish you would tell your brothers to make a bow and arrows, two painted red and two black for me and the same for you." Lodge-boy said, "You always speak indirectly to our brothers, but we are twins. We are from the sky. There is a big village where we came from. The chief is Long-arm and he knows everything that is going on and is called a holy man. When our brother Charred Body wanted to come down here to this earth he asked for permission and, although Long-arm said neither yes nor no, he took it upon himself to come down here and this has led to the destruction of all our relatives. But the holy man knows what is going on below here. Our brother and Coyote went courting and our brother killed the chief's daughter. So there was a fight and our brother was enticed away and was not in the fight, but our other brother Coyote stowed our mother away in a cellar and I knew all these things that were going on. One of the formidable men who took part in the fight was a monster with no head but a big mouth from shoulder to shoulder who lives around the bend of the creek. He killed our mother and I knew all about it and thought that you did too." Spring-boy said that, through living in the spring, he had forgotten all these things. The arrows he had asked for the men made for the boys. Then they went through a ceremonial and Spring-boy said that these arrows, one painted black and one red for each boy, were to be kept sacred and used only in emergency and they were to have other arrows for daily use.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For the sacred character of the red and black arrows compare Arapaho, 37, 344, 365.



One day as they walked near their mother's grave, Spring-boy proposed that they use the sacred arrows to bring their mother to life.<sup>22</sup> The two boys had watched the arrow rite. When the two hunters had gone out before sunrise, they took down the arrows from the quiver, burned sweet grass and sang the arrow song. They did the same for the bow, resting one end of the bow on buffalo-bull manure while they strung it. Then they went out where their mother lay. Spring-boy placed one arrow in position, sang the arrow song and let it fly. They could see it go up into the sky like a streak of flame. As it fell the boys cried, "Mother! mother! look out! the arrow is going to hit you!" The figure on the scaffold looked as if about to turn. Lodge-boy shot an arrow. It went high in the sky and came down like a bright light. They cried, "Mother! mother! look out! the arrow is going to hit you!" The figure began to move. Spring-boy sent the third arrow and this time the mother sat up. Lodge-boy shot the fourth arrow and the mother yawned and stretched her arms. She said, "I must have slept a long time; I feel tired." The boys set up a ladder to the scaffold and the mother came down and embraced them and said, "My spirit has remained here and was about to return to my people when you sent the arrow. You are motherless and it is a joy that you have done this for me and my spirit has returned to my body." When they returned to the lodge she noticed at once how the meat was cut in strings, not in the nice flat pieces that a woman is accustomed to cut. So she ate a hearty meal. In time came Charred Body and Coyote home from hunting and as Charred Body threw down his pack he recognized his sister and they all cried for joy and she told him how her spirit had pitied the children and had lingered about until it had been restored to her body by means of the sacred arrows.

Charred Body warned the boys that although they had more supernatural power than he had they must never lie down to take a nap without setting up four arrows in the ground, one at each of the four directions,<sup>23</sup> and lying within the arrows with the

<sup>22</sup> For resuscitation compare Arapaho, 269, 344, 352, 365; Caddo, 36; Crow, Lowie, 66, 78, 87, 95; Gros Ventres, 96, 99; Hidatsa, Matthews, 66; Iowa, 464; Osage, 28.

<sup>23</sup> For the arrow guard see Crow, Lowie, 56, Simms, 301.



head resting to the north or to the west (for even an ordinary person should never rest his head to the south or to the east) and they must place their moccasins to point toward the west not toward the east because all the spirits go to the east. Among both Mandan and Gros Ventre a dead person is always placed with head to the east.

One day the boys went out to survey the country and came to an old man whom they knew to be Flame-around-the-ankle.<sup>24</sup> They stood side by side and asked him to give them a demonstration of his power. He loosened the strings of his moccasin, let the flap fall, and they saw flames leaping. They asked him to run about a cottonwood tree; he trotted about it in a circle and the tree fell over in flames. Spring-boy asked to try the moccasin.—“Surely you may!” He ran about a tree, then back to his brother, and then all at once he circled the old man and burned him to ashes. Then the boys ran shouting and laughing home to their mother pretending that Flame was chasing them.

Again the boys wandered out and as they followed up the creek Lodge-boy said, “Brother, right in that dense timber on the side of the hill lives the monster without a head who carries his mouth on his shoulder.<sup>25</sup> Let us go over and have a look at him!” They approached cautiously, then, turning into chickadees, they flew over the monster’s den and perching on a tree began to call. They had filled a water-bag made out of a buffalo paunch and had heated a stone red-hot and caused it to shrink so that they could carry it in the curve of a stick. They first got a big stone, then went into their mysteries and rubbed it until it became small. To this day when we heat a stone red-hot for the sweatbath we call it “the chickadees’ stone.” When the monster came out and opened his mouth to swallow them they dropped the hot stone. As it went down his gullet he thought, “It must be their claws that scratch so!”—“Enlarge! enlarge!” called the boys to the stone. He snatched the water-bag to drink and they said, “Enlarge yourself and hold more water!” The water began to boil in his stomach and the monster burst. The boys

<sup>24</sup> The episode occurs in Hidatsa, Matthews, 68; Crow, Lowie, 60, 71, 79. In Blackfoot, 31, 37, the episode is introduced in an Old Man trickster tale.

<sup>25</sup> This incident is in some cases replaced by that of the swallowing monster; e.g. Dakota, Riggs, 91; Wichita, 101.



burnt up his lodge, skinned him and placed the skin on Spring-boy and ran back to the lodge as if the monster were after them. Its body was black, it had two tails and claws like a tiger's. The mother was so delighted with this victory that she danced for joy, so from that time they dance when one wins a victory, generally the women but sometimes both women and men.

There was another mysterious spot where an old woman sucked people into a basket.<sup>26</sup> The boys wandered far one day, came to her den and saw the basket hung upon a post. They asked her to demonstrate her power. The woman was afraid of them, knowing that they had supernatural power. A flock of birds were passing, she waved her basket to and fro, then to the side and brought down the birds into the basket. Spring-boy asked her to let him try. He took the basket, waved it as the old woman had done and drew the woman into the basket. Thus he killed her. Great was the joy of their mother when he brought her home dead in the basket.

All those mysterious beings lived in the vicinity of Turtle creek which the Indians call Charred Body creek, just about a couple of miles east of Washburn.

Some time later the boys heard about the Beaver-with-tail-like-a-knife who could tear open the earth with a blow. Even today you can see where his tail struck the earth; it looks something like a shellhole. The beaver had sharp ears, but the boys lay in wait for him and Lodge-boy shot an arrow through his head as if it were a big pumpkin. When the beaver was dead they cut off the tail and brought it home.

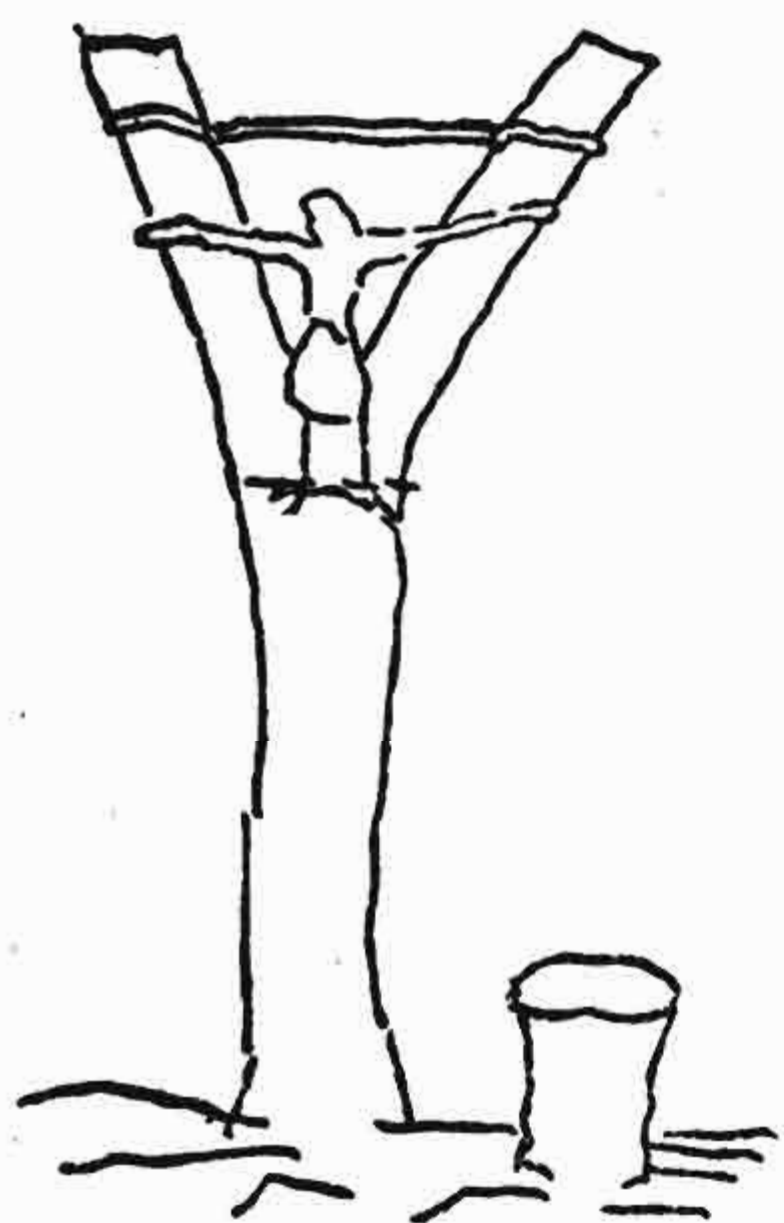
These were the beings who lived about Washburn and had allied themselves with the enemy. There might be others living at a distance, but those who lived near were all destroyed. So their mother's brothers urged them to attempt no more such exploits and the boys agreed that their mother's safety was now assured. They wished however to wander further into the country, so they told their mother not to worry if they did not return and took their leave.

<sup>26</sup> The pot-tilting old woman occurs in Hidatsa, Matthews, 68; Crow, Lowie, 54, 61, 72, 77; Gros Ventres, 85; Wichita, 96.



While all this was going on down below, the people in the sky became uneasy lest the boys who had killed so many mysterious beings below come up to the sky and kill them. So they held a council and asked Long Arm to bring Spring-boy, who was dark and reckless, up into the sky and put him to death. Long Arm told them he saw nothing wrong with the boys and did not wish their death. They belonged to their own people. The father and mother had had hard treatment and they had avenged themselves justly. But the people cried out all the more against Spring-boy, and Long Arm accordingly used his magic power to throw the boys into a sleep at noon. That is the origin of daytime napping. The boys grew sleepy and, remembering their brother's instruction, they set up the arrows and placed their moccasins westward with the bow and arrows beside them and went to sleep. The sun cast his direct rays upon them, making them drowsy. Then Long Arm reached down to earth to where Spring-boy lay and picked him up and carried him up into the air.<sup>27</sup>

The people arranged for Spring-boy's death. They dug a hole and the chief bade them set up a tree there with forked



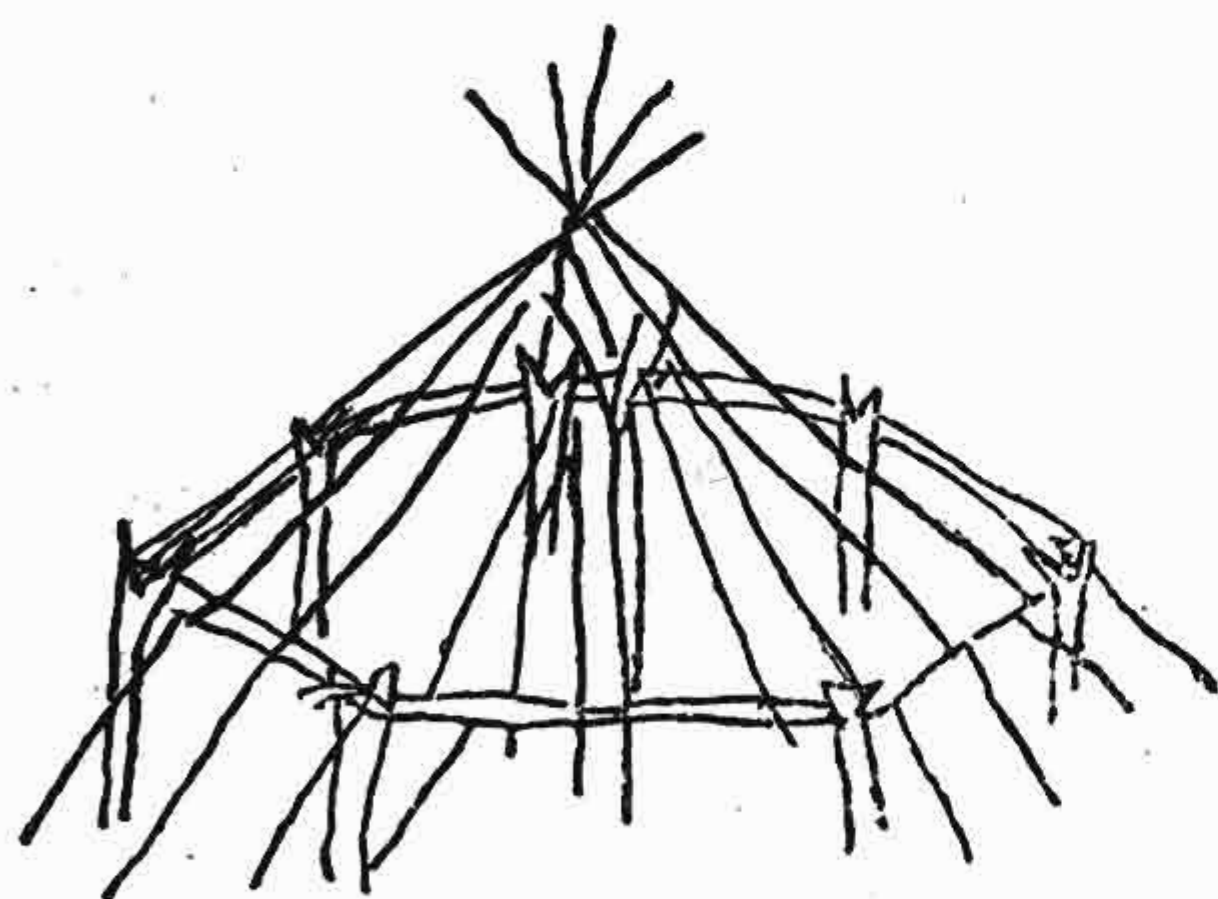
The Torture Tree,  
as drawn by Bear's Arm

branches, but all feared to cut the tree lest Spring-boy come out alive and destroy the one who cut it down. They tried to persuade the women to cut it, but they said, "If you are afraid, how much more should we weak women fear!" Then the chief decreed that a hermaphrodite should cut the tree on which Spring-boy was to be hung. As soon as Long Arm brought Spring-boy up, the people rushed upon him and beat him until he was nearly dead. They had already prepared the form of death which

<sup>27</sup> The Long Arm episode is found in Hidatsa, Matthews, 69-70; Crow, Lowie, 66-67, 83-85, 91-93, 96-98. Compare Iowa, 439-440; Wichita, 101. It occurs in the Iron-Hawk story of the Oglala Sioux, although in different form.



he was to die.<sup>28</sup> A rawhide was stretched across the arms of the crotch and wound around the tree while it was wet; when dry it was much tighter. The boy's arms were lanced next to the bone and his feet through the cords and rawhide strips were run through and brought right around the tree so that he hung by wrists and feet. After he was securely tied they raised the tree and set it into the hole. They had put an antelope hide, tanned soft, about his waist so that it hung below the knee, this on account of the number of women present. Over the tree they erected a kind of bower the cross-pieces of which were inserted into the rawhide at the top of the tree. The whole was covered



The Ceremonial Bower,  
as drawn by Bear's Arm

with leaves. All this time the boy said nothing, but now he spoke: "I have been delivered into your hands and I do not think evil of you, for my mother was one of you and I do not wish to destroy you. If this were done by an enemy it would not be strange, but as you are my own people it does not seem right for you to cause me this agony. But you

need not fear me." The people did not answer; they could accuse him of nothing.

(Today they do not put up a man but they kill a buffalo and cut a strip along the back leaving the tail and raise it as if the buffalo were angry and on the other end they put the buffalo skull without the horns and hang this up to represent the buffalo. They set up a bower about it and gather up the earth into a ridge on the north side and stick bog bush into it, beginning at each end and leaving a place vacant between. They used to leave this space so that when the boy died his body could be laid there.

<sup>28</sup> *Noch-pi-di-ke* or (abbreviated) *Noch-pi-ke*, the *p* pronounced almost like a *b*. This is the "Okippe" described by Maximilian among the Mandan, pages 400-401, 374-378, as a festival occurring in May or June at which candidates present themselves for torture. For the scaffold method of torture see Linton, *The Origin of the Skidi Pawnee sacrifice to the Morning Star*, in *American Anthropologist*, vol. 28 (1926), pages 457-466.



Today they lay there the sacred weasles or other animals used in the ceremony. To the right of the ridge on the west side sits the holy man in a robe worn hair side out.)

For three days Spring-boy hung there on the tree, then he began to get weary. Now when Lodge-boy awoke from sleep and could not see his twin brother, he was alarmed and, taking the shape of a flaming arrow, he flew over the earth even to both sides of the ocean calling the name of Spring-boy and, finding nothing, he returned to the place from which his brother had vanished. There as he lay looking up into the sky, he saw a streak of light at the point where Spring-boy had been taken through. Flying through the air he entered at the same place and saw that the land was empty where all the multitude had flocked after Spring-boy. So he changed himself into a little boy with shaggy, uncombed hair and a big belly, who was nevertheless old enough to talk, and followed the people to the field where they were massed about the bower. At the edge of the field was a lodge in which an old woman was sitting. He asked for food and the old woman adopted him as a grandson, he waited upon her and she was glad. All this time they could hear singing going on in the bowery. He said, "Grandmother, what is going on here?" So she related the whole story of Charred Body's descent to earth and his crime and how the people feared the boys and especially Spring-boy because he was dark of color and reckless and how they had cut the tree and what Spring-boy had said about his own people destroying him.—"This is the third day and night and tomorrow at noon they will place his body on the ridge in the bowery," she said, and she told how they danced in the morning, at noon and in the evening and sang ten songs in rotation, and how they could not stop dancing until the ten songs were sung or extend the dance beyond them. For a drum they used a long raw-hide without hair which they beat with sticks, and the dancers whistled to the rhythm of the song. The best singers beat with sticks on four small round drums of wood covered with skin on one side like a tambourine which were to indicate the four nights of the dance. It was difficult to remember the order of the songs correctly. (These four lead the singing) and the whole society must sing with the leader. (In old times my wife's father was the



man who knew the order of the songs and all the society sang with him. It was an age society and each man sang according to the society he belonged to at the time. These songs were not originated on earth but in the skies.)

So the little boy asked the woman to take him to the bowery. At the door she picked him up so that he could see and asked the people to make way for her and her grandchild. They were singing a song and dancing with whistles in their mouths and shouting to the man on the tree, "Be a man for one day more!" As Spring-boy looked about and saw his brother a light shone about his head and he began to move and stretch as if he had been strengthened. Lodge-boy, fearing he would be recognized, begged the old woman to take him outside. That evening they heard again the sound of songs and dancing. An announcer came through the village warning the young men and maidens not to sleep that night but to keep watch lest Lodge-boy come to his brother's rescue, for the holy man thought when he saw the light that Spring-boy's brother must have come there to strengthen him.—"My grandchild, did you hear what he was saying? He says that Lodge-boy is here!" said the grandmother. There she was speaking to Lodge-boy in person!

Rows of people slept at the bowery to watch the place. When the old woman was snoring, the boy got up, took some buffalo fat and went over to the place. Some slept, others were talking and moving about. It seemed impossible to reach his brother. He changed himself into a great spider and crawled up to the post where his brother was. With the fat he greased the wounds, then he cut the thongs and they came down to the ground. There he found a stone hatchet with eyes, the very one used to cut the pole, and they carried this out with them. They went out as spiders and the holy man knew all about it but could do nothing because the two together were too powerful for him. Long Arm went and placed his hand over the hole by which they passed through so as to catch them. Spring-boy made a motion with the hatchet as if to cut it off at the wrist and said, "This second time your hand has committed a crime, and it shall be a sign to the people on earth." So it is today that we see the hand in the heavens. The white people call it Orion. The belt is

where they cut across the wrist, the thumb and fingers also show; they are hanging down like a hand. "The hand star" it is called.

The boys went back to the place where they had left the arrows sticking in the ground, pulled out the arrows and went home to their mother. She told them that the people in the sky were like birds, they could fly about as they pleased. Since the opening was made in the heavens they may come down to earth. If a person lives well on earth his spirit takes flight to the skies and is able to come back again and be reborn, but if he does evil he will wander about on earth and never leave it for the skies. A baby born with a slit in the ear at the place where earrings are hung is such a reborn child from the people in the skies.

While the people sang and danced about Spring-boy in the bower, he had learned the ten songs and he instituted the ceremony on earth in order to get power from the skies. In place of a man's body he told them to use a buffalo skin. They should lance themselves at the wrist and tie cords to their bodies and suspend the cords to the nose of the buffalo skull and hang there just as he had been suspended. He said, "The person who performs the ceremony in memory of me may have the picture of the sun on his chest and of the half moon on his back. The sun causes things to grow and the moon causes the moisture. Since I have named the buffalo hide as my own body, the buffalo shall range where people are. In regard to the tree, the maidens of the village must be examined and one who is a virgin shall cut down the tree and a young man, brave and unblemished, shall help her haul the tree to the dance place. In course of time they shall marry and their seed multiply so that the people may live and not go out of existence."

The Gros Ventres (Hidatsa) people have believed in those rites. You can see where I have been lanced across the chest in those ceremonies. They took hold of the flesh, lanced it through with a sharp knife and thrust a Juneberry stick cut about four inches long and wet with saliva through the lance-thrust and tied it with buckskin so that it would not slip off, then pushed back the chest. It hurt at first but not later. As I ran around (after being suspended to the tree) my feet would leave the earth and I was suspended in air. Above my head I heard sounds like those



made by spirits and I believed them to be the spirits of my helpers.

The chief celebrant at these ceremonies has usually killed an enemy. He cuts off the hand, brings it home, skins it, removing the bones, and fills it with sand. After it dries he empties out the sand and wears it at the back of the neck, where it flaps up and down as he dances. It represents Long Arm's hand. He wears a hand at his back and a white antelope hide about his loins just as Spring-boy wore it. Every night he uses the ridge of earth as a pillow. Since Spring-boy hung on the tree three days and it took a fourth to escape back to the lodge, the ceremony lasts four days. The men who are lanced have to fast. The man who sleeps with his head on the ridge is naked and sage is strewn. The ceremony is called the Sun-dance in some tribes, but among the Hidatsa it is the "Hide-beating."

The boys were worried for their mother's safety and the mother for that of the boys, so they sent the two older men and the mother to join the people in the sky and take back the hatchet and give it to the owner. The boys promised their mother to stay below and help the people on earth in spirit as long as the world lasted and at the end of the world she would see them again. The greasing of Spring-boy's wounds by Lodge-boy was the origin of the use of grease and tallow to heal wounds.

### Part 3.

#### *Unknown One, Son of Two Men.*

The twins now went by the name of Two Men. Their former lodge was abandoned and they roamed at will all over the country and made a permanent camp on the west side of the Missouri by Knife River. There you can see the ruins of the old village. The Two Men would come back to the village for ceremonial rites then they would be off again. When a young man of the village performed such a ceremony, if he had a young wife he would call together all the men of the clan and deliver her to them in turn. Meanwhile they sang the holy songs and prayed for blessings upon their daughter-in-law. Thus these Two Men were given their son's wife and they took her out and sang songs and without

their having any intercourse with her she bore them a son.<sup>29</sup> As he grew, Two Men visited him in spirit as often as they could until he attained manhood. They drove the buffalo within hunting distance of the village and caused rain to bring good corn crops. Thus they fed him so that he might become a strong man. Then one day his father was killed in an Indian war and his mother died through miscarriage. Before dying she called in a man whom she had adopted as a brother because, though not a blood relative, he belonged to the same clan, and entrusted her son to him as a brother and her mother to him as a mother. The man accepted the charge and the woman died. She was her mother's only child. From this time on the man looked after the boy and loved him dearly. His lodge was placed close to the grandmother's and if they went on a winter's hunt their camps were always beside each other. The two never quarreled, hence it is a rule that when two camps are beside each other there is to be no quarreling or backbiting between them. From time to time they went hunting, as the custom was, or made gardens. Sometimes before the winter hunt the women and old men would recount the deeds of the hunters and compare their ability to find a helping spirit or to endure bravely the torture of hanging themselves over a cliff. Then pipe in hand they would proceed to the lodge of some warrior who had shown himself brave and give him the charge of the winter camp for that year.

One year the leader decided to place the winter camp near the mouth of the Yellowstone. The people harvested their corn and stored into cellars what corn and squash they could not carry. In those days nine varieties of corn were known differing in color or in hardness of grain, but some of these varieties have today disappeared.<sup>30</sup> Almost up to today it was the custom for heralds to go through the village four days before the start and announce the departure. In those days they depended upon dogs for transportation and the dogs were well fed and cared for. They were harnessed with a strap of soft fur cut from the buffalo where the fur is thickest and fastened to poles on each side. Almost over

<sup>29</sup> See note 2 on the virgin birth in the Mandan story of creation.

<sup>30</sup> See Hidatsa and Mandan, Maximilian, 346, and note 42 to the story of Split Wing Feather in this collection.



the back was a round withe bent in a circle to which were fastened rods as in basket-work, and to this luggage was fastened. This year they made camp at Beaver Creek (about fifteen miles from here) on the south side of the river. Below this creek is a creek called Bear-dancing creek where there is a big meadow like a river flat, and here they made their fourth camp.

Unknown One was now grown to be a young man and was a good hunter for his age. As they came up the river he was successful in killing deer, elk and other game so that his brother was well provided. One night he came in with only a small portion of the game he had killed and said to his grandmother, "On our way up I went in advance of the camp and saw a few herds to be sure, but the bulls looked scabby. I think it is going to be poor hunting and propose that you and I return home and I will provide for you through the winter. But let us not tell my brother anything." So the next day he delayed starting until the camp had gone over the hill and then the two packed up and returned to the village. At a certain place where a man eloping with a girl had tried to shoot at a rabbit and always missed it, hence called "the Place where the man missed the Jack rabbit," they could look over the whole village and from one hut they saw smoke rising. The boy said, "Grandmother, there must be some one remaining in the village."—"That must be the man who broke up the gambling-stick. I have heard that although he is only a middle-aged man he has been poisoned and can not use his legs." It was in fact this man; he had remained with his wife and daughter, a girl of marriageable age. She ran out joyfully to meet them and the young man shared his game—the ham of a deer, a rib, and such pieces also as are eaten raw. They insisted that the two must share their lodge, the cornmeal was already cooked and a bull-hide was placed for the old lady to sit upon.

Early next morning at dawn Unknown One rose and went hunting. About daybreak he came to a river where the antelope crossed, killed four and carried back the parts eaten raw and as many ribs as he could carry. In those days they had a big log of wood burning all night covered with ashes and the ashes were brushed away to kindle a fire in the morning. The old man was overjoyed.—"I had thought that we would make snares and catch

snowbirds, but now we are to be provided for the whole winter," he said. Toward spring the old man proposed to his wife that as they liked the young man he should become their son-in-law. The wife consented. They proposed the match to the old woman, promising to look after her until the day of her death. She told her grandson of the proposal, but he refused to consent.—"I should be the laughing-stock of the people if I should marry before performing any warrior's deed!" The old woman begged him to consider her loneliness, but he refused to yield. Three times the proposal was made, three times he rejected it. The fourth time was the last chance. The old lady sat by the fire mending. She told him how old she was and how she could not live much longer, how his own mother would wish the match, and even threatened suicide unless he would marry the girl; so rather than this should happen he promised to marry. The old people rejoiced at the news. All was prepared and there was a marriage. The young girl loved the man dearly, as he was a handsome fellow, and she herself was a beauty. Her father gave to his daughter for his son-in-law his eagle-tail ornament made out of twelve feathers and the young man was well pleased with it and hung it up in its case.

One day as he was out hunting and had shot a deer and was skinning it, he saw two men whom he recognized as his fathers. The men told him that in order to honor their daughter-in-law they were driving down a herd of buffalo from the north and among them was a white buffalo out of which to prepare a robe for their daughter-in-law to hang on the scalp-pole in front of the lodge. They bade him cover the fire so that there should be no flame, muzzle the dogs so that they would not bark. He must burn incense, the wife prepare a dish of corn cooked with fat, the father-in-law tobacco for smoking (by greasing the leaves and drying them by the fire). At night as the stars appeared one by one in the heavens they would come to visit the lodge. So all was done as directed and at the appointed time Two Men lifted the bullhide at the door and entered the lodge. The coals burned without flame and the lodge was dim. Unknown One took the pipe from a square of buffalo hide and passed it to Spring-boy, who lit it at the coals and smoked by inhaling the sweet smoke;



it was then cleaned out, refilled and passed to Lodge-boy. Unknown One then divided the eagle-feathers, giving six to each, which they stuck in their hair. It is for this reason that feathers are valued today by the Indians. Unknown One dished out the sweet corn and in no time they had cleaned out the pot, neglecting the meat which was there in abundance. After smoking again, the visitors advised them to bring in ice and drinking water in preparation for a heavy fog which would last four days while the buffalo were being brought in, then they left the lodge.

Two Men had observed that the father-in-law was lame and Spring-boy now agreed to doctor the man.<sup>31</sup> They came to the lodge a second time. Spring-boy had the fire rekindled with split wood and water brought. He dipped up some of the water into his mouth and gargled four times. Then he took more water into his mouth, chewed up some black medicine and going over to the man he took hold of the leg by the ankle, lifted it up and blew the finely chewed medicine four times from the man's feet up to his hips. Something was seen twitching in the man's leg. Spring-boy reached into the instep and drew out a male bull-snake and placed it on the ashes. Lodge-boy did the same and drew out a female bull-snake from the left leg which he laid on the ashes beside the other. He told the husband and wife to tie cords to the snakes, spit black medicine over their legs and draw the snakes out on the snow and leave them with their heads pointing to the west, then cleanse their hands with sagebrush and lay sagebrush at the rear, pointing to the west. The man was now perfectly well. All that night they kept a light in the house lest the snakes escape and the next morning they took them far outside the village and left them on the snow as directed. Four times the young man would have stopped to leave them and four times the wife insisted that they should be carried farther from the village.

When the two returned they hauled the ice as directed and placed it on blocks of wood close to the door. Four days the fog lasted when they must muzzle the dogs and keep inside. Voices were to be heard like those of women, which were spirit voices.

<sup>31</sup> For this story see "Black Wolf" in this collection. Maximilian notes, page 383, the practice among the Mandan of casting out animals in the body by dancing.

After four days they could see through the smokehole that the sky was clear. Outside they found all the scaffolds throughout the village loaded with meat, the scaffold outside their own door as well, and on the scalp-pole hung the white buffalo hide. This the mother took down immediately to tan. Buffalo were to be seen roaming about everywhere.<sup>32</sup> The old man was delighted. Day by day he went through the village to drive away the ravens and magpies from the meat. Their own store of meat the family put away, the old grandmother helping as she could. The bones were then crushed with a stone hammer over a flat stone, the grease melted out and stored in buffalo bladders. When spring came the man erected shelters over the scaffolds to protect the dried meat. One day the Two Men came to the boy and told him that the people were returning and would camp that night by the Little Missouri. They would send four runners to the village and these must be well fed and given bundles of meat to carry back, for the people were famishing. So they got a good rib roasting slowly by the fire to feed the runners and gave them bundles of jerked meat to carry back to the others. Just about where the ferry is today, that is where the camp began, and it was stretched west to the upper crossing. The next day there was a string of young men and women all the way from the camp into the village, some hurrying to preserve the meat and others to take food back to the others. Old people hobbled along on their canes eager to see what had happened. Soon the whole village was lively with people.

Unknown One was hunting and his two fathers came to him.<sup>33</sup> They told him that they could not come to his lodge now, for his father-in-law was the kind of man in whose lodge men congregate. They warned him that although he had mysterious power he was nevertheless human and the evil spirits would not fear him as they did his two fathers. Whatever happened therefore he must never allow himself to feel fear or they would get the better of him.

<sup>32</sup> A magic buffalo drive is a popular accompaniment of a hero story, especially in connection with a deserted camp. See Arapaho, 45; Pawnee, 90-95, and the stories of "Black Wolf" cited above and of "Crow Nicholas" in this collection.

<sup>33</sup> This adventure of Unknown One is related from the Crow by Lowie in the story of "Red Woman and Flint-like Young Man," pages 128-133.



He was more cautious after this and formed the habit of going up on the lodge and looking off in a southwesterly direction over the village. One day as he was watching the hunting parties going and coming he saw a big buffalo on a ridge headed toward the river and, thinking to get a shot at it as it came to the river, he took his bow and arrows, explained to his wife where he was going and hid himself in a ravine in the buffalo's path. As it came along he was surprised to see that at times its body appeared to contract. He shot, but the animal contracted its body so that all the ribs showed and the arrow fell off harmlessly. The buffalo ran, he pursued. Four times he shot, but the arrow had no effect. He followed it up a coulee, came to a lodge, and was amazed to see the buffalo change into a human being and walk into the lodge. "I told you to bring him along; did you bring him?" said a voice inside.—"Yes, he is standing outside," said another voice. "I had all the points arranged where he was to shoot, but the four shots were the limit of my power. With every shot I drew the distance toward me and succeeded in getting him here."—"Son, enter in!" said the first voice.

Inside was a great serpent with a concave snake face, a big mouth, four legs with claws, and a tail coiled in a heap. As the boy entered there came a hissing sound and flame shot forth. This so frightened him that he went around the fireplace and because of this fear he lost his memory and could not recall his own mysterious power.<sup>34</sup> A man reproved the snake and said, "Only if he brings home no game or tries to escape are you to kill and eat him!" and to the youth he explained how the buffalo had drawn in the country at every shot with its paw so that he was now far in the north country in a land of springs and running water where it was useless for him to try to escape. His task was to hunt deer and bring home the whole body without skinning it. He must then skin it and boil the guts and head for the serpent and feed him without tasting a bit himself. Then he must fill the pouch with water and raise it to the snake's lips, throw out the remainder and taste no drop himself. This man had been in the fight with Charred Body and had formed an alliance with the chief whose daughter he had killed. He knew that Unknown

<sup>34</sup> Compare Crow, Lowie, 168.

One was his enemy's grandchild and had sent the buffalo to draw him to his lodge.

The boy went out, shot and killed a deer, cut down the skin over the shinbone and took out the bone leaving the hoof, which he brought crosswise through a slit cut in the skin so that he could hang the deer over his shoulder. The snake hissed loudly as he came in and, even when the man quieted it, still it humped its back and grumbled. The boy saw no way of escape. He skinned the deer in the customary manner by cutting the throat and drawing out the inwards. These he threw to the snake and watched him swallow them down without chewing just like feeding grain to a threshing machine. He roasted a rib, brought pieces of board and placed them in front of the man and laid the cooked meat before him. When the man had eaten he threw every bone into the fire so that the boy should not get a taste. After this the boy took the water-bag made of a buffalo pouch laced into a kind of kettle, carried it to the river and, wading out to the middle where the water ran clear and cool, he brought it back filled to the brim and, lifting it with great difficulty to the man's mouth, gave him what he could drink and poured out the rest outside without tasting a drop. Then he took string and a stone axe and went after firewood. He was commanded to bring no rotten sticks but dry wood fit for firewood and to drink no water on the way.—“Should you disobey me in the slightest in one of these commands,” said the man, “you will die. This earth with us is like a small dish out of which you cannot escape.” So during his captivity the boy had little liberty except when out hunting; it was just as if he were shut up in a penitentiary. During the night the fear of the serpent kept him awake. The man slept on the left of the door, the boy on the right, the bull near the center. Under him there was not even straw and he had neither pillow nor robe.

For three days the same things happened. On the fourth day he had become so weak that when he got the deer on his back he was unable to lift it. As he lay on his back crying he saw a bright light pass across the sky and heard a voice crying, “Where are you?” The Two Men had become alarmed and were out looking for him. With their backs against each other they were



traveling all over the sky. They had searched the mountains in the west, the ocean, but had not thought of the north. The boy suddenly realized that he also had mysterious power but had allowed his mind to become distracted. He got up, took up his arrows and bunched them in his hand, slid them over the ground, and the arrow that slid the farthest he took and wet across his mouth to indicate that it was the voice that the arrow was to carry with a call for help. Had he not wet it, the arrow would have gone through the air with a flash of light but carried no sound with it. He strung his bow, tested the string, strung the arrow and called out twice to Spring-boy and Lodge-boy "Heh-h-h! heh-h-h-h!" Then he let go the arrow and it shot through the air like a flame with a sound of tearing and came down again beside the boy. The Two Men followed it and the boy was overjoyed. Lodge-boy looked at him sadly, thinking how he must have suffered, but Spring-boy laughed and asked how he could possibly have become so emaciated.—"Whoever it is, the enemy shall not escape my hand today," he promised.

The boy related his story and as he laid his ear against the deer he heard a ringing sound in his right ear. This is the Indian sign of glad news; a ringing sound in the left ear is a sign of bad luck. The men told him that the serpent had caused him to lose his wits and this ringing sound was the return of his consciousness of power. The men shot a fat old buffalo for the boy to eat. They cut out the leg bone and used it to strike the back bone loose so that they could cut up the ribs. They told the boy to drink four times of the blood from the ribs and gave him a piece of raw liver to eat. Then they accompanied him to the lodge and told him to go in as usual, but when the man had finished drinking to throw the rest of the water upon him and they would enter and take care of the situation.

All was done as they had said. They bound the serpent from its head to its tail and threw it into the fire. They shot the man and burned him with the serpent. But the buffalo they spared. This was the leader of the buffalo who had brought in the herd for the boy's marriage feast, but he had been taken into captivity by the man. He promised to do them no harm; only when they made sacrifices and did not perform the ritual correctly would he

allow them or their ponies to be gored. Then the two set the boy between them, Spring-boy to the right and Lodge-boy to the left, and made a leap and landed beside the river near the village. All the family, who had been mourning for him, rejoiced. The young man became a great chief.

*Additional incidents told by Arthur Mandan.*

There are other stories about the Two Men. The flat-topped red butte against the east side of the river (visible over the slope from Bear's Arm's house) is where they sat and sang love-songs to the Woman-who-never-dies.<sup>35</sup> She lives across the river and when she gets very old she stirs the water into a foam with her hand, bathes and becomes a little girl again and then develops into a woman. The Gros Ventres (Hidatsa) used to come and visit her and eat the corn she prepared. Sun's son stayed with her and when he wanted to leave this earth he became Morning Star. The only thing he was afraid of was an unborn calf,—that was unclean to him.<sup>36</sup> The Two Men were great hunters. They killed a buffalo cow and Spring-boy told the boy to carry the calf to his grandmother. He ran and climbed a tree and stayed there until he was just skin and bones. Old Woman caused a blizzard and the game became scarce. A mouse was the last thing they shot. They were starving. They looked out and saw Sun's son blowing the corn out of a box of elderwood and this caused the snow.

<sup>35</sup> Maximilian records, page 360, that among the Hidatsa the old woman who never dies lives in the moon and wears a white band from front to back of her head. He says, page 398, that Morning Star, Venus, is her grandson and child of the moon. For further particulars see the story of "The Big Wind-Bag" in this collection.

<sup>36</sup> Compare Arapaho, 263; Arikara, 50, 58; Crow, Lowie, 55, 68, 73, 93. In the Arikara story, Dorsey, page 60, the reason given for this fear of an unborn calf is because the cluster of stars to which the boy's father belongs does not rise above the horizon during the period when the unborn calves are maturing, hence the father is not able to come to his help.



## 17. THE FLOOD

Told by Ben Benson, June 17, 1931.

### Part 1. Magpie.

There were six in the family, four buffalo, their mother, and a younger brother called Magpie. The oldest buffalo brother was called Fall, the second Winter, the third Spring, the fourth Summer. The mother was Corn Woman. There were others in the village but these were the chief characters in the story.<sup>79</sup>

They had a village along the banks of Devil's Lake, which the Mandan call Holy Water. Every day the younger brother would go out early in the morning, fly about all day, and return at evening. In the springtime the Corn Woman made her garden and showed people in the village how to plant corn and vegetables. When all the different kinds of birds came back in the spring, the boys of the village would snare the birds.

One boy tried for a long time to snare a bird. At last he caught a small warbler called Daubed-eye(brow), or *I-sti-da-ka*, because it has a yellow streak over the eye. He said, "For four days I have been trying to snare a bird and have not succeeded. You birds are too shy. Now I have snared you, you shall go back home." He pulled off all the small feathers from the warbler, leaving only the tail and wing feathers, painted the skin red, pulled a long wing-feather and stuck it through its beak and said, "Now you are ready to go home!" and tossed it into the air. Away it flew eastward, and the people thought no more about it. All went on as before.

Now Magpie was in the habit of roaming about from place to place. One evening he came home and found the four buffalo in the lodge where the rest in the village had congregated. He ate his meal and said, "There is a very dangerous thing coming to

<sup>79</sup> See note under number 2 in this collection. There seems to be some relation between the four buffalo brothers in this story and the four wolf brothers in the Winnebago origin story, three of whom went underground (JAFL 2: 140; 4: 341). Benson's father thought the woman was sister not mother to the buffalo men.

pass." The brothers did not even question him. Four times this happened. The fourth time his brothers rebuked him and said, "Every time you come home you speak of danger. Look at your brother here, the Fall buffalo. In the Fall when the buffalo are fat he goes out and brings them near the village and the people kill and bring in meat and eat to their hearts' content. The same with Winter, Spring, Summer buffalo. So with your mother; even though she plants the corn on a stoney place it springs up and we eat the corn. But as for yourself, all you are good for is to roam around the country!" Then Magpie said nothing more to his brothers about what was to happen.

Magpie went about from lodge to lodge and warned the people that danger was coming. He said, "We must try to leave this village and make our way to the river." Some believed him and they formed a band and started out. It was spring, the snow had melted, the land was drying. When they had almost reached the river, they camped along a deep coulee to rest the old women and children. They were in want for food. In the night it rained, the rain changed to snow and the snow to a blizzard. There was little fuel in the camp and they were in danger of their lives. Magpie went from tent to tent to see how the people were getting on. At the door of the tent he saw a Hole-blower who was talking to another of his kind and saying, "They are short of food and of fuel and I think we shall kill them in no time." Magpie advised the people to build up their fires high with whatever articles they had left, then take skins and daub them with white clay and daub that over with red ochre to look like meat and make a foaming liquid with white clay and pretend they were boiling meat and licking the foam. So when the Hole-blowers<sup>80</sup> saw them they said, "We can hardly destroy them since they have plenty of food and fuel! Besides, we are getting cold ourselves." Magpie came out into the open and prayed, facing to the south-west, and said, "O Uncle! (meaning Lone-Man) these Hole-blowers are trying to kill us with cold. We have burned up our stirring slabs and even the frames of our travois. Come to our aid!" Lone-Man

<sup>80</sup> Little people who cause the blizzard are called Hole Blowers and the name is given to the blizzard itself because the snow blows in through the chinks. The word is the same as that used to express the act of blowing in through a small tube, hence the use of the flute to produce a blizzard, as in the story of Grandson.





Preparing corn.



Rack for drying corn.

heard the voice and came as the South-west wind that blew all the Hole-blowers away to the north with its heat. Some hid themselves under the grass, some in holes in the ground. The snow melted and the people were saved.

They continued their journey until they came to the Missouri. They crossed near the mouth of the Heart river and went down on the south side until they came to a high range known as Bird's-bill butte. Below this butte Magpie built a village which is known today as "Magpie's village." After all were well settled, the people saw a stream of water which covered the land in a great wave from the north. The current kept the stream from the west side of the river and carried it along to the ocean. Magpie said, "I suppose that all my people who did not heed what I said are drowned, but I will fly over to the site of the village and see if some are alive." When he came to the site of the village, the whole place was covered with water. He could see his four brothers standing on top of their lodge. He flew over and said, "What are you doing here? Try to save yourselves, for I told you that a great danger was coming and you would not listen." They said, "If you had told us that a flood was on its way we would have listened to you." He asked for their mother and they told him she was in the cellar in the form of an ear of corn. He could see through the chimney-hole where the water made a whirlpool below and he shouted "Mother, are you alive?"—"Yes!"—"Can you come through the smokehole?"—"Yes, but use your skill and try to save me."—"Wait, and when I am ready I will call you." He pulled locks of hair from one of his brothers and wove a snare, one end of which he tied about his neck and held the noose ready. When she sprang through the smoke hole, he caught her in the noose and tied her firmly to one of his brother's heads. Then he urged his brothers to make an effort and swim across the river to the side toward which the current carried the water. All four swam abreast and Magpie flew over their heads. At length Summer buffalo said, "Brother, I am exhausted; I shall sink here. This shall mark the distance to which you shall bring out your people to hunt (in the summer)." In vain Magpie urged him on; he disappeared out of sight. They went farther and Fall buffalo said, "Brother, I am exhausted. From



henceforth come here to hunt buffalo," and he disappeared out of sight. Magpie encouraged him in vain. The two swam on. Just within the bluffs of the Missouri, Winter buffalo said, "Brother, I am exhausted!"—"Don't say that, brother, you are almost within the bluffs; make one more effort." Winter buffalo said, "I am not far now from your village," and as he spoke he swallowed water and disappeared. Spring buffalo had almost reached the south side when his strength gave out and he said, "Brother, I am exhausted." Magpie encouraged him and flying to the top of his head he dug his claws into his hair and pulled him along. Spring buffalo floated on his side and thus, aided by Magpie, made the other side of the bank. There, having regained strength, Buffalo and Corn took again the forms of persons and came to Magpie's village and lived there.

## **Part 2. Spring Buffalo.**

Magpie tried to keep his brother near home as much as possible. He would bring the herds near for the people to kill and get their provisions. When Magpie flew over the country to other Indian villages he never told his brother about them lest he go away to some of these villages to court. One day when the two brothers were on top of a high butte, Buffalo smelled corn roasting. He rolled on the ground and rose in the form of a buffalo. Then he faced north and sniffed but smelled nothing. He rolled again and faced east, but smelled nothing. Again he rolled and faced south but smelled nothing. He rolled again and faced west and smelled nothing. He tried again, faced to the south-east and smelled nothing, then to the south-west and smelled nothing, then to the north-west and smelled nothing. The last time he faced to the north-east and there he smelled the corn roasting. He followed that direction. Advised by Magpie, he rolled four times until he rose in the form of an old buffalo with strength and endurance.

He was told that there were dangers to be met on the way. He came first to a meadow with bunches of grass and cotton (wood) trees growing far apart. Some one was hiding behind the bushes. Magpie had warned him to crowd his ribs together and take short steps until the figure grew tired and relaxed his bow, then to rush forward so swiftly that the man would

miss his aim. He went through the meadow to a high hill and came to reaches of land where he saw another figure peeping over the hill, then disappearing behind it. He lingered, deciding which path to take. Choosing a big draw between two hills, he watched until he saw the object appear over one hill and go out of sight, then took the other side and walked slowly, pretending that he did not see the hunter. When the hunter relaxed his string, the buffalo darted ahead so fast that the hunter could only hit his leg and could not catch up with him. This second hunter had a bladder drawn over his head daubed with white clay so that the game would take him for a stone. The third shooter he encountered was a better hunter than the other two. He was to be recognized by the two magpie feathers on his head. As the old buffalo approached, up over the ridge came the two feathers. It was early in the afternoon. He made no attempt to go forward but stayed pretending to feed until it should grow late and he could save himself in the darkness. Late in the evening he again rushed by when the man relaxed his string, and escaped. Magpie had warned him to be particularly careful when he reached a place where lay broad valleys and groves, for here were two skilful hunters, Lodge Boy and Spring Boy. When he came to the place he recognized it and saw two persons ahead peeping over the ridge. Now he thought that he was to meet death. The men were dressed alike, with the outer skin of the buffalo's heart drawn over their heads, bunches of grass at the back, and a bunch of crow's feathers tied together on the side of the head and another bunch at the end of their bows. The buffalo waited for the darkness, then ran between them and escaped. The two pursued. The buffalo set his jaws firm and ran on. Finally he ran into a grove of timber. The men waited for him to come out. They built fires which they kept re-kindling, and patrolled all around the grove. The buffalo however pulled out the arrows with which he had been struck and walked lightly away in the darkness and escaped. At daybreak the men searched for him in vain.

The buffalo came to a large village far to the north-east. Here he took again the form of a handsome man wearing his robe with the hair outside. His forelock was curled in the fashion in which the Gros Ventres arrange their hair. He climbed to the top of a



large earth lodge and stood there until noon. The man of the lodge told his four wives to prepare the young man a meal. He sent the youngest to go outside and invite the man in. She came halfway out and seeing how handsome he was said, as if trying to flirt with him, "You are invited within." The man paid no attention to her. The second and third wives were no more successful. The fourth wife was directed to take the spotted eagle tail feathers from the mystery bag and place them over the man's head before inviting him in. This time he replied "Ha-ho!" that is, "Thank-you!" and followed her quickly inside.<sup>81</sup>

As they smoked after eating, the man said to a fifth woman in the house, "My sister, will you make some cornballs to eat?" The woman got up without speaking, took two pots, put water in one and set the other on the live coals. She put in sand and laid yellow corn upon the sand. They could hear it popping until the pot was filled to the brim. Then she set to work to grind the corn. She put all back into the pan, then unbound her hair, which was tied up in a knot on her forehead. She sprinkled water on her hair and it turned into cornsilk. The perfume of the water dripping on the corn filled the lodge. It was this which the young man had smelled. She poured some of the water on the corn and with her hands made the cornballs. When they were ready she placed them on a wooden plate and gave them to the buffalo man and he ate them. She was a beautiful woman and her name was Corn Silk.

The two men became friends. They would sit on the lodge top together and go about together. This chief man of the village advised him to marry. He said, "All these people are mine. If you see a woman whom you fancy I will give her to you." So the next day the older women dressed up and had a foot-race and each thought the handsome stranger might select her for a wife, but he saw no one who took his fancy. The day after came a second race for the younger women, the day after for the young girls, but he chose no one. The fourth day the chief announced that all the women were to turn out and play kick ball, even his own wives and his sister also were to join the game.<sup>82</sup> The sister

<sup>81</sup> Compare Cheyenne, JAFL 20: 175, where Coyote uses the same expression.

<sup>82</sup> For an early description of this game see Mayer, 150-157.

knew well that Buffalo Man had come all this long distance after her. She made a ball and came out of the doorway of the lodge and gave it a kick and away it flew in the air above all the others. Four times she did this and then went back into the lodge. He said, "The woman who came out and kicked the ball four times, that is the woman I want for my wife." They entered the lodge and the chief said, "Sister, since I have promised my friend that he should have any woman he wants to marry, make up your bed and take him for your husband." She did not answer but at once prepared her bed. . . .

The next day, in order to gratify his friend and the people of the village, he found buffalo dung and scattered it all about and the next morning the people saw a herd of buffalo on the outskirts of the village. The chief had the announcer cry the hunt, a party was formed and away they went. He now let his name be known as Spring buffalo and drew the herd in, so the hunt was a success. They came home with plenty of meat. From that time he drew in the buffalo from time to time and as this had not been done before he was looked upon with honor.

### **Part 3. Stiff Robe.**

When Spring Buffalo's wife was about to deliver a child, Spring Buffalo asked the chief to name his brother. Now when the buffalo robe gets wet, it becomes hard in drying. The boy was named from this circumstance "Stiff-robe."

When he grew up to be a man, Spring Buffalo said to his wife, "We should go home to my people," and the woman consented. She said, "You are a buffalo and no doubt the boy too, but if you take him overland you will get into trouble. I can turn into a swan and our boy can also. I will take the lead and our boy shall follow and I will keep watch of you." They started home and, traveling day and night, reached home after sundown. At Magpie's place the door was barred. He called to him, "Open the door, it is your brother!" and Magpie opened the door. He asked why the camp was so quiet and Magpie said, "Since you left us we have had hard times—no buffalo, no corn." The wife opened a big bundle and cooked corn and beans and made corn



balls. Stiff robe told Magpie to go out and announce that he was there. All came in, old men, old women, young men and women and the children. Corn Silk had them spread a rug—"a good big robe and a clean one too"—and she told them to fill it with corn and all those who came in first got a quantity, and when there was little left she had them stir it up and there was more for those who came later. Next morning she told Magpie to open up the cache holes, whether they had one, two, or three, and have them ready. She would ask, "Whose cache hole is this?"—"Mine."—"How many pits have you? Where are they? What kind of corn do you want in each?" Then she would drop in kernels of corn. "Anything else you want?"—"Yes, squash." Then she would drop a few squash seeds, and so on. She warned them not to open up at once, but those who were very poor did so and found their caches a quarter full, those who waited two days, a half full, those who waited three days, three-fourths full, and those who waited four, found their caches full to the brim. This Corn Silk did for her husband's people.

As for Stiff-robe, he broke buffalo chips and scattered them all about over the prairie and the people went out and killed many buffalo. He was now old enough to learn to shoot and they made him a bow and arrows. His mother told him he could shoot all birds but one. That one had a gray back, spotted tail, yellow breast with black streaks under the neck. It was the meadow lark. The boy found a meadow lark right in his way and took a few shots at it but always missed. The bird said, "Why do you shoot at me? You should stay in your own country." The boy went home sad and said to his mother, "Mother, when I shot at the bird it turned and said this was not my home." The mother said, "It is your home because it is your father's home. Your father came up to my country and you were born there, then we all came back to your father's home. Put this thought out of your head." But the boy insisted upon going home. "I keep thinking about what the bird said," he said. When his father came in the boy said, "I want to go back to where I came from."—"Why? this is your home. I am leader of this camp and if I should die you would take my place." The boy said, "I can come back here and go again." The father pleaded in vain and finally gave his con-

sent. The two went out together and the father made him roll four times. The first time he rose a young buffalo, a year old, the next time he was older, the next older still; the fourth time his horns were worn and his teeth all worn down. "Now you are a man; you can fight your own way," said his father. He then related to the boy all the dangers he must encounter on the way. They were the same which he himself had met when he went to court Corn Silk. All these dangers the boy succeeded in escaping as his father had done.

Corn Silk had told her son to go to a man named Forked Tail. When he reached the village he went to Forked Tail's lodge and was invited in. When the boy told who he was, his mother's brother jumped up and said, "You are my brother. This is your home and you shall stay here." One day the two were playing stone-rolling and Forked Tail sent the young man home after his eagle tail. His wife was tanning a robe and was barefoot. He asked for the eagle tail and she told him that it hung over his brother's bed and he might get it himself. He was now a handsome fellow. As he leaned on the bed she embraced him. He shook her off, saying, "He is my own brother." When he had gone the woman tore her robe and wounded her face and cried to her husband when he came home that Stiff Robe had attacked her. Stiff Robe told his uncle that it was all a lie, but he determined to leave the village. He learned that Forked Tail was going away on the war path. He and his boy friend joined the party, crossed a great lake in bull boats, found and killed the enemy, returned to the boats and slept. When the men were called to their boats, Forked Tail went away and left Stiff Robe sleeping but took along the friend.

When Stiff Robe awoke he found himself alone. He went along crying until he came to a nest of eagles. He said, "Mysterious birds, help me to get home!" He gave to the eagles part of the scalp he had taken and offered part to an old buffalo skull, then he went to sleep. The next morning he found a fresh-killed antelope laid ready to eat. The eagles said, "Butcher the animal and feed us with the tender parts until we are grown, then we will see that you get home." So when they were full grown the male said one day, "Go down the bank here to where you see a



stretch of timber, take four dry sticks and lay them on the ground in the shape of a house, lie down inside and go to sleep. When you awake you will be inside a log house without door or window. Two bears with sharp noses will come and stick their noses between the logs trying to tear them down and their noses will be caught there." They gave him a flint knife and told him to cut off the two noses and fasten them with the scalp to a cane and offer them to the Old-woman-with-many-dogs (who would be his next danger to overcome) and say to her, "Grandmother, I have been looking for you; I have a cane for you," [and she would be propitiated]. Now the Old Woman's dogs were not really dogs, but wolves. All these things he did. He cut off the sharp noses of the bears and gave them with the scalp to the Old Woman and she was pleased. She said, "Over here is one who will help you," and she sent him on to a man whom he was to call "father" and to whom he was to present the piece of scalp that he had left, tied to a cane. This man was the Sun. He said, "I am the man who helped your uncle, but one thing he refused to me; that was the black wolf robe which he has. That he would not give to me, so now I will help you." Then Sun showed him all that he must do. He said, "Go back to these birds and they will take you home. You will become a brave warrior and have a village of your own, larger than your uncle's. You will go on the war-path, take horses, kill enemies. You must have some one come and bless you and give thanks to the spirits. Send for your uncle to do this. He will say, 'Let him pray and make the offering himself.'" Then Sun showed the young man how to perform the ceremonies and offer smoke to the spirits and all the ritual. He said, "Thus you must do, then the people will come and tell Forked Tail. He will be worried and will invite you to smoke and give you the robe and offer to forget the past. Then come and hold up the robe to me and say, 'Father, here is the robe that you wanted,' and give it to me. That is what I want."

As soon as Stiff Robe reached home he found his boy friend and made his home with him. After a few days they got some young men together and went north on the war path. They were successful and brought home scalps. They had food cooked and sent for Forked Tail to come and give offerings to the spirits and

perform the ceremonies proper to celebrate their success. He refused. Then Stiff Robe put on a rabbit skin over his head, painted red, and a common wolf skin as a robe, and sang the songs and performed the ceremonies. It was thus that the Sun had been dressed. They came and told Forked Tail and he was afraid. He ordered his wife to cook food and invite his nephew to come and eat with him. The old man gave his nephew a smoke and took down his wolf robe and gave it to him and said, "Let us be friends and work together." Then Stiff Robe went outside and held up the robe to the Sun and said, "Father, here is the robe; take it," and Forked Tail feared.

Stiff Robe went back to his friend and proposed that they move into a new camp as this one was getting old and the wood scarce. They selected a site higher up where there was good wood and water. Half of the village moved up with them. He did not ask them to come, but they saw that he was going to be a great leader and followed him. So he took half of the people away from the old village. Then Sun came to him and said, "I am going to take everything away from your uncle. There is to be a war, not of human beings but of June-berry trees. Go ahead and kill every one of them. Cook them up and eat them, they are sweet. Your uncle will have a war with the choke cherries. He will begin cutting up his enemies and eating them and he will go crazy; the more he eats the crazier he will get. And I will dry everything up and they will die. So the uncle and all his people died and Stiff Robe was left alone and became a powerful leader.



#### 4. THE BIG WIND-BAG.<sup>37</sup>

A Mandan story related by Ben Benson.

There were two men, one named Black Medicine and the other Sweet-scented Medicine. Their father was Bird Chief. The two got together and agreed to go after buffalo and other game. Black Medicine was slow in action, Sweet-scented Medicine was hasty and something of a mischief-maker. They roamed over the country making camp from place to place. Every day the grass grew scarcer and scarcer. All day long they would wander without finding game. One day toward evening they spied a grass hut in the dense timber along a valley and thought they would get shelter there. At the entrance a man passed them by without speaking carrying something on his back. Inside they saw a roast rib on a spit over the fire and a fine leg roasting slowly by the fire. There was a buffalo pauch full of water, a comfortable bed and everything snug inside. They went in like invited guests and waited for the owner, but he never returned. Finally Sweet Medicine proposed helping themselves as he was hungry. Black Medicine was for waiting, but as Sweet Medicine would delay no longer but sat down by the fire and began eating, Black Medi-

<sup>37</sup> In Dorsey's Arikara version, pages 76-78, the adventure concludes the "Packs Antelope" story of the fight with the snake who harasses the Thunder Birds; a Hidatsa woman recited to me a similar version. Compare also Gros Ventres, 79.

In the Mandan story the old woman on the island is no other than Old-Woman who never dies, who, according to Maximilian, pages 378-380, has plantations of maize whose keepers are stag and white-tailed deer, and blackbirds whom she feeds in the fields. Mouse, mole and stag are her laborers. In the spring she sends the waterfowl as symbols of the plants cultivated by the Indians,—wild geese for maize, the swan for the gourd, the ducks for the bean. When the Indians celebrate their corn festival to ensure good crops they lay offerings before her which the birds bring back to her in the fall. Formerly she used to live on the Little Missouri.

In the story of the wonder twins it is often by shooting at a bird or at a "worm" that the mischievous twin gets carried away from his brother, is picked up as a waif and becomes "Old Woman's grandson." Compare Arapaho, 354, 369; Crow, Lowie, 91; Blackfoot, 46; Shoshone, 187. In Pawnee, page 98, Wind bears the "Wonderful Boy" to the home of Tirawa where he is given food supplies for the people.

The mischievous grandson in the Arikara Star-woman story, pages 45-60 is adopted by an old woman who tends a garden. He kills her blackbirds, shoots the serpent who is her husband, and performs other feats. Compare Arapaho, 335; Crow, Lowie, 53, 59, 70; and other tales of this character.



cine also joined him and they ate their fill and drank from the buffalo pauch. In the morning they arose, cooked what they could find and went out hunting.

This happened four times. The fourth evening they determined to find out what being this was who never spoke to them and what he carried on his back. They approached the camp away from the wind and at the door they seized him. As soon as they had him down he drew the bag from his shoulder, threw it on the ground and ran away. When they burst the bag open out ran all the animals they had been hunting and they marveled at his power. Inside all was comfortable as before. The next morning when they went hunting there was game of every kind all over the country, and they congratulated themselves on having let loose the game. So they went on hunting game all over the country as before.

As they roamed about enjoying the beauty of the country, they saw something like a white balloon swelling, then contracting again as if the wind had been let out of it. They went over to examine it. Sweet Medicine wanted to shoot an arrow into it to find out what it was, but Black Medicine objected that it might be something holy and they had better leave it alone. No sooner had Black Medicine turned away, however, than Sweet Medicine who had lingered behind shot an arrow into the balloon. They heard a great roar and looking back saw a pillar of dust rising to the sky. Both boys took to their heels, Black Medicine complaining of the trouble the mischievous brother had got them into. Although they lashed themselves together with their snares, the wind picked them both up and carried them through the air, together with a mass of stones and other debris. Black Medicine hoped that toward evening the wind would die down instead of carrying them farther from home. He sang his medicine song to see if it had power to restore them to land and they descended to the height of the cottonwood trees. Then Sweet Medicine tried the power of his song and they went up again into the air. Finally they floated across the ocean to an island in the sea and there toward evening they landed.

There they sat on the ground and Black Medicine said, "Here we are all through your foolishness! How are we going to get



back home?"—"Let us get up and look around." Examining the country they found deer tracks all along the timber and this gladdened their hearts. Along the shore they found a footpath leading to the water and saw human footprints upon it. They followed the path to a big earth lodge which stood alone without another in sight. Inside they saw an old woman.—"How did you get over here, sons of Bird Chief?" she asked them. Sweet Medicine acted as spokesman and asked for food. She showed them where to sit and showed them a small earthen jar of cornmeal mush and told them to eat what was there and then stir with the spoon and it would be full again. They tried to eat it empty, then stirred it with the spoon and it was full to the brim. To her question Black Medicine explained how his mischievous brother had caused their misfortune by shooting an arrow into the balloon, which had burst and the wind had brought them there. The old lady asked in what direction it blew. They said, "Over the ocean."—"You must stay here by the ocean for a time, but in course of time the wind will return home again."

The woman had a corn garden whose ears were now ripe. One day they saw a big buck near the garden and creeping up they shot it and carried the meat back to the lodge, working like good fellows. She pretended to be pleased but she explained that they must eat it alone away from the lodge, for both corn and deer were part of her own being and the deer were those who looked after the corn. They might have all the meat that they wanted but must never bring it into the lodge again. Late in the fall the corn began to ripen. The old woman said, "You must hide yourselves today inside the lodge close to the walls," and she stacked up things about them. They heard a noise as if some one were approaching, the door flew open and a woman entered with a bag on her back. The woman spread a mat on the ground and opened her pack and laid out pemmican and buffalo meat. Others came in one by one each loaded with buffalo meat.

(Among the Mandan in the fall during the harvest the corn is regarded as sacred. The people sacrifice jerked meat and robes to the ears of corn before they are husked. The ears are brought unhusked and the owner of the field gives a sacrifice by placing robes or food or whatever he can before them according to his



means. These are given to the harvesters, but in spirit they are brought to the corn spirit (represented in the story by the old woman). The things are not taken away visibly but are brought home in spirit to the old woman. All those women who bring them represent the unhusked ears of corn.)

After the women had left the lodge the boys still remained with the old woman. One day she noticed that they were moody and quiet and asked the reason.—“It is because we are getting homesick for our own country.” She told them how glad she had been to see her grandsons, but if they were getting homesick she would send them back home. So she made them each four big cornballs and told them to go to the edge of the water and call, “Grandfather! our grandmother has commanded you to take us across this water.” A big serpent with a sharp horn would come out of the water. They must say, “Grandfather, our grandmother said that you are not the one to take us across,” and he would go under again. Then they were to call again, “Grandfather! our grandmother says that you are to take us across the water,” and another serpent would appear having horns like antlers. He too would disappear when they told him he was not the right one. They must then call again. Another would come out of the water with sandbanks on top of his head; he was not the right one either. Finally the fourth time that they called a big monster would appear with his head covered with dirt in which big cottonwood trees grew. He was the right one to take them across, all others were false. When he made his appearance they must say, “Our grandmother has commanded you to take us across and to go rapidly.” He would consent and when he got tired they must feed him with cornballs. Four times they must feed him before they got across. When he got near shore he would tell them to jump off and wade ashore, but they must not consent lest he swallow them. They must ask him to rest his nose on the shore as a bridge and then jump to one side not in front lest the monster swallow them.

38 For the swallowing monster in the Plains twin story see Blackfoot, 56-57; Cheyenne, Grinnell, 173-176, Kroeber, 179-181; Dakota, Riggs, 91-92; Iowa, 429-430.

The ferryman episode is a wide-spread incident in animal trickster stories. Here on the Plains it is regularly connected with the enmity between Water-monster and Thunder-bird. Compare Dakota, Riggs, 142, and see note 47 in this collection.



All went well until the last. Black Medicine jumped to one side as his grandmother had instructed them, but Sweet Medicine jumped straight ahead and the monster sucked him down.<sup>38</sup> When Black Medicine saw that he was alone and the monster had swallowed his brother he began to wander along the shore weeping. He cried all night and in the morning he saw the waters in commotion and the serpent showing itself. Black Medicine cried out, "Grandfather, show me my brother!" The serpent opened its mouth and there stood Sweet Medicine with bow and arrow slung over his shoulder motioning to his brother and saying in the sign language, "Come over here, it is a fine place!" Black Medicine urged him to make for shore, he kept motioning his brother to join him. Three times the serpent presented Sweet Medicine to his brother and three times the boy refused to come ashore.

The third day, looking down, he saw a person in the water with hooked nose and yellowish pupils to his eyes wearing a full robe of calfskin well tanned to the corners of which rabbit-skins were tied and carrying a flat weapon like a club in his hand. As he stared into the water a voice above him said, "Son, here I am up here! what is the cause of your trouble?" When he had heard the story he advised him to ask the monster, when he came the fourth time to show him his brother, to place his jaw on the shore and he would feed him a cornball. This his new friend prepared for him. The monster would ask if there were any clouds in the sky and he was to tell him that the sky was cloudless. He was to ask to shake hands with his brother once more and when he had taken his hand he must jerk him ashore sideways even if he became unconscious. The serpent came the next morning and all happened as he had been instructed. When he had grasped his brother's hand he jerked him one side out of the jaws of the serpent and at that instant he heard a great crash of thunder and both boys fell unconscious.

A fight was now on between the bird and the serpent and hardly was the thunder from the bird to be distinguished from the lightning from the serpent. Finally Thunder slew the serpent. He then came over to the boys and explained how long he had been after the serpent and sent them over to his lodge



to get something to cut it up with. There they found two handsome girls with light-colored hair and fine features who appeared to be bashful before the young men. When they had left to cut up the meat, the two boys went on to camp. Sweet Medicine said, "There were people inside that serpent and I should like to have gone with them and seen new sights," but this was all pretence on the part of the boy. Black Medicine said he preferred his own country.

The father and the two girls heaped the meat up into one pile, then they came in and the father told the girls to prepare food. The mother was bedridden and remained in her bed. The old man was well pleased to have destroyed his enemy the serpent and he said, "When a man is of age to marry it makes no difference where he is, he should marry. Here are my two girls, let the older take the older of the two and the younger the younger." Then Sweet Medicine played the fool and said, "I will take the younger!" so the younger brother had the older. Before the day was done which had opened so badly the two boys had a home, food, beds, wives, and father and mother-in-law!

Day by day they went out to hunt while the mother lay in bed. They asked what was the cause of her illness and the daughters said that once they were far up the Missouri river in the western country and had seen a big porcupine. The mother flew down to get it and a quill stuck in her foot. Ever since she had been obliged to stay in bed. The boys told their wives that they would doctor the woman. The quill stuck out a little way and they had little difficulty in pulling it out. They had a sweat-house ready and when the pus ran out they put her in the sweat-lodge, blew steam on the foot, greased it with tallow and the old lady felt better and was well pleased with her sons-in-law.

Another time they went out hunting with bow and arrows. They would shoot an arrow ahead then pick it up and go on. The third day Sweet Medicine's arrow hit a small snake; when they came up to it they found its backbone was broken and he picked up the arrow, wiped it on the grass and sage, and put it back in his quiver. Not seeing any game they went home. The old man seemed to notice something at once.—"Daughters, your husbands seem to have killed game but have come back empty-handed. Ask



them what they have killed." They said that they had killed nothing. He asked for their arrows and taking one at a time and smelling at it came at last to the one that hit the snake. It was the very snake he had been so long hunting and he asked where they had killed it. The old man called his wife and daughters and went over the hill and found the small snake turned into a monster, and they butchered it and brought the meat home.

Another day the father-in-law told his wife that his sons must be warned to keep away from a lake dangerous to venture close to. Everywhere else they might hunt but not near this lake. They kept away for some time, then Sweet Medicine said, "Let us see what is in it!" Black Medicine objected but the other coaxed and finally they both approached the lake and peeping over the hill saw a big white beaver with a great tail each of whose scales was made out of an Indian arrowhead. When an enemy approached he would flop his tail and these arrowheads would fly toward the intruder with deadly effect. Eagle had often tried to kill the beaver and possess himself of the arrowheads, but always the beaver was too powerful. The beaver now began to flop his tail and the boys could hear the arrowheads fly over their own heads as they crouched behind the hill. Black Medicine bade his brother remain where he was and he went ahead and came across a badger.—"Grandmother, I want you to help us get the white beaver to present to our father-in-law." (He wanted the arrows to force down at the end of the lightning stroke). The badger promised to dig a hole under the beaver where he lay to sun himself and the next day when it was warm and sunny Black Medicine crawled through the badger-hole to a little room at the end where he could sit down and adjust his arrow to the bow. He was so near he could hear the heart beat of the sleeping beaver. Very carefully he aimed his arrow and shot into the heart of the beaver. He could hear (safe under ground) the tail flop and the arrowheads singing through the air. Then the two went over and cut off the beaver's tail and skinned the animal and carried back to camp skin, flesh and tail. They dropped the tail in front of their father-in-law and the heads clattered as they struck the ground. All rejoiced in the young men's success.

Again the old man said, "Over by that lake where the reddish



buttes are I have been trying to kill a red jack rabbit but he is so on his guard I can not get a shot at him." One day when they were out hunting the boys said, "Let us go over to the butte where our father-in-law said the red jack rabbit was!" They found the rabbit, killed it easily and took it back to their father-in-law. He said, "These are the three things I have wanted most to present to my friends the fowls of the air." When the hides were dry he cut them into small strips and cut chockcherry saplings in the timber and tied a strip of the hide to each sapling so as to have one apiece for each of his friends. These he placed carefully against the wall at the back of the lodge opposite the door. Of the flesh of the snake he said, "When they come how they will enjoy it!"

All arrangements having been completed for the visit and the lodge cleaned inside and out, he sat outside on the lodge and awaited his guests. Then one day he saw an object in the sky and when it came closer it was seen to be a crow. Soon it was followed by a white-tailed eagle. These two he invited into his tent where the sons-in-law had been concealed, and they were shown all that had happened. Soon all the other birds made their appearance in such numbers that they had to be placed outside the lodge and the old man divided the snake into four piles and the cherry sticks tied with rabbit skin into four bundles and distributed them among all his guests. The four piles were for the four kinds of eagle—Spotted-eagle, Black-tipped, Speckle-tailed, White-tailed. Then the young men were brought out and presented to the guests and were recognized as the sons of Bird Chief.

As the winter passed into spring the birds got together for their westward journey. Since the two sons-in-law were to lead the trip it was necessary for Bald Eagle to take action.<sup>39</sup> The two young men were told to go up on the lodge and lie down side by side. Bald Eagle circled over them and laid his wings upon them and when he flew up there were two eggs with streaks of lightning upon them lying where the two men had lain. He circled and lighted again and there were two eaglets with big mouths and fat pouches. He circled and lighted again and there were

<sup>39</sup> Compare Crow, Lowie, 145-146, 148-149.



two young eagles about ready to fly. Then the old eagle flew up once more, swooped down upon them and covered them with his wings, and when he flew off there were a couple of grown eagles and as they sat on top of the lodge and shook their feathers a low rumbling of thunder was to be heard. The two began to fly in a circle and then circle back in the opposite direction and the people rejoiced in their sons-in-law who would lead them on their journey.

Now their wives called them aside and said, "The people will offer you your pick of weapons with which to kill game. They will lay on the ground stone clubs of every color, but at the end you will find a green stone club with a broken handle tied here and there. Take it, for it is the most powerful. When they ask you to kill for them, swoop down swiftly, first in one direction, then in another, and the third time make a strike with the club and the lightning will strike the object they wish killed." So the two young men did as they were directed, and the birds started on the journey. The chicken-hawks were the scouts for the thunder-birds. They usually fly close to the ground and travel along through the valley bottom close to the ground to watch for anything creeping underground upon which the thunder-birds live. They were anxious to have the two young men travel westward with them across the Missouri because they were so successful in everything they attempted. One of these scouts located a snake near the surface and returned to get the two young men to come and kill it. They went but could not find it. So the people taught them how to turn their heads from side to side as birds do in watching for their prey, not straight down, and the next time they went out they saw the snake just beneath them. Now the people had forgotten to instruct them how to charge and watched them anxiously. They swooped down, crossed in opposite directions and flew up again. The third time they got close to the ground and struck slowly with the club. There came a great flash of lightning from below and from above but the snake was at last slain. The sons-in-law divided it into four parts according to the divisions of the eagles and all had a share. Thus the hawks scouted both sides of the



river and Black Medicine and Sweet Medicine killed everything in sight.

When they came to the village of the Mandans it was the custom of Bird Chief (who was himself a bird transformed into a man) to get up a feast for the birds who came back. The scouts came in and reported the feast and the two young men listened and, thinking how this must be their own tribe and their own father, agreed to leave their wives and return to their own home and visit their family once more. So they told their wives how much they loved and had done for them, but now they wished to go home and see their parents once again. The wives spoke to their parents about it and both gave their consent. But the old man said, "When a man marries, where the man may want to go the wife should follow, so I counsel you to go with your husbands." The daughters said, "Father, if we go in our bodily form it may be well at first but not so well afterwards. But if we go in spirit form all things will go well with them for a long time to come." So they gave their husbands each a feather and said, "These are our bodies. Keep them in a sacred place and reverence them and all shall be well with you." When they got home Bird Chief was amazed to see his sons alive. He said, "You have been long away and I believed you both dead. What has happened to keep you away so long?" Black Medicine told all that had happened and they showed the feathers which were their wives. Old Bird Chief was glad and told the young men that since the two daughters-in-law were with them in spirit form all would be well with them. So they had a ceremony with the two feathers in order to make them sacred and then they were wrapped in a bundle and hung in a sacred place. For the ceremony they made a sweat lodge, put in new bedding and everything clean, seven fresh-tanned buffalo robes to cover the floor of the sweat-lodge and new clothing to clothe themselves in. That was how they had the ceremony.

As for the wind-bag, their father told them it had gone over to the east and might return here. As a boy I never heard of a cyclone here but only in the east; now they even have them here! We think that these stories come from the big wind-bag.



## 18. FOUR WINGS<sup>83</sup>

Told by Ben Benson, June 17, 1931.

In a certain village a man and his wife had ten boys and one girl. This girl, Corn Silk, was much beloved by everyone. She was very pretty and all the young men wooed her, but she refused them all. At length a certain young man decided to try his luck. In order to get the favor of her oldest brother, whose name was Left Hand, he would bring to Left Hand the game he had caught. One evening as he was returning from the hunt Left Hand invited him to sit down. Food was placed before him. Left Hand said, "You have provided food for myself and my family all the year. There must be something you have in mind that you wish for. What is it?" The young man said, "All I wish is to obtain your favor to marry your sister." Left Hand said, "I believe that you are asking a difficult thing. All the young men in the village have had the same wish and my brothers have helped them, but I have never even said to my sister that she should marry. I have kept silence and left her to use her own judgment. I regret that you have asked this of me, but I will see what I can do." He went to the lodge where his sister lived with his father and mother and made the request in behalf of his friend. The parents said, "She is listening, and since you are the oldest she should grant your request." But the girl hung down her head and said that she had no desire to marry the young man. Then her brother said, "I suppose then that you want to marry Four Wings who lives in the far west where the sun comes up. Though he is so fearful that one can hardly look upon him, I have heard that he is a man greatly honored."

In the morning when her father and mother had gone out to the garden, Corn Silk cooked food and invited a blind old woman to come in and eat with her, and as she ate the wise woman said, "Corn Silk, you must have had a reason for inviting me to eat

<sup>83</sup> Compare number 5 and its variant (a) in this collection.

with you. What is it?" The girl said, "My brother has told me of a man named Four Wings who lives in the East and he is the man I want to marry."—"My dear, there are all kinds of obstacles to be met in going there. He has a very dangerous brother. But use your own judgment."—"I have made up my mind." Then the old woman instructed her to make a cornball and to cover a ball with skin and stuff it with antelope hair, paint half of it with red ochre to represent the day and half with charcoal mixed with grease to represent the night, and fasten a rawhide lash to the ball to hold it by. When she was in the hills away from the village, she was to hold the ball by the lash, swing it about and throw it eastward and where the ball rolled, there she was to follow.

Corn Silk followed the ball all day. In the evening she found herself in a valley where there was timber and following to where she saw smoke curling in the air, she came to a little grass hut in which were buffalo tongue and other choice bits of meat relished by Indians, and a gut bucket filled with water. This container was her own ball. When she had eaten, even breaking the bones to get the marrow, the ball spoke and said, "Put me on your back, for something is coming in here." She heard voices outside. One said, "Here is a dwelling; let us go in." Another voice said, "You are lucky; I did not see it," and Two-face came in.<sup>84</sup> One of the faces spoke and said, "Here is Corn Silk sitting here!"—"Yes, sit down over there and eat what is left." First one face ate and then Two-face turned around and the other face ate the rest. After supper Two-face said, "Let us gamble and lay a bet." Corn Silk said, "What shall we bet?"—"Our own bodies. If I win I have your body and if you win you will have mine." The ball on her back said, "Take up the bet."—"How are we to gamble?"—"The one who falls asleep first loses." The ball on her back said, "That is all right. You go to sleep and I will an-

<sup>84</sup> In Cheyenne (JAFL 13:186), Two Face plays "hiding button" with a man for his daughter. In Crow (Lowie, 85) Two Face is the monster who kills the twins' mother. In Cheyenne (JAFL 13:173, 184) Two Face steals girls and contends with the boy hero who comes to rescue them, or he steals children and exchanges fears, as in the stories of the swallowing monster.

Compare the Dakota Double Woman (JAFL 2:138). In Riggs, 148, a girl goes after a husband and sees two women. The patron of ornamental work among the Sioux is, according to Mayer (193), a spirit called Two Women.



swer for you." Two-face lay on one side of the fire, Corn Silk on the other. The man talked on, the ball answered. When one side of the face was sleepy, the man turned about and the other side did the talking. When morning came, Two-face prolonged the night. Toward morning of the fourth night he fell asleep. Then the ball instructed Corn Silk to hit Two-face with the ball as hard as she could and crush him, then burn down the dwelling and throw the ball eastward as before.

Again Corn Silk came to a dwelling and ate her supper there. The ball instructed her to go down to the water in the coulee and she would see seven mud-hens. She must ask their help, for another Two-face was coming. This time the front face found the dwelling first. He asked her to gamble and brought out a round basket to cast lots. The ball told her that the counters Two-face would use would be seven human skulls and as they were light they would scatter in the wind. She was to use the skulls of the mud-hens and when she tossed them up, since the ducks always flew in a bunch they would all fall together. Two-face came, ate, proposed the gambling game with the basket as a tray. He said, "We will toss up these lots and the one whose lots all fall back into the basket will be the winner."<sup>85</sup> Two-face went out and brought back seven empty skulls, Corn Silk went out and brought back the seven ducks. She told Two-face to start the game. He put his lots in the tray, made three motions and the fourth time he struck the edge of the tray and up flew the skulls; they could hear the wind whistling through the cavities. After a time down they fell, missed the tray and broke in pieces. Then Corn Silk placed her seven ducks into the tray, made the same motions, and at the fourth motion they could hear the ducks going through the air; after a time back they came together in a bunch and landed on the tray. Two-face admitted his defeat and pretended to sleep. On the last night of the four he fell asleep and she killed him as she had done his fellow.

On the third day she reached Four Wings' dwelling. In front of the doorway stood a very tall cottonwood tree. Two Two-

<sup>85</sup> In Winnebago (JAFL 44: 155), Turtle contends with the giant. Turtle uses little turtles, the giant uses snowbirds. Compare Iroquois (RBAE 43: 467), where Earth-grasper plays at dice with his grandmother.

faces were at the doorway. They said, "When any woman comes to Four Wings it is the custom for her to climb the tree where Four Wings' nest is and wait there until he comes. She swung the ball and it carried her up to where the nest was. The Two-faces caused a strong wind to blow, hoping she would fall and they could eat her. All the afternoon they waited. Late in the evening Four Wings came home and looking up in the tree he saw the most beautiful woman he had ever beheld. He said, "How does this come about that you are up in the tree?" and he told her that the Two-faces had deceived her. Corn Silk came down from the tree and went into the lodge with Four Wings. Inside was one of the Two-faces. As excuse he said that she might have come there to give birth to a child and if she bore the child in the house it would be like herself, if in the tree it would have four wings like Four Wings. So the Four Wings believed him.

They lived together for some time in peace. Every day Four Wings went out. Two-face disappeared, but came back once in a while. She was now about to give birth and was in pain. Two-face came back and said, "When Four Wings' wives are about to give birth, they climb to the top of the tree and there they give birth." She took her ball by the lash and it said, "Throw me up with all your force and I will take you to the nest." There she bore a nice white egg. Then her husband came home and saw her on the nest and she told him. Out came Two-face and said, "I told her to climb up there. I knew if she bore a child here it would be in human form, so I sent her up on your nest in order that it might be in shape of an egg and you might hatch it." Four Wings said his wife had done right. He sat on the egg and in course of time it hatched, came to have feathers and would sit on the edge of the nest when his father was away. Two-face would come out and look up at the boy and smile. After a time the child grew to be almost as big as his father and he came down from the nest and became a little boy.

For some time they lived in Four Wings' lodge, then the mother said, "My son, we have a village of our own far away. Your grandfather and grandmother and your uncles must be getting hungry for corn. Ask your father if we may go home to



your grandfather and grandmother." The boy did as she asked and the father consented. He told them that the village was in famine. He said, "Be on your guard, for your uncle (Two-face) will not even acknowledge you as his son; he will try to kill you, and if he should do so your mother is no match for him. I will insert an arrow at your back and if he should take you up and try to break your back the arrow will pierce him. He will kill your grandfather and grandmother and will put on their skins. If he goes too far, strike him on the head and kill him." [This arrow means that the boy has the power of sending lightning.] The boy obeyed his father. As they approached their own village, out came the grandfather and grandmother to meet them. Now Two-face had killed the two and crept into their skins and in this form came out to meet them. Corn-silk said, "Pick up your grandchild and put him in your lap." The grandfather picked him up with an arm about his body and set him down on his lap, intending to break his back, but the arrow pierced the man's leg and he let him go, saying, "This grandchild of mine is pretty rough!" The boy then killed both his grandfather and grandmother and found the Two-faces inside the skin and burned them up.

In the village people were on the point of starving to death. Corn-silk called the people together, and told them to clean out their cellars and leave them open. She asked what kind of corn each kept in his cellar, then she put in a few kernels of that kind and went on to the next. She told the people that if they opened the cellar in one day it would be a fourth full, if in two days, a half full, if three, three-fourths full, but if they waited four days it would be full to the brim.

## 5. SPLIT WING-FEATHER.<sup>40</sup>

A Mandan story told by Ben Benson.

There was a girl by the name of Corn Silk who was so handsome that all the men of the tribe wished to marry her, but she refused them all. Her brothers became impatient and said, "It must be that you want to marry Split Feather who lives in the far north." The girl thought, "Since my brothers wish me to marry this man, I will go and marry him." She roasted corn and pounded it and mixed it with sunflower seeds and made cornballs of the kind called "Four-in-one." She set out early in the morning and traveled all day. Towards evening when the sun was low she came to a coulee on the edge of the timber where was a dwelling of sticks put together like a tipi and covered with grass. As she stood at the door she heard the people within talking of how they had dug beans and artichokes and how chapped their hands were from working. Then one sent the children for water. When these came out and saw the woman standing there they ran inside in fright.—"Who is standing outside?"—"It is Corn Silk."—"If it is she, let her come in." She entered and they prepared the meal of roots and herbs gathered during the day. The visitor distributed cornballs, jerked meat and fat for greasing their hands. They asked, "My dear, why are you here? Where are you going?"—"I am going up to the north to marry Split Feather."—"It is a dangerous journey, but tomorrow about this time you will come to your grandfathers and they will do their best to protect you; we also will do what we can." These were the mouse people, of the kind with whitish hair on the belly.

The next morning she set out and traveled all day and in the evening came to a similar dwelling. She stood at the door as

<sup>40</sup> The story is recorded by Lowie among the Crow, pages 107-115. He divides it into the "Bluebeard" and the "Piqued Buffalo Wife" incidents.

For the first incident compare Blackfoot, "Red-Head," 129-132; Crow, Lowie, "Worms-in-his-face," 119-128, Simms, 309-310.

For the second incident see Dakota (Olgala), Walker, 183-190; Pawnee, 62-68; and see Thompson, *Tales of North American Indians*, note 222.



before and heard those inside relating the doings of the day. Then someone sent the children out for firewood and when they saw her standing there they ran inside again, tumbling one over the other in fright.—“Who is at the door?”—“It is Corn Silk.”—“If it is she invite her to come in.” They prepared the evening meal of roots and herbs gathered during the day and again she distributed cornballs, jerked meat and fat. They asked her where she was going and she told them, “I am on my way to marry Split Feather who lives up in the north.” They cried out, “He is a terrible being! but if you are in trouble we shall try to help you.” These were also mouse people of the kind with black skin.

She went on the next day and the same thing happened. The people with whom she passed the night said, “On your journey tomorrow you will come in the evening to your grandmother’s camp. Whatever they tell you will be useful to you and we too will try to help you.” The people of this third dwelling were the mole people. You will notice that all these people live in the ground.

The next day she came to the badger people, all of whom had white hair and were advanced in age. They questioned her as the others had done and told her that the next day she would come to the place where Split Feather lived. She must prepare strings for her moccasins and for her bracelets and necklace so strong that they would not break. He would take her down to the bank of a stream where the fishes had long sharp teeth and make her stand on top of a dried buffalo skull, then transform himself into an eagle and fly up in the air; but she must kick the skull into the stream and the fishes would chew it up. Then she must throw herself on the ground and tell him she meant to die. He would try to throw her into the stream, but the underground people would hold on to her strings so that he could not move her.

On the fifth day she reached Split Feather’s home. That night he did not take her into his bed but prepared another bed for her. The next morning he said, “Let us go bathe in the stream.”<sup>41</sup> Now Split Feather was a handsome man to behold. When they

<sup>41</sup> Daily bathing was customary among the Mandan, according to Maximilian, page 353.



got to the stream there were high banks on either side so that no one could get down. Split Feather stood on the bank and said, "Father, I have given you presents before but this present is the handsomest I have ever given you!" As he spoke the fishes jumped to the surface. He commanded her to stand there and told her that he would go back into the ravine and return to embrace her. She looked back and saw him transform himself into a gold eagle and he came rushing upon her with a great wind. The underground creatures clung tight to her strings and told her when he flew lower to snatch his necklace because the necklace was his heart. He circled low, she seized the necklace, and he was instantly transformed into a human being and begged the necklace again, but she refused it. They returned to the lodge and as Corn Silk had possession of the necklace she gained his love and they lived contentedly together for a long time and had one child.

Corn Silk was a person transformed into corn. Knowing that her people were in want for corn she proposed that they return to her own people to live and go back and forth between the two homes.—"Since these people are yours and my son's people, what you decide we shall do," said her husband. It was night when they arrived and the door was fastened. She called and the old man's wife said, "That is the voice of your daughter!" He went and opened the door and there stood his daughter with her husband and son and they hugged each other joyfully,

Ever since her departure the people in the village had been in want for corn. Now she told them to clean their pit cellars. She went to each in turn and asked the owner what variety he usually stowed away in his cellar whether white, yellow, blue, or some other, and dropped into the pit a few kernels of the kind asked for.<sup>42</sup> (In old days the Indians had more than one cellar, one for each kind of corn.) If the owner opened the pit the next morning he would find it one quarter full of corn, if he waited two days, it was half full, if three then three-quarters full, and if he had patience to wait four days before opening the cellar the pit would be full to the brim. So all the village rejoiced. From

<sup>42</sup> See Arikara, Dorsey, 125; Pawnee, 93; and Wilson on the "Agriculture of the Hidatsa Indians."



that day the people were successful in planting and prospered.

One day the family went down to the river to bathe and as the water was low Corn Silk and her husband went out to the middle of the stream to bathe. Meanwhile the child played on the bank, and as he was playing with his mother's robe he pulled out the necklace from the place into which it had been sewed. Both saw what had happened and hastened to the bank. Split Feather reached it first, seized the necklace from the child and put it on and was immediately transformed into a bald eagle. He said, "My people at home are hungry and I am going back to the north. Consider this child as myself. He shall grow up to manhood and become a leader of his people and whatever he does shall prosper," and he named the child "Looks-down-on-the-ground-from-above."

## Part 2.

### *The Corn-wife and the Buffalo-wife.*

The boy and his mother remained with his own people. Young as he was, when the people planted corn he would cause rain so that the crops would grow up and mature and the people have plenty. So he grew until he was of an age to marry. All the able-bodied in the village went away on a hunting trip while the mother remained behind, and the boy said he would remain also. He was a handsome fellow like his father and already a distinguished figure among the people. It was his habit to go up to a mound of stones he had built on the divide away from the village and look abroad upon the surrounding country (just as a bird perches on a heap of stones.) Meanwhile he could see his mother come outside all dressed up, with smoothly combed hair and painted face, and play at kick ball. In this game the ball has a long string attached to it and the player tries to keep it in the air without its touching the ground. This he supposed she did in order to pass the time. When he came in at evening he noticed that his mother went to another lodge and then came in with his food like one who is trying to attract a man's attention and he could not understand why she did this. Day by day this went on and her strange ways worried him.

One day as he sat on the ridge he heard a voice either speaking



or singing and coming from the direction of the east.<sup>43</sup> Another song came from the west. He could see his mother out kicking the ball and now he was angry at her actions. The next day as he sat on the mound he heard the same song from the east and this time he could distinguish the words:

I am very fond of Looks-on-the-ground-from-above,  
I am on my way to him,  
But there is one thing that troubles me most,  
That is, that his mother is trying to flirt with him,  
That worries me.

Then came a song from the west which said—

I am very fond of Looks-on-the-ground-from-above,  
There is one thing that worries me,—  
That his mother is trying to flirt with him,—  
But my feet are sore coming from so far to meet with him,  
The flirtations of his mother trouble me,  
Nevertheless I am on my way to meet him.

Now he understood his mother's manner but he said nothing and ate his food as usual. Near noon he heard the voices again as if they were coming from the earth close by. He remained on the mound all day and toward evening he saw a woman approach from the west and another from the east. He could see that both were beautiful. The one from the east had a robe of elkhide and carried in one hand a plate-shaped basket made out of willow shoots filled with cornballs and in the other hand a pair of moccasins. The one from the west wore a robe made of buffalo hide and carried a wooden plate holding pemmican and in the other hand a pair of moccasins. Both reached him at the same time and passed him the food. He seated them beside him, one on the right and the other on the left, and took from both at the same time the food,—the cornballs with one hand and the pemmican with the other. He took off his own moccasins and taking

<sup>43</sup> Song accompanies the corn spirit in Pawnee myths. In the Pawnee story of "The Grain of Corn Bundle," pages 58-61, a kernel dropped from an ear of corn takes the form of a woman and becomes a boy's protector. She says, "My spirit is of Mother-Evening-Star, who gives us the milk that is in the corn," and directs him "When the tassels are out there will be singing in the fields. Remember where the singing comes from. Remember that this is the sacred ear of corn." In the Skidi Pawnee version, pages 280-282, the place of Corn is taken by Deer-wife and she draws the man to her by the sound of a flute.



the right moccasin from one woman and the left from the other told each to put one on his foot. Then he invited both women to the lodge. When his mother who was kicking the ball saw her son coming with two women, one on one side the other on the other, she ran into her lodge, changed her fine dress for an old one, unbraided her hair and rubbed ashes into it and on her face. Leaving the two women at the door he went inside and said, "Old woman, let in your daughters-in-law." She ran to the door and let them in and each placed her food before the mother-in-law. She reached out her hands and took the food and told them to put the moccasins on her feet and they did so. Then she cooked food and made up a bed for her son and his two wives. As they talked the woman from the east said to her husband, "That other wife of yours has a hot temper, so pay more attention to her than to me and all will go well." This woman from the east was Corn and the wife from the west was Buffalo Cow. They lived there until the whole village came home from the hunt and everyone spoke of the young man's resemblance to his father to whom women would go from everywhere.

Thus they lived together. As one wife was a buffalo cow people were successful in the hunt and as the other was corn the crops were plentiful and when the ground lacked moisture Looks-down-from-above caused it to rain. So the people had all they wanted and were happy. In course of time the two wives were with child. Corn told her mother-in-law that it was the custom in her tribe for a woman to go away to the bush outside the lodge to bear her child. Looks-down-from-above was curious and, following her from a distance, beheld a large growing cornstalk swaying back and forth and he withdrew and waited in the lodge for his wife. Soon she appeared carrying a fine baby boy wrapped in an elkskin. The next day Buffalo Cow told her mother-in-law that it was the custom in her tribe for a woman to go to an isolated spot outside the lodge where none would see her deliver her child. The husband followed her and saw his wife crouched in a buffalo wallow in the shape of a cow and swaying back and forth. She was delivered of a buffalo calf which began to play about its mother. So he withdrew and waited inside the lodge and when she returned she brought him a fine boy wrapped in a



calf's skin. This is how they brought home the children. When the mothers asked what they should be named he said, "This child shall be called Calf; he shall be fearless and successful in whatever he undertakes. This other son shall be named White Tail (after the same kind of eagle as the father) and he shall be fearless and in whatever he undertakes he shall have the command.

In the course of time the boys grew old enough to play games. One day Calf had a disc made of stone and was rolling it on the lodge floor in play. White Tail wanted to play with it also and Calf would not let him have it, so both fought for the disc and were crying. The father and mother bade Calf give it up but he would not. White tail cried more and more. His mother called her son over to her side of the lodge and rolled over the floor a small squash shaped like a disc and striped black and yellow. When Calf saw it he began to cry and throwing away his own disc rushed to take away the new plaything from White Tail. His mother was angry and said, "Can't you give him the toy, you Dust-raiser!" (meaning a tiller of the soil).—"How about yourself, Man-killer!" retorted the other. The Buffalo wife stood up, wrapped up her child in the calf-skin and went toward the north. Corn-woman said, "When a man has a wife he is supposed to love her. That is your child and you should follow her to her home while I and my son remain here with my mother-in-law. You will have trouble but I will try to help you in all the troubles that arise." Thus she spoke.

So he left the lodge, went up to the mound and, transforming himself into a whitetailed eagle, circled about at a height until he saw a buffalo cow with her calf following behind and he followed them in the sky until at evening he saw them making camp. She pulled out one of the protuberances on her jaw and out of this she set up a tent<sup>44</sup> issuing from which was soon to be seen the smoke of a fire. The little boy played outside while the mother roasted ribs for supper. He alighted on the ground and became a man and approached the tent.—"Father is coming!" said the child.—"If you had a father we should not be camping out here!"

<sup>44</sup> Compare Arapaho, page 418: "In the mouth of the buffalo there are rows of little protuberances in the lower and upper jaws which are said to indicate a camp-circle."



answered the mother. When he entered the tent she would not look at him or give him food, but the child saved him a rib and when the mother took a separate bed the child went over and slept with the father. During the night he spoke to his father and said, "Tomorrow we are going through a desert place. There will be no water until we camp and you may become weak. Only one place has water and it will look like a dry pool. Watch me closely as I circle the place and where my footsteps are you will find water." The mother scolded the child for chattering and when the man awoke he was lying in a buffalo wallow. Transforming himself again into an eagle he flew aloft and could see the cow and calf disappearing in the distance. He followed them in half circles so that they could not detect him. Toward noon he grew thirsty and saw his son circle a pool and return to the mother. He alighted and refreshed himself at his son's footprints. At night he saw them camping again as before. He changed into a man and approached the tent.—"Father is coming!" said the child.—"If you had a father we should not be camping here!" answered the mother. When he entered she would not speak to him or give him food, but the child saved him a rib as before and slept with his father. He warned his father that the next day they would pass a canyon so steep it would be impossible for him to follow but he must watch the boy's steps and he would indicate the way. He did not know that his father could change himself into a bird. The next night when they camped the same thing happened and the boy gave him food and talked with him at night saying, as they slept together, "Tomorrow we shall come to a body of water hard to cross. We shall camp on the other side and the next day we shall be at our mother's home." The next morning they were gone. He flew upward and saw the cow and calf traveling on until they came to a body of water so big that he was anxious about his son, who at times was so tired that he rested his head against his mother.—"If that wife of mine drowns my son I will strike her on the head," he reflected. (This indicates lightning.) When the cow and calf landed they camped by the timber and this time the boy stayed inside the tent. As evening drew near he alighted and turning into a human being he approached the camp and listened outside. His wife was say-



ing, "I do not think your father can follow us here; I myself could hardly make the trip." He heard this as he stood without. The boy came outside and saw him and cried, "Here is father!" This time she said, "Well, let your father in," and the boy joyfully invited him to enter. When she had roasted the ribs she said, "Calf, give these ribs to your father," and the boy, overjoyed, shared the food with his father and they all ate together. That night when the boy slept with his father he said, "Tomorrow when we get home you will follow us. There are ten calves all alike and you will not know us apart. So with my mother, there are ten sisters who all look alike and you will not know which is our mother. As you enter the camp, in the doorway lies a big buffalo bull and he will try to jam you against the hallway. If you get inside safely we shall all be playing about the floor inside and our mothers will be there also. All have beds to themselves ranged about the wall with a hole in the curtain to crawl through and each will be sitting on her own bed. When you get inside, grandmother will say, 'Calf's father, if you know your wife's bed hang up your bow and arrows and go sit by your wife.' Then watch the calves and I will run and hit against one of the beds and that is the one for you to choose. She will say, 'I wish Calf's father would take the calf who is his son on his lap.' Watch closely and I will move my left ear, then pick me up and set me on your lap. She will then think you a man with mysterious power."

The man followed his wife and child to their home without changing himself into an eagle. At the camp the mother entered first, the boy followed and the man came last. As he passed the big bison he changed into a feather and as the bull butted against the door the wind caused by the impact drove him into the lodge. Inside he saw ten women all alike sitting beside their beds and could not distinguish one from the other. The grandmother said, "I wish Calf's father would hang up his bow and arrows by his bed, sit beside his wife and place his boy on his lap." (Indian women do not speak to their sons-in-law directly but through some one else in the third person.) So he watched and saw one of the calves run and push against one of the beds and then wriggle its left ear. He walked over to the bed, hung



up his bow and arrows, sat beside his wife, picked up his son and placed him on his lap. The mother-in-law said, "He must be an extraordinary man!"

After this the mother-in-law said, "Calf's father has come on a long journey and is tired. I will prepare him a sweatbath." She took a stone about so big (a foot long), heated it red hot and put it by the doorway. Then she called buffalo bulls and had them lie around the doorway and told them "Do not let him get out." Then she put the stone into the pit and it turned of enormous size. She herself went in to pour on the water. But the man turned into a spider, worked himself down into the earth and kept calling for more water until the old lady was herself almost suffocated and had to come out. "This is an extraordinary man! We shall have a hard time killing him," she said.

The next morning the old grandmother went out and returned crying. "I went to visit a friend and she had some young wolves and when I asked her to give me some she laughed at me and said, 'What do you take me for? You have an Indian for a son-in-law and I have not!'" Calf's father spoke up and said, "Where is that wolf's den?" She pointed out the place in the timber. When he got there he saw a great wolf painted in front with red ochre. She came running toward him but stopped when she recognized Looks-down-on-the-ground. He took six wolf pups, killed them and took them back to the old lady. She said, "My son-in-law is a successful hunter!" then she took the dead pups outside, struck each behind with a stick and said "You must all go!" and they ran away to their den.

The next day she went out again and returned crying. She said that she had been to visit a friend and found her pulling feathers out of a bald eagle. When she asked for some the friend mocked her and said, "You go get your Indian son-in-law to bring you home eaglets!" Calf's father said, "Whereabouts are those eaglets?"—"Down there in one of those dead trees; the nest is in one of them." He had no trouble in getting up the tree because Bald Eagle was his father. All about it were things that had been killed by lightning. Bald Eagle said, "Son, your mother-in-law is trying to kill you. What can I do for you?"—"She wants some eaglets."—"Take them along. Even

should she kill them, we can take care of them." So he took four young eaglets with big bellies and wide bills home to his mother-in-law.

The next morning she went out again and came home sobbing. Now her daughters-in-law did not approve of her treatment of her son-in-law and they scolded her. She said, "I went to see my friend and she had a bunch of young Juneberry trees and was picking the bark with her teeth and licking the sap. When I asked her for some she mocked me and said I had a brave son-in-law and why couldn't he bring me some young Juneberry saplings to pick the bark off and lick the sap." The man asked where they were to be found. She said, "Tell your father to go over to the foothills. There in a deep ravine they grow thick in marshy ground that looks like a spring." He took a flint stone and sharpened it and as he went along he considered what he might transform himself into this time, so he turned into a swallow, the kind that is of a bluish color with a V-shaped tail. He flew along rapidly and cut one sapling and then another. As he flew the ravine went together with a crack. All this time the old woman was in agony for each of these sticks was part of her own body. He cut all but one and as he reached for the last the valley caught him. When she knew this she said, "Calf, what is keeping your father so late?" There as he lay lodged in the ravine caught in the marsh, his feathers muddled, he heard a voice crying, "I am coming to help you, so do not fear." There was Corn coming somehow in the air carrying a small basket with a string tied to it. She said, "Get into the basket as I drop it down to you." He managed to crawl into the basket, his feathers all bedraggled. Then he took his original form, bathed in the stream, picked up the bunches of Juneberry sticks and carried them home, where he told his son to give them to his grandmother that she might peel them with her teeth.—"He is a difficult man to kill!" said the old woman. She took them outside, saying that she would show them to her friend, and thrust them down her anus and reviled them for letting her son-in-law escape.

One day the old lady told her grandson that his father must be on his guard. Among the bunches of buffalo which he must have noticed everywhere was one bull who was very fierce;



one must not trifle with his wives. His name was One-solid-rib, and he came sometimes to watch the gambling games. From that moment Calf's father guarded against trouble. One hot day he chanced to meet a young maiden coming home with a pail of water. She was not a pretty girl but ragged with towzled hair. Without realizing the consequences he asked her for water (which is the Indian way of courting). She said, "If you wish this you may have it." He said, "Give me the pail that I may drink."—"No, I will lift the pail." Then the people began to shout, "The son-in-law of the woman who wears toads for her ear-rings is courting with One-rib's wife!" He looked about and knew not what to think as he gazed at the ragged girl. At home his mother-in-law said, "Why do I hear people shouting that my son-in-law is courting Solid-rib's wife? Now, Calf, tell your uncles to help and I will also fight to defend their brother-in-law." She rolled on the ground and became a buffalo. Then Calf's father said, "I never knew that girl could be Solid-rib's wife. It was through ignorance that I drank the water from her pail and I want to fight my own battle. Solid-rib can not kill me!" He got his robe that his wife had made for him, loosened his hair, tied a long feather to his locks so that it dangled behind. He chose a mound to stand on (because he was a bird) and told his brothers-in-law that if he was overcome it would be their place to avenge him. Solid-rib wallowed on the ground and then came to meet Looks-down-from-above. Only in two places could he be penetrated and they were on either side of the collar-bone and at the rectum. The bull made a full charge with head to the ground and almost stood on his head with the onset. His rectum showed and Looks-down-from-above shot an arrow which went in out of sight. Solid-rib recovered himself and made a second dash. Two arrows it took before he began to bleed at the mouth, turned over and died. When his friends would have avenged their leader's death Calf's father said, "Solid-rib is bone all over yet I have killed him. If you fight I shall kill you all!" So they agreed that he was right and called the fight off.

One morning the old lady said to Calf, "I want to bet with your father."—"In what manner does your grandmother want to



bet with me?"—"I want to see which has the voice that can be heard the farthest. The stake is one whole valley." By this she meant a valley full of buffalo.—"If she will make it at least four I will bet with her." Now the man's bet was his own body. She accepted the bet. He filled up a pipe with tobacco and placed it before a white bird of the goose family. The bird said, "All right, you may use my voice." The old lady took a buffalo bull. They took them a long way off and when the buffalo bellowed it could be heard for miles and miles. She believed she had won but nothing could be heard by those they had left behind. When the bird sang it could be heard distinctly. So the mother-in-law lost the bet.

Another morning she said, "Calf, I will make another bet. The balance of the buffalo I will bet with him for those I lost on the first bet and his body also."—"In what manner does your grandmother want to bet with me?"—"We shall run a race.<sup>45</sup> Far on the horizon there are four pillars holding up the sky. We shall go by way of the north and at each pillar your father shall leave a red mark and I will leave a black and we shall see who will be the winner." So Calf's father called together all the birds of the air to see which was the fastest. All related their feats of swiftness and it was decided that the magpie was the swiftest, for every time it made a swoop in flight it drew toward it the object toward which it was flying. Hence he took the form of a magpie. Before the race began he spoke to some young curlews who lived in the marsh and asked their help in the race by making the ground boggy. He asked his mother-in-law what animal she would use and she said she intended to run the race herself. She put her robe about the upper part of her body, painted her cheeks black and made three distinct marks on her forehead, put feathers on her head and wore her earrings of toads which scratched their legs against her cheeks. At the starting-point she took up her cane which, when she placed it and made a spring, carried her from one valley to another so that she believed she could win. But after they had started they came to the marsh and there when the old lady stuck down her

<sup>45</sup> For the race see Assiniboine, 196-197, 214; Biloxi, 104; Cheyenne, Kroeber, 161-162; Omaha, 161; Pawnee, 67.



cane it sunk to her hand and she landed on her feet and was mired and had to pull herself out. Meanwhile Magpie had made one pillar and gone right on to the second, third, and fourth and finished the race. As the old lady came to each pillar in turn and saw the red mark and put on her own black one she said to herself, "This son-in-law of mine is no ordinary man!" There was Magpie already back at home and she had lost the bet.

The old lady wanted to hold back some of the buffalo, so she said, "Calf, as far as your father can see, that is the limit for the buffalo that I shall lose." Now the raven has good sight, so he got the raven and ascended a high hill and the raven said, "I can see the four pillars holding up the clouds." That included the whole earth, so she lost the whole bet. Since she had lost, Calf's father bade his son tell his grandmother to turn out all the buffalo inside the earth. There was a boulder against a high bank which shut in the buffalo inside the earth. When she rolled away the boulder and called them all to come out they all streamed out, coming out, coming out, coming out. The old lady stood on one side, Calf's father on the other watching her. In the middle was a bunch of buffalo with double head and neck. He said, "Calf, tell your grandmother I do not want those to come out," so those were all sent in again. Another bunch came out without hair, just a mass of flesh. Calf's father said, "Tell your grandmother I do not care for those," she ordered them in again. These two kinds were ordered back, all the rest came out, then the big boulder was replaced. Looks-down-from-above said to his son, "The winner of a bet is entitled to take home what he has won. My people are hungry for meat and I want to take back these buffalo to them. You are now a man grown and must act as a man should." So he left his mother-in-law's place and let the buffalo range over the country where the Indians of his own tribe and of other tribes could use them for their subsistence. Even the few buffalo kept in captivity today are the result of the bet won by Looks-down-on-the-ground-from-above from his mother-in-law who wore toads for earrings.



*Variant A.*

**THE GIRL WHO MARRIED RED CLOUD**

A Hidatsa story told by Mrs. White Duck, interpreted by  
Thomas Smith, Elbowood, July, 1929.

There was a beautiful girl named Corn-silk who refused to marry anyone. Her suitors would bring beautiful horses and tie them at her door, but she refused them all. Her brothers urged her to marry, only the younger never said anything, but at last when one man more had asked for her hand and been refused he said, "Why not marry this man? Do you want then to marry Red Cloud?" After this she could not get Red Cloud out of her mind. He seemed to her the one desirable man to marry. So she made a feast and asked in a number of old women and inquired where Red Cloud lived, but they could not tell her. Now there was a very old woman so old that she could not walk who lived at the foot of the village and Corn-silk brought her in to the feast on her back and asked her where Red Cloud lived. The old woman said, "You don't mean that you are going to marry Red Cloud! Well, it would not be bad. He lives south-east of here."

The girl struck out south-east and followed along the Missouri River and, taking off her clothes, she swam across, but as she was tired she lost her clothes. As she followed along the sand-bar she saw a man coming, so she ducked into a hole in the sand. The man came up and asked, "Corn-silk, which way are you travelling?" She said she was going to marry a man named Red Cloud. He said, "That is I, but I am a ghost. You go straight ahead to my house and I will come to you at night." He gave her a coat of hide to wear and she clothed herself and went on to his house. When Red Cloud's mother and sister came home they found her sitting outside by the door. They asked her what she wanted and when she told them that she had come to marry Red Cloud they were amazed and said, "Red Cloud is dead and we buried him. We have just come back from his grave." They told her that his bed was there and she might sleep on it that night.



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When night came she went to bed. The fire went down and it was dark. She heard some one come in and walk to the bed. It was Red Cloud come back. Although she could not see him she could hear his voice and she felt but there was no body, only the hair. As they were talking together, Red Cloud's sister heard them and recognizing a man's voice she thought this must be some loose woman who had brought a man into the house. The next morning she told her parents what she had heard and they advised her to ask the stranger whom she was talking to.—“That was Red Cloud,” answered Corn-silk. “He told me that his ghost would be around here for four days before he went away,” and she advised, “This is what we must do. The fourth night I will catch him and we will have the sweat bath ready and put him into the sweat house.” It was nearly daylight before he came. He asked her, “Why are you people putting all those rocks into the fire?” She pretended that his father and mother were preparing for a sweat, then she wrapped the hair about her hands and, jumping up, ran into the sweat-house with the hair. They poured water on to the rocks and she held him there in the steam until he came to life again. All rejoiced to see him and as for Corn-silk, she had a husband like anybody else.



*Variant B.*

**OLD STONE MAN AND HIS SON-IN-LAW<sup>46</sup>**

A Crow Indian story told by Kid White Eagle, Gros Ventre, and interpreted by Allison Grinnell, July 1, 1929.

There was a Crow Indian who had a good family name and a beautiful daughter. Now and then he would come out into the hills and when he did so, some handsome young man would follow the daughter and at the end of the year he would be missed, never come back. Several times the same thing happened. A certain young man determined to follow and see why the men never came back. He went, married the girl, and for six months they lived together. Then one day in the middle of winter the father began singing and the man listened. The man stopped singing and said, "Tell your husband to go pick me some ripe Juneberries." Now it was the middle of winter and the young man did not know what to do. "Thus it was that the young men ended their lives!" he thought. He went on aimlessly and on the brink of a ravine stood crying. A bear called him into his lodge and told his wife to give the boy Juneberries. As he went back with them some mountain lions met him and when they saw that he had the berries they fawned upon him. These were the old man's dogs. He gave the berries to his wife saying, "Here are the berries your father wanted," and she gave them to her father and said, "Here are the berries you sent your son-in-law after."

After several days the old man was heard singing again. He said to his daughter, "I want your husband to go bring me ripe plums." He went to the same ravine and stood crying (to the spirits) and again the Bear man gave him plums which he took to his wife to give to his father-in-law. Again the dogs fawned upon him. Soon after he was sent for Indian turnips of the kind with thin skins which are easy to pull off. Again the Bear aided him.

<sup>46</sup> Lowie has the same story from the Crow, pages 149-151. Compare also Arapaho, 294-298; Cheyenne, Kroeber, 177-179; Pawnee, 38-41.



It was now spring and the season for hunting buffalo. The old man sent his son-in-law after straight arrows for his bow. The Bear-man told him to go down to the spring after rushes which he put over the fire and turned into wood. Again the dogs fawned upon him and the wife gave the arrows to her father. Next the old man demanded bright-colored flint for arrowheads of a kind that would float on the water. The Bear-man sent him to gather knife-shaped leaves of the elm tree and performed ceremonies over them until they were bright-colored and would float on the water. The old man sent him out again for three eagle feathers, yellow, blue and red, to put on the arrows. Bear-man sent him to find dead grasshoppers and changed them into feathers, yellow, blue and red.

Now the old man said that it was time to hunt and he sent his son-in-law to bring down a buffalo of all colors even to his horns and mane. Bear-man told him that across the gully were seven buffalo and he must test them to see if one of them could kill the old man. The buffalo said that the father-in-law was made out of stone and that they could not kill him, but, after testing the other six, the seventh was found able to break up a stone, so the young man painted this buffalo all colors and drove him down toward his father-in-law's camp. He told the buffalo that the Bear-man had said the old man's arrows were soft and could not kill. When the old man shot, the buffalo charged him. He turned himself into a black stone, but the buffalo cracked him all to pieces. Then the boy took his wife and his father-in-law's dogs and horses and went back to his own village.



## 19. BROWN-BANK VILLAGE

Told by Ben Benson, June 17, 1931.

Right on top of Brown-bank is a village. Its chief was Sun. He had two daughters, both very handsome. The youngest was Corn-silk, the oldest Haughty-woman. A bull snake named His-dwelling said to his friends, "I think Corn-silk so beautiful that I am going to her village to court her. I shall reduce my size and look about for a place to live." In the village he found a gambler. He said, "Now I shall go to this man's village and whenever they bet things that I want I shall help him to win." He turned himself into a boy and went to the village. There were no streets, just large lodges standing about. The boy came through the village and on the foot-path between the lodges the boys attacked and beat him. At the gambler's lodge the man took pity on him, thinking that he must be an orphan. He came down from his lodge and invited the boy into his dwelling. He told his wife how he had taken pity on the boy and bade her give him food and he told the boy not to go outside as the boys would show him no mercy, then he went out himself to gamble and was very successful. Every night when he went to gamble he was just as lucky. He told his wife, "Since this boy came I have been successful." Now every morning when they awoke they found the boy sleeping with his head or his leg hanging down over the bed and the man said to his wife, "I do not believe this boy is a human being."

The boy said to the man, "Brother, when you go to gamble, if you win eagle plumes, yellow ochre, black ochre, and tan-wing birds, do not give them away but bring them here to me." The man said he would do so. He won them all and brought them home to the boy. The boy remained with him until he was grown to be a young man. The gambler said, "It is time that you went courting." The boy said, "I love you so much that I keep myself from courting girls. If I should go courting I would leave you and go home." One day he said, "Brother, when you win a

nice young buffalo robe, bring it to me.”—“How about a pair of leggings?”—“Yes, leggings of buckskin hide.” He won them and gave them to his brother.

One day the man went up on the lodge while the boy stayed inside. The wife also went out and he put the bar across the doorway and told his brother if any visitor came to say that the lodge was empty. The man heard the young man inside singing a sacred song and the sound of a rattle. The older brother crept to the chimney hole and peeped in. The young man had spread the robe on the floor and with the paints had drawn on the tanned side of the robe the picture of snakes facing in one direction. In the center where his shoulder would come he drew a circle indicating a den. The snakes were all facing toward the den. It seemed to the brother as if the snakes were moving and crawling all over the robe. He crept back to his place, but he knew now that his brother was not a human being.

After noon the man on the lodge said, “Are we ready to go in now?”—“Yes.” They went back into the lodge. The young man had tied up the robe and hung it on the wall of the lodge. Although the older brother knew what was painted there he never questioned him. About this time an expedition went out to hunt. The boy said, “I hear that the hunting expedition is homeward bound. I should like to go and meet them on the way.” The brother said, “Why not wait. When our friends and relations come they will give us meat.” The boy insisted upon going. The other said, “When you leave the lodge the boys may stone you and they may hurt you,” but he finally consented and the young man started out. On the trail into the village he stretched across the path full length in the form of a snake. When the hunting party came up they made offerings of meat and fat and prayed. When every member of the party had made an offering and passed by, there lay a great heap of jerked meat from all parts of the carcass, for when they threw a small bit the piece became large. Then he came home. All the hunting party had returned and the relatives had brought the wife something. As she was about to prepare the meat the young man appeared and said, “The hunters have given me so much it will take more than ten persons to carry



it in on their backs." So they brought it home and had all kinds of meat.

The young man now said to his brother, "You have been very kind to me all these years and I have been helping you in spirit as you gamble. Now I came here to court, and the girl whom I have in view is Corn-silk. She is my sweetheart. When I have won her I shall leave you." The older brother said he was sorry, as he had reared him from a boy and had been well repaid and would miss him. The young man now asked a single favor of his brother. He said, "Corn-silk will come over to me tonight and I want you to take her and sleep with her the first night. After that I shall go home with her content. If you say No, I shall have to go without her." The older brother was not pleased, but he finally consented. The boy said, "Tomorrow will be the day. There will be a light breeze blowing from the south-west in the direction of my sweetheart's lodge and mists hanging over the hills. I shall be lucky." So the next morning it was an ideal day. He dressed himself, combed his hair and let it hang down long over his back. He was very handsome. He stuck a plume feather at the side of his head, put on his buckskin leggings, put his robe over his shoulder, and stood on top of the lodge looking over to Corn-silk's lodge. The south-west wind blew on his long hair with a waving motion. The next day as he stood there Corn-silk came out, saw him, and became excited. From time to time she came out to take a look at him and note carefully where his lodge was. In the evening she came over to the lodge dressed in her fine things. The two brothers sat side by side on the brother's bed. The wife went out and, seeing Corn-silk standing there, asked her what she had come for. She said that she had come for the young man. The wife came back and conveyed the message secretly to her husband. He bade her invite the woman in. Corn-silk went over and sat by the young man. He moved over and told her to sit between the two. She sat there without speaking and the young man said, "Corn-silk has come over to marry you." — "Surely not to marry me, but to marry you." The young man bade her sleep the first night with his brother and the next night with himself, otherwise he would not

marry her at all. After the second night he would leave her and she might follow him if she would.

The second night he left her and at the bank of the river he changed himself into a snake, coiled, and sprang across. The woman flew across in the form of a swan and lighted beside him. He said, "It is well that you have followed me." Hearing a herald announcing a snake ceremony he prepared to follow the man and told her to remain where she was. He found an old woman and asked her who was assuming the lead in this ceremony, without waiting for his return. "Swelling is the chief who took the snakes to the ceremony," he was told. He followed the others and found the sacred lodge full of snake people. He reproached them for not waiting for him and, spreading out his robe, commanded them all to enter the den pictured on his robe. He then took up the robe, folded it, tucked it under his arm and started out of the lodge. The Indian who was performing the ceremony followed and laid the sacred pipe across his path. Then he agreed to return for the ceremony and bring his wife. As they returned, a spotted eagle asked to join them: "You can always depend on me," he said. Farther on, the bird called Brown-winged asked to join them and he too was invited. Farther on he had his wife provide herself with a flat stone and he took up one also for protection. The birds remained near them. They arrived at the ceremony and he reproached Swelling for taking upon himself the calling of the ceremony and Swelling defended himself and called upon the snakes to poison the two. As they sat upon the stones it was impossible for the snakes to attack them from underground. When they went about above ground in the form of snakes, Brown-wing would hit them on the head and Spotted-eagle would pull them out with his claws, and the two birds had a great feast. Four days the sacred ceremony lasted. Sacred songs were sung and paid for with jerked meat and corn. The wife was presented to the snake man by the Indian who performed the ceremony. At the end of four days all returned home.

There is, near the town of Hebron on the Northern Pacific railroad, a high butte called today Skunk butte. Here His-Dwelling told Corn-silk she should have her home and should live there and protect the Mandan when they came out to hunt. He



himself would go from place to place and occasionally return to her. We Mandan believe that Corn-silk is living yet in person. She belongs to the band of the Mandan called Nupta, a band which has a village of its own and a dialect different from other bands. They have a way of crying and words which they utter. Often she may be heard saying, "Poor things! some of them must be living still and be crying to me!" She will give them help in battle and in other pursuits. She might even confer something on me if I went over there and used the proper words, for I know the words these people use in fasting. My grandfather (the same as Arthur Mandan's) belonged to that band. The village was three miles west of Bismarck. It was surrounded and wiped out by the Sioux in very early times.

It is ninety-two years since the Ree (Arickara) came here. The Mandans were down at the town of Mandan and the Gros Ventres at the mouth of Knife river. The Nupta were then a separate village of the Mandan. Not more than forty years ago this snake ceremony was performed. Old Bear's Ghost, part Ree and part Mandan, got it up himself. A man must dream first of the mystery. Then if he wishes himself to obtain it he must pay the expert to teach him the songs and to perform the ritual. In spirit the payment is made to the snakes and especially to His-dwelling and his wife and to characters like the birds, who are impersonated and appear as the chief actors in the ceremony. The robe is used as a symbol. The man who gives the ceremony gathers up robes and other articles and prepares the symbols. The one who already knows the mystery performs the ceremony.

## 6. THE BURNING OF THE EARTH.<sup>47</sup>

A Hidatsa story told by Bear's Arm, June 29, 1929.

In olden time there was a great village and in the village was a chief called Hungry Wolf who had a younger brother by the same father and mother called High-up-Bird. This young man had a friend of the same age called Yellow Eagle, a poor boy who belonged to the same tribe. The two lads stayed together, neither married.

It was the custom at noon when they ate for the women to go down to the creek after water. There was a path on one side for the married woman and one on the other side for the unmarried maidens. The unmarried men watched the girls as they went along the path and when they saw a girl they liked they cried, "Give me a drink!" Sometimes a young fellow would be afraid to ask the girl he liked for a drink lest the others laugh. At other times the girl herself would give no hint of having heard him but go on back to her lodge, for in this village the girl herself could judge whom she would marry by giving or refusing a drink to the man who asked her. The decision was left with the daughter. In those days it was the custom to stir up mud and clay with water (in a natural hollow in the rocks) and make a mirror called a "water glass"—*a-wa-sa-ta*. When the water cleared it looked like a mirror and the young men and maidens looked into it to paint their faces. Right above our place in the hills where they used to camp you can see these water glasses. Always about noon the young men would paint up and go down to the creek to get water. No one paid any attention to the married women, all were interested in the single maidens.

Now Hungry Wolf had two wives, an old and a young one—just a girl. One day when this young wife went to get water instead of taking the married woman's path she went by the other.

<sup>47</sup> See Arapaho, 23-31; Assiniboine, 150-154; Biloxi, 99-107; Blackfoot, 98; Dakota, Riggs, 130-143; Dakota (Oglala), Wissler, 196-199, (Wahpeton), 78-83; Iowa, 441-446; Pawnee, 308-312, and note 38 in this collection.



It was usual for the young man first to clear his throat to attract attention before asking for a drink. On this occasion no one paid her the least notice. After passing everyone else she spied the young man High-up-Bird and said, "Drink from my bucket." He said "No, you are already married. I am looking for another." Then she broke up her pail and tore her hair and everyone laughed at her and told her to go on her own path. When she reached the chief's lodge, the chief sat surrounded by his warriors with a great bowl of pemmican before him and two pipes laid across it. She accused the young man to her husband, saying that he had asked for water at the creek and when she refused he had torn her hair and made her nose bleed. Her older sister said, "You have always told lies, now I will ask the crowd!" so she went out and said, "How was it?" and they answered, "It was she who asked him to drink and when he refused she tore herself and we all laughed." Then she returned to Hungry Wolf and said, "You believed your wife, but now she has lied in front of all of them and they all know her!" So the young wife left the chief's house and lived with her aunt and did not return lest her husband the chief accuse her. But in the Council the older men advised the chief not to accuse his wife because she was young but to take her and treat her as before. Now her name was Yellow Calf Woman.

Ten nights after, the men went to war. The chief held a council. He told the warriors to take parched corn and make cornballs to give them strength to travel on and to build up the strength of the sick. In order to parch corn and grind it, in those days, they used to cut off a big tree-trunk in the ground and burn it out with hot stones until the hollow was big enough to grind the corn in. Besides the corn they were to carry a supply of buffalo meat to eat on the way. The evening before they left for war, those who wanted to accompany the party were invited into the lodge. High-up-Bird said to his friend Yellow Eagle, "My young brother, our brother is old. Let us go with our brother to war. He is old and his men may desert him in danger. We will go to defend him." So they parched corn and prepared cornballs. But when the young man and his friend entered the lodge, the



chief did not welcome them. Others found them seats, he did not say a word.

The war party left before dawn to avoid having too many in the company. They traveled until noontime, then rested and traveled again. When they reached a buffalo herd, they were ordered to kill forty animals and to skin them without breaking the hide in order to make forty bull-boats round like a bowl as in olden times. This they did, and they took the hide which was left over and wove it around the rim to hold the hide. The meat they cut thin and hung on a corn-shelf to dry and they packed it up and placed it on the corn-shelf to prevent animals from getting at it. Two men went in each boat. They sat in the middle in order to balance the boat and paddled each with an oar. They put all forty boats together and those on the outside did the paddling while those in the middle held on to the buffalo tails and thus they crossed the water. After they had got into the middle of the water they sang their warsongs and shouted their war-whoop and named their sweethearts and sang: "I am going to war and if I do not return my sweetheart will think of me and will not marry until she is old." They made all this noise because they were in another's territory, and were going to make war.

They did not reach land the first day because it was so far away. They saw nothing but water, the day was hot and a fog hung over the water, but at night there were stars to guide them. They watched the star and travelled until they came to land. There they turned the boats upside down along the bank for the sun to dry them. The chief sent two men to the hills to spy for the enemy while the rest repaired the boats in order to return in safety. He picked out High-up Bird and Yellow Eagle to act as scouts. After two days they returned singing the scalping song that is known to all the Plains tribes:

The tangled haired men, it is they who get the enemy in the morning (because they get up early in the morning without waiting to comb out their hair).

They had seen an enemy scout and killed him. High-up Bird shot first and his friend second, so High-up Bird had the credit. He gave half of the scalp to his brother and kept half himself to prove the achievement.



The chief told the boys, "You are tired! Spread out your blankets and rest." Then he ordered his men to get out the boats noiselessly and put the young friend in his boat, and they went on with the boats and left the younger brother sleeping. By-and-by the young man's neck grew stiff in the hollow of the boat and he awoke. He called, "Where is my friend?" They showed him where his friend still slept on the bank. He called and the young man awoke.—"Chief of the tribe, send back a boat! you are leaving me!" Three times he called thus, but Hungry Wolf said "I have no brother." Then said High-up Bird, "We have the same father and the same mother, but you are jealous because of the woman and so disown me. You will not listen to me and I shall die. Even if I should make a boat, the waves would overturn it. I charge you all, my friends, when you return tell the truth to our father and our mother." The brother answered, "Our father is at the bottom of the sea. If you try to cross I have given you to him." (It is true that when men are crossing the Missouri River they drop beads and it stills the water. It really gets calm.) High-up Bird said, "You are doing me wrong. Your first wife is to be trusted but your second wife has lied to you and you have believed her. You should protect me as your younger brother, for you are the elder, but instead you leave me here alone. But I have a father in the heavens who will pour down fire and all who follow you will burn up like a burning prairie."—"If you should cross the water, may three Sharp Noses run their noses into you and kill you!"—"Since you wish me bad luck, may my father the Thunder-bird devour you for your punishment!"—"The Person-with-many-horses, he has also many dogs and may they eat you up!" Then the younger brother said, "Three evil fortunes you have wished me, I have wished you but two. My friends, I have loved you. You have heard what has been said, but he is in the wrong. When you return, tell the truth about us to our father and our mother." Then he turned away and the chief commanded the men to row on. All this time the water had been so calm that the words of both could be heard distinctly. As they rowed away the waves rose, the boats tossed up and down looking, as the distance widened, like little ducks rising and falling on the



water. He climbed a hill and watched until all the forty boats had disappeared from sight.

Left alone, High-up Bird wept and rolled on the ground. Then he arose and found ripe Juneberries and chokeberries partly ripe which he ate for his meal. For three days he ate nothing but berries; he made fire of dried bark and drank water from the sea. The third day he heard someone coming behind his back and, turning, saw a Whirlwind. He knew it was a spirit and hid behind a tree, but the Whirlwind called to him and told him that his brother had made the Water Serpent his father and that was why he was so pitiless, but the Whirlwind hoped with the help of High-up Bird to destroy the serpent. This spirit was Thunder. It said, "Wait and tell to our chief all that has happened. You have called upon our chief to destroy your brother, but he is after all your own brother. I will not destroy him; the one to destroy is the Water Serpent. The Person-with-many Dogs is a woman; on her left shoulder is a poisonous rattlesnake, on her right is a blue razor; she owns over two thousand hounds and many lions, bears and tigers. I could kill her, but the one I really wish to kill is the Water Serpent to whom your older brother has given you to devour. I could carry you across the water myself but I want the Water Serpent to take you across. He has a son whom he loves dearly. About your neck is tied a shell which the little serpent would like to own. When he comes around call to him, 'Come here, brother!' and put the shell about his neck and say, 'Tell your father to take me across.' When the serpent comes from the water he will have horns that shine like lightning. Say to the son, 'Tell your father I will tie this scalp on his horns as a decoration and I will feed him with cornballs, one at a time, if he will take me across the water.' When he takes you to the other side, tell the serpent to go near the bank and when you walk across his jaw, jump to the side not to the front or he will kill you. After you are across I will give you other directions."

Soon came Red Snake, son of Serpent. High-up-Bird said, "Hold still and I will give you my necklace and you must go and ask your father to take me across the water. Direct him to this place and tell him I will hang this scalp on his left horn and four times when he raises his head from the water I will feed



him with cornballs." The young snake promised that when the serpent heard about the scalp and the cornballs he would take him across in no time. Thunder had told the young man when he was riding on the serpent's head to eat the partly ripe chokecherries and crack the seeds on the serpent's head in order to have strength to reach land. It grew foggy and High-up-Bird could hear the blowing of the serpent's breath and a roaring in the water. The serpent called to him to get upon its back. He waded out, climbed on to the monster's back and hung the scalp on his left horn. He noticed that the serpent's eyes were closed; he was blind. The head was large and covered with long hair and there was hair on the horns. (Four times the serpent lifted his head for a cornball and each time asked anxiously if there were any clouds about in the sky.) There was a small cloud where thunder was lurking, but the boy assured him that the sky was clear. (Just off the bank the serpent paused.) The young man begged and said, "You have promised my brother to take me to land and I have given him my necklace, I have decorated you with a scalp and fed you with cornballs." So the serpent put his head on the land. The boy went way back and ran and jumped to the side, and at the same time the thunder sent down two strokes of lightning that killed the water serpent.



Thunder-bird's  
knife made of  
hard wood daubed  
with red ochre.

The boy meanwhile fell unconscious. Soon Thunder poured rain upon him to revive him. "As I have awakened you, in return you will do the same to my people when they are unconscious,"—so Thunder spoke. Thunder also told him that since he had helped him to kill his most dangerous enemy he would always be safe when out fishing. He gave him a knife with a lightning figure painted upon it and told him just to touch the serpent in four places and it would fall into four pieces.

Thunder they claim is a bird, but it now appeared as an ordinary man. (There is no connection between the spirit of Thunder and the spirit of the Sun but they work together; the Thunder is above the Sun.) Thunder said, "All



the birds are your father. I am the head of all the birds. After the serpent is killed, turn to the west and call the birds, then to the east, to the north and to the south. They will come in the form of people. I will direct them what part of the serpent each shall eat." The boy prepared himself and called for the birds west, east, north, south, and as Thunder said so it was, all were like men, all talked at once and Thunder directed them what part each should eat. Thunder said, "Before they take their share, you take the long shining horns and show them to the people." The birds of the west got together and placed him in their midst. The head one was spokesman. They told the lad when he got back to camp to ask his brother to smoke first with him, if he refused four times he was still the lad's enemy. They said, "Every living thing on earth must some day die—people, all creation, all who crawl on the face of the earth. Your parents are even now mourning for you and even the little children are crying for you." They told him to make a dugout in the ground deep enough to go into and place a hide over it and four stones to hold down the hide. When he wanted anything he should go down to this house and the ghosts would ask it of the birds, for the ghosts can communicate more easily with the birds than man can. He must withdraw from the band and go south where it was warm and take his parents with him, and the birds would go with him. Age was now coming to him. As he had fed the birds (with the serpent) he must now feed the old people, love them and do for them. So he would be cared for also in old age. The eastern birds said similar things to him. If his brother refused to smoke with him, the eastern birds would set fire to the eastern camp. He must take his people into this underground hole and save as many of those who had mourned for him as possible. The northern birds warned him of the hardships before him because of his brother's curse that the Three-sharp-Noses might get him, and they promised to help him. They told him that the Thunder-bird would give him the knife pointed with lightning to kill his enemies. He must set a big dog on the creature to grip the noses so that he could kill it with this knife. The southern birds told him in council, "You are to face the Woman-with-Dogs, but before you start out make a



cane of chokecherry stick and on top of this hang the half-scalp. When you approach her you will first see her dogs by thousands coming over the hill. Then call to her, 'Mother, I have brought you a cane to use when you travel!' and when she hears this she will tell her dogs to lie down on the ground until you reach her the cane. Tell her to go north with her dogs lest she burn when the fire comes." After all had advised him, Thunder pulled out a white fluffy feather and told him to put it on the right side of his head and tie a cloth over it and he gave him a knife and told him to send after his brother's pipe to smoke with him. He must send his mother for the pipe as she was the one his brother was most likely to obey. Hers was the hardest position of all for she must take both sides since she was mother to both. If his brother refused four times, then he must take other men's pipes and smoke. He must say to his brother, "Now save yourself" and to the men, "All who are for me must follow me." Then "the village will be on fire, the great trees will not take long to catch and the whole will be in flame. After the fire has passed over the camp there will be a great wind and rain which will put out the fire." Then the birds all said, "The source of all the trouble is the young wife. Don't go south or east or west, go straight north and take the young wife with you. And for her punishment, strip her body down to the waist and hang a heavy bundle of arrows about her shoulders so that the sinew cuts into her flesh, and make her carry this a whole day until she reaches camp.

Thunder said, "Your brother wished three things to come to you, the Water Serpent, the Three Sharp Noses, the Woman with Dogs. I have helped you kill the most dangerous, you must kill the other two yourself." The boy travelled three days and on the fourth, about noon, he met the three Sharp-Noses. He ran behind some logs and the Sharp Noses attacked him one on one side and another on another, but they ran their noses into the logs and he cut off the noses with his knife and carried them with him.

Three more days he went and on the evening of the fourth day he looked and saw a cloud coming over the hills. This was the lions, bears and hounds of the Woman-with-many-dogs. He cried out, "Mother, I have brought you a cane!" so she scolded



the dogs and they lay down leaving a pathway for him to walk to her. A rattlesnake hissed from her shoulder, but she turned to it and said, "Be quiet! this is my son!" The other snake raised itself but she scolded it as well. The two snakes fastened down her cloak in front. He bade her, "Mother, take your dogs and move north or you will burn. Everything that crawls and creeps on earth or flies in the air, all are moving north."

He travelled seven days and on the evening of the eighth day he neared camp. Just on the edge of the camp some one was mourning and he recognized his friend who had been carried away from him. "Dear friend, you whom I have made my companion," the youth lamented, "I have always thought I should die with you, but now I do not know whether you have been killed by some enemy or have died alone. We shall never see each other again, friend of my heart!" High-up-Bird sat down and wept to think that some one still cared for him. In the distance he could hear the drums beating where his brother was holding a festival. Apart from the main camp where he knew that his family would be staying he saw a number of children with hair cut short in mourning. These directed him to his home. Formerly his parents had occupied a large lodge, now they lived in a little hut. He entered and placed his trophies at the head of the room. The fire which was dim he rekindled and said, "Father, I am back." The father said "Eh!" but the mother recognized his voice and bade him welcome. They summoned the camp. There were fifty lodges of those who mourned for him. Soon the company crowded around him so that they could hardly breathe and he told everything as it had happened. At the end many pipes were thrust out for him to smoke, but he refused them all. Four times he sent his mother to his brother to ask for tobacco "if not a handful just a pinch in the pipe," but the chief refused, even thrusting back his mother and saying, "Go back or I will hit you on the legs (her dress being worn short in mourning)!" The next day he commanded them to dig a hole so deep that inside it was like a cool lodge big enough for all to gather into safe from the fire. On the following day he told all to paint with black. He gave his mother the scalp to carry and his father the three noses. One girl carried the horns and another the knife. Two drums were played, one for



singing, the other for cheering, and they went toward the village where the chief Hungry Wolf lived. The people jeered but the horns of the serpent shone bright. As they approached the brother's lodge everyone came out to see what would happen. It was a warm day and as the brother lay in an outside hut dressed in an old robe with his head covered, he could hear what the people said. He thought, "They have killed my father (meaning his spirit father)!" The one who carried the knife just touched the lodge-cover and it was ripped to pieces. The young man said, "Four times you have refused to smoke with me. Now get up and do something for yourself! Tomorrow the fire will come and consume you." Then he turned to the crowd and said, "You people have believed my brother. Those who believe in me, go to the north, for only today will you live, tomorrow you will all burn!"

That evening he told the people, fifty of them, to take water and wood and their bundles into the hole, but those in the large camp would not believe him. Those who had children married in the camp tried to bring them in but they would not be persuaded. Early in the morning after eating he gave four times a warning call and commanded the spirit to burn all but the young wife outside in the camp. He drew the skins over the hole and fastened them down with stones. All remained within in safety while the fire raged. In the evening they went outside. Nothing remained which had been there before. All was swept black with the fire. Then the wind blew and the rain fell and the air became cool. They brought out their wood and cooked supper. They could see the blackened bodies of the people with ribs sticking out just as they had run out from their lodges to escape the fire. A single person was to be seen away by herself. He knew who it was and he sent the boys out to bring her in. She looked hungry and pitiful and he said, "Mother, give her something to eat." The next morning when he broke camp he picked out the heaviest tent of all and a bundle of arrows, stripped her to the waist and put the pack on her back. They traveled all day without stopping. At evening when they made camp her chest and shoulders were seen to be cut by the cords. But this was the end of her punishment.



This world had to be changed. They traveled to the far north and found many a severe winter so that some returned, but the rest remained and those are the people who live up there in ice houses and eat fish. This really happened because we can dig down anywhere (about here) and get coal. This coal is the layer left after the great burning. The clay buttes about here are not just hills, they are the ash heaps left in the great burning.

High-up-Eagle is the one who invented the method of butchering buffalo by means of a big drive over a claybank with a corral at the foot of the cliff so that the animals can not run away. Ten men are chosen as pickets, one head man and nine others. The two bravest sit at the edge of the bluff, the next two beside them, and so on, to wave back the herd (if they try to break away). Below the bluff is the camp. Three men drive in the herd. The leader watches the movements of the herd and signals its movements. The men watch the leader. If all the herd are coming together he opens out his arms and robe and then clasps his arms together. If buffalo are straying from the main drive he takes off his robe and waves it. When all fall in and none are left he takes off his robe and tosses it in the air to show that all are caught below and there are no stragglers. Then the ten headmen come around the edge of the cliff and stake off the pit through the middle and give one half to the western societies and one half to the eastern. (The eastern half is made up of four societies called Prairie Chicken, Three Buttes, Pierced Pauch, and Pointed Cliff. The western half has three societies:—Knives, Low caps (that is my society), Stalehut. When you go to an Indian dance the presents too are given by societies). They butcher the meat and divide it, but everyone has a raw liver and a raw kidney before cooking or eating the meat. The three men who drive in the buffalo and the ten men who act as pickets get the tongues. The one who gives the signals decides how many tongues there are to give to the leaders. One of these butchering pits used to be above George Grinnell's place. You can see the bones of the buffalo lying around there today.



## 20. SNAKE VILLAGE AND BUFFALO VILLAGE

Told by Ben Benson, June 16, 1931.

East of Turtle creek, which the Indians call Charred Body's creek, there were two villages, one located near the Missouri river and the other north from the river. The name of the chief of the lower village was Snake, that of the village to the north was Sharp-horn. The chief on the north side had four sons, the chief of the village near the river had four wives. One of Sharp-horn's sons wanted to go down to the lower village to court a girl. As he was about to set out his father said, "Guard yourself!" As the boy was walking about the village he chanced to see a pretty girl of about his own age. He watched her go for water and he put his arms about her and made love to her and they parted. The young man went back to his own village and she went back to her lodge with the water.

Now the girl was Snake's oldest wife and Snake knew all the time what was going on. The next morning when they called the boy to get up there was no answer and when they investigated they found only a skeleton; all the flesh had been picked off his body. The Snake chief had sent some of his men over to kill and eat him. All the people of the village mourned for the boy. They bore him to the outskirts of the village, dug a grave, covered him with earth and all came to pay their respects. Snake chief from the top of his lodge mocked them, saying, "Sharp horn's people are always successful in the hunt. They must be butchering a buffalo. I wish some of you people would go over and get a little!"

Another brother wanted to go over to the Snake village to court. The father warned the boy to be on his guard. "I mistrust the chief down there," he said. The boy went down to Snake village, met a pretty girl and made love to her. She was the chief's second wife. The next morning he too was nothing but a skeleton. The same thing happened to the third son of Sharp-horn. Then the youngest son said, "Since my brothers have met death, I too might as well go down there courting." The father lamented and said, "Yes, my bravest sons are gone, and you too might as well go and meet your death!" for he had no opinion of the youngest's courage.

The boy was angry and instead of going to Snake village he

wandered away to the north to die there because of his father's words. He saw a tent and a girl outside and as he approached the tent he heard the girl say to those within, "Father, your son is coming." Inside the tent he saw a man who was the image of his father and a woman who was the image of his mother, and he was confounded because he had left his home in anger and he could not imagine how the two came there. The man said, "Son, sit over here by me, you must be weary." Then the mother prepared supper and he was hungry and ate. The father asked how he came there, and though he was amazed, he related the whole story of his brother's death and how his father had reproached him and how he had come off here to die. The man said, "I am one of your father's brothers. There are four of us and we all look alike. As you go north you will come to your third father, then to your fourth. Listen to what he has to say. This fourth father will send you to your grandmother; do whatever she advises."

The boy went on and all happened as he had been told. At his grandmother's village the people said, "Sharp-horn's son has come! Show him his grandmother's lodge." His grandmother received him gladly and asked him how he came to visit her, and he told her all that had befallen his brothers and how he had wandered away to die. She said, "Grandson, over in this direction lives the son of Snake chief. You shall kill him and cut off his head and bring me the (?) to eat. His scalp you shall divide among your uncles as you return and there will come a time when you shall destroy half of Snake chief's village." In the morning she took him down to the stream to bathe and told him that Snake chief's son was longing for her to be his wife and she meant to disguise him to resemble his grandmother. She went about him rubbing his body with her own until he looked like a beautiful girl, just like his grandmother, so that as he approached the village the people would cry out, "Here is the girl whom Snake chief loves!" She bade him keep the chief awake all night and at daybreak she would prolong the night again for four nights. All this time the chief must be kept awake. At daybreak the uncles would drive herds of buffalo about the village so that all the able-bodied men would be away at the drive. When Snake



fell asleep he must cut off his head and come away. Those left in the camp would be only the children and they would not be able to avenge him. The boy did all as directed, brought back the head to the old lady, and she was pleased. She told him to go back home and have his mother cook the bones, break them up and strew them over the floor, cover them with grease and tallow and leave all to ferment, then cut ash sticks and have them ready. He was then to go down and court the Snake chief's youngest wife. That night when he returned from the village his father and mother must sleep on the scaffold away from the floor and he was to arrange his own bedding on the floor, then stuff up all the holes into the dwelling except a small opening at the doorway. This he was to guard.

The boy came home and did everything as he had been instructed. He went over and courted the Snake chief's fourth wife. That night his father and mother slept on the scaffold. They had grass and brush ready to light up the lodge at a moment's notice and the ash sticks ready. He made up his bed on the floor and watched at the hole. When the men whom Snake chief had sent over to eat up the boy tried to come in and found the holes stuffed up, they hesitated and he could hear them hiss as they lingered at the door. One crawled in, then another, the lodge began to be filled with the sound of their hissing. He called to his father and mother and they lighted up the lodge and killed the snakes one by one with the ash sticks. In the morning Sharp horn told the people to carry them out in baskets to the edge of the village and when the wind blew toward Snake village to burn up the snakes. All the people went out to see the burning. Snake chief went up on his lodge and said in derision, "Sharp-horn is so successful with his sons, it looks as if they were all out for a great butchering! They might give you a bit of intestine if you went over." But when he smelled the burning, then he came down from his lodge and he and all his people began to crawl on their faces and to hasten to get across the river. The people in the buffalo camp turned into buffalo and chased them and trampled upon them. Only a few got across to the other side. That is the reason why there are so few snakes on the north and west side of the river.

## 7. PACKS ANTELOPE.<sup>48</sup>

A Hidatsa story related by Bear's Arm with some hesitation since he said that a storm had always followed his telling of the story.

There was a man who was very fond of hunting. When he skinned an antelope with pronged horns, he would wear the skin over his body as a decoy and walk up to the herd away from the wind and against the sun and when he came close he would shoot. Then he would pack the animal home on his back. So they named him "Packs Antelope."

A pair of Thunder-birds and their young lived on top of a high butte (called Thunder butte) which no one could climb. Every year when the birds grew a new coat of feathers they would shake off their old feathers and the wind would carry them in the direction of a lake named Skunk Lake. A great Serpent which lived in the depths of the lake would come out of the lake, cause a heavy fog to envelope the butte and, under its cover, would climb the butte and devour the young thunder-birds. Now the bird watched Packs Antelope and, seeing how powerful he was and how skilful with the bow and arrow which had been given to the Indian by the good spirits, decided to carry him away as he slept to its nest on the butte. One day when he grew drowsy after the hunt and lay down to rest, it took him away in its claws and when he awoke he was amazed to find himself on a flat butte with sheer rocks on the sides too steep to climb. As he looked over, the wind blew upward into his face. It was impossible to descend!

As he stood crying he noticed two birds in the nest, one a male the other a female, and the female said, "Stop crying, brother and come over to us!" and she told him not to fear, for their father had adopted him as one of their own. She related to him the danger they were in from the serpent and how her father had seen how brave he was and had brought him there to

<sup>48</sup> See Arikara, Dorsey, 73-78; Crow, Lowie, 144-149, cf. 152-156, 169-171; Pawnee, (Skidi), 57-59, 167-168.



help them. She sang to him her father's song which he used when he wished to kill anything and her mother's song, and she gave him the right to sing both songs. The brother objected but the sister said she gave them to him to use when he fought the serpent because she was afraid of its power. These songs do not belong to me (Bear's Arm) hence I can not sing them; I do not understand them well.

Away out in the south-east in the direction of the Kildeer mountains they heard the thunder. The girl said, "That is my father's voice." The next sound of thunder was the voice of the mother. A dark cloud lay on the horizon and a windstorm arose. He lay down flat, the hot wind went by and when he looked up there were the two parents of the Thunder-birds. The male bird told him he would do all he could to shift the wind but he had to trust to the boy's skill. The serpent's breath smelled like something spoiled burning; he would know by this smell when it was approaching. It was double-headed and on the throat of each head was a white spot where it was vulnerable. When that spot was hit the snake would open its mouth and thus make an easy mark, but he must guard himself against the lightning. The sandstone on the butte would be no protection, hence he must have a barricade of rocks of a more solid composition brought from other hills. Then the birds taught him their songs and departed.

The next day Packs Antelope bade the birds shake their feathers. The wind was at that time blowing toward the lake. Packs Antelope took in his hand all the arrows he had and slid them forward. Four fell ahead of the rest. He straightened these, tested the heads to see if they were tight, tightened his wristlet made of hide to protect his wrist in pulling the string. He kept guard and after midnight felt the fog surrounding the butte. They could hear the snake coming and smell something like old moccasins burning. He knew that the serpent was approaching. He went over to the heap of stones where it generally appeared, got behind it and waited for the snake to show its head. When the head came he watched for the white spot on the throat, drove an arrow in, dodged the lightning emitted by the serpent, and when the creature opened its mouth he shot a second arrow and could hear the head fall and the rocks tumble. He ran around to



the second barricade and sent an arrow into the white spot on the second throat, dodged the lightning and shot an arrow into the open mouth. Just as he had shot the last of the four arrows the sun rose over the hills to the east. The fog ascended into the clouds. He went along the edge of the cliff and could see the double-headed snake circling the butte. On the side he had shot first the stones had fallen and he thought that he could climb down.

Just then thunder sounded, a cloud came over him, a great wind blew and a few drops of rain fell. There were the birds sitting on the butte. Fourfold was their joy when they saw the snake. Thunder-bird laid four of his war implements before Packs Antelope and told him to take his pick. He chose a mean-looking implement as he had been instructed by the daughter. Thunder-bird said he had chosen well; this was the most powerful implement of the four. It was to be used when he sang the songs the daughter had taught him. He instructed him to go to the edge of the butte, make a motion as if to cut up the snake and instantly it would fall into pieces. He did so and the serpent fell into four parts. Then he was instructed to go to the edge, face each direction in turn and invite the birds from the four corners of the earth to a feast. When the birds came, one part was given to those from each direction—north, south, east and west, and they blessed their son and promised that he should be a leading man of his people, a successful warrior and one able to control rain. After he had gone back to his own clan, whenever they had made a good kill if a rainstorm was coming he should wave his arms and the rain would split and go around them, or by motioning with his arms he could draw the rain toward them.

The birds wished Packs Antelope to remain with them for a time. They roamed over the breaks of the Little Missouri and he used his power to destroy many of the evil things beneath the earth. Our grandfather who lives in the river thought, "Now Packs Antelope has done his duty in killing the serpent and he should refuse further expeditions and live among his own people." So he had a big sweat lodge prepared and tied up his hair into a big knot and put his head up above the surface of the water near



the place which the whites call Clark's Creek but which we call Thunder-bird Creek. Packs Antelope descended and struck his claws into his head and gave him a blow. Old Man grasped him by the ankles and carried him under the water to his den. "You have no power to kill me," he said, "I belong to the Gros Ventre tribe. I existed long before you saw the light. You are my grandchild." Then he instructed him not to go back to the birds but to carry back their blessing to his own people. He put him into the sweat-bath, switched him, gave him water to drink and made him vomit up all the flesh of the serpents he had been eating since he became a bird, and sent him back to his own people. He told Packs Antelope for his headgear to use the skin of a skunk with a visor of rawhide lest the gleam of his eyes in anger should destroy his people. The lightning from his eyes strikes the visor first and does not kill the people. It is thrown only once a day in the morning when he first rises, after that there is no more lightning. To this day the people of his clan are known as the "Low visors" (or caps) because of their headgear.

## 21. THE CEREMONY OF GIVING-AWAY-WIVES

### Part 1. Wedge Calf.<sup>86</sup>

There used to be a wide belt of timber from below Elbowood right down to Nishu. There it narrowed down and this strip was called Where-the-strip-narrows-out. Here there were a great number of beaver dens. From this point to the old village of Fish-hook the timber widened again. One winter the people from across the river established winter quarters in the timber down near old Fish-hook village. The game was scarce and although they had corn, squash, and beans, they lacked for meat. They therefore sent scouts up the river, then down the river east.

The children went often to play along the banks of the river, where they dug caves and played at keeping house. One would be the father, another the mother, and others the children. Thus they imitated the grown people. The fathers went out to hunt and brought in ears of corn in imitation of meat and the little mothers pretended to be glad and roasted the corn at the fire and distributed it about. One evening a boy who came from an unknown place invited his play wife to go home with him. "We have a tent in the timber and plenty of provisions," he said. The boy lived alone with his mother, who was in reality a buffalo cow. When the herd went north, in crossing a bog she had caught a bit of bog brush in her hoof and was unable to travel with the rest. Her lodge was filled with meat. She fed the girl and gave her meat to carry home and told her to come again and she should have all she wanted. The parents made up corn balls and the girl gave them to the boy to take home. The old woman asked to move to the girl's camp where she could have corn to eat, so the

<sup>86</sup> See for a close variant, Assiniboine, 206-209. In a Piegan story (JAFL 24: 246-247), a poor old woman finds a "buffalo rock," establishes a buffalo lodge and calls the buffalo. Compare Wissler & Duval, 85-89.

For other tales of calling the buffalo compare: Arapaho, 259-260; 42-48; 17-18; Assiniboine, 138; Cheyenne, JAFL 20: 180, 189, 191; 21: 278, 311, 317; 13: 172, 179-181; Kiowa, Parsons, 53; Pawnee, Dorsey, 90-109; JAFL 5: 127-134; (Skidi) 44-48, 147-149; Shoshone, JAFL 37: 45-48. Compare Osage (RBAE 39: 129-138) for deer calling songs.



parents moved her to the camp secretly and pulled out the stick that had become wedged in her foot. They called her Buffalo Woman.

Buffalo Woman promised to call the buffalo to the camp. She told the people to clear a space in the willows in a circle and build a fire in the center and when the ashes had burned down, the girl and the boy were to come inside the circle, be incensed, have calf skins laid over them, and then they were to make motions like young buffalo calves, going first to the north and back to the fire, then east, then south, then west, then circle about the fire, all this to indicate that the buffalo were to come from each point and circle about the camp. The fire was a symbol that people were again to build their fires and have plenty. The woman made a sweat tent out of the willows, but without any covering, placed a buffalo skull in the center, a live coal, a plant called buffalo-does-not-eat (a low plant with close growing tops, yellowish in color) and she sang a song and took the skull and touched the girl with the skull in symbol of marriage. When a girl is thus married she is called "Daughter-in-law-of-the-buffalo." Thus she became the boy's wife.

In the night the woman sang four different songs to her son and told him to take his wife to the outskirts of the timber and there she was to stand in front of him and face the north and sing these songs. He should then go in front of her and roll and become a young buffalo, roll again, and the fourth time he would become an old bull like the skull in the circle. He must go north through four valleys carrying four corn balls which he was to tell the buffalo their daughter-in-law had sent them, and he was to distribute them among the buffalo of the north. This they did. The boy returned and said that the buffalo were on the way and after four nights from the time of his return they must prepare for the hunt. The people appointed chiefs of the hunt who prayed to the spirits of the buffalo and made offerings to prevent accidents during the hunt. The hunters went out and saw the country to the north black with buffalo. They kept on coming. The camp was in a tumult with joy. The hunters killed and returned laden with meat. The old people built a bonfire in a clearing in the brush and if any hunter passed without giving

them meat they would hoot him and say, "He has never seen meat before! That is why he is so stingy!" The boys in camp would cry "Hi-la-e-e!" or "Whoo-i! whoo-i!" as the hunters came in loaded with meat.

From this time buffalo were so plenty that each family hunted for itself. Before the river broke up in the spring, all crossed to the south side of the river and, after the snow had melted sufficiently, returned to the main village down the river. Buffalo Woman and her calf went back with the herd to the north. Wedge-calf was the name of the boy.

The girl was about to deliver. She went out to a buffalo wallow and bore her first-born and it was a buffalo calf. The women refused to let her see it and they took her back to the village leaving the calf in the wallow. Seven bulls came to the young calf, and made him roll until he was full grown. Then they took him back to his father in the north. His father was delighted to see his son, and Buffalo Woman came to see her grandchild. He was named Spotted calf because he was part buffalo and part human. As a buffalo he had the name of Horn-in-splinters.

After four years Spotted-calf wanted to go back to his people. Wedge-calf consented and promised to follow. Buffalo Woman went with him to help the people. At the outskirts of the village the calf took human form and entering the village he made himself known to the people of the village. His father followed and returned to his wife, who had not re-married. Everyone greeted Buffalo Woman also with joy. She had her lodge on the south side of the village and as she was the means of calling the buffalo to the camp, all the hunters gave her ground corn for her use.

## **Part 2. High Hawk and the Sun.<sup>87</sup>**

Thus far everything went well. Now on the east of the village there was a gambling ground where people gambled from early morning until late at night. One young man was unlucky. When he had lost everything, his opponent suggested that he cut arrows with which to bet. He came over to Yellow-water spring

<sup>87</sup> See the story of "No Tongue," Mandan, JAFL 26: 335, 29: 402-406; Arikara, 2: 298.



and cut ten Juneberry sticks, peeled them and dried them. Then he saw an old man coming from the south who wore bunches of human hair all over his body even down to his moccasins, as if he was a great warrior. The old man proposed a game and gave him his choice of two sticks, one heavy and one light, with which to play the game of stick and disk.<sup>88</sup> The young man chose the light stick and the old man won the game. He took up his blanket, disc, arrows and made his way south, singing songs of triumph on the way.

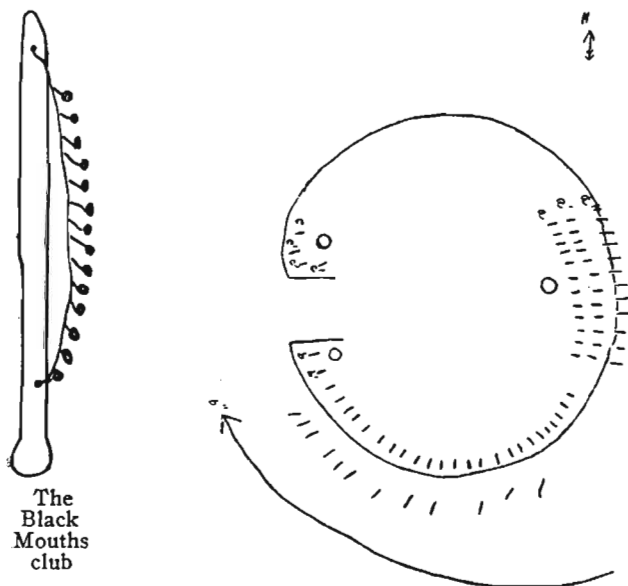
This old man was Sun. He had directed his son from an enemy tribe to attack the Gros Ventres. His winning the ten arrows was a sign that a hundred of the Gros Ventres people should be delivered into this son's hand. An old buffalo cow's skull lay on the ground and heard all. The Skull woman told Buffalo Woman and she promised to reverse the fate of the battle. She prepared a meal and invited ten leaders of the village. After the feast she told what was about to happen. She selected a man who had a perfect wife to perform a ceremony to offer his wife to all the spirits.<sup>89</sup> This man was Hawk. She directed the people to build a bowery with the door facing the west. One of the men's societies was to dress in a buffalo robe with the fur turned outside and wind a piece of cedar about the head. Each was to paint his face according to his own dream and to carry whatever mystery he possessed. These men were the singers who were to impersonate the spirits. One carried a robe as a drum. All gathered in a lodge outside the bowery. In this lodge was a buffalo skull. Inside the bowery there were three fires built, one on each side of the door, one at the east opposite the door. Behind this fire in a row sat the young men who were to offer their wives to the spirits. The young man selected to offer his wife to the Sun sat at the extreme left. Behind each man sat his wife and behind the wives sat the older women. Buffalo woman sat behind the wife of Hawk who was to be given to the Sun. At the left of the entrance sat the impersonators of the enemy. Strips of

<sup>88</sup> For the Mandan game of Ring and Stick see Catlin, 1: 149-150; Maximilian 61. Compare Crow, 247-249; Isleta, New Mexico, RBAE 47: 390-392; Picuris, RBAE 43: 313-315.

<sup>89</sup> For wife-giving at the buffalo dance see Maximilian 2: 334, 295-296; 3: 30, 42-43.

jerked meat hung on a frame behind them. As a signal to the singers gathered outside, one of the enemy impersonators took a slab of wood painted red to which was attached a string of rattles made of young buffalo hoofs, and the hide to be used as a drum, and went over to the singers' lodge. [This club is that carried by the Black Mouths as a symbol of authority. There is always a man of mystery in each camp who can persuade the animals to come near the camp. His word is law. The Black Mouths are his officers. They can even kill a man if he does not obey the Mystery Man's orders.] After the signal to come out was given,

Plan of the bower for the Giving-away-women ceremony. The small circles are fireplaces. The entrance is on the West.



The  
Black  
Mouths  
club

- a Giver of the ceremony and other young men.
- a' Their young wives.
- b Moon. b' Society members.
- c Sun. c' Other *Pa-ta-ki*.
- d Men spectators.

the men in the lodge came outside and called *Hu-u-i!* meaning, "Come, yes!" and any members of the band who were not in the



lodge at the time joined them quickly. The young man impersonating Hawk next brought them a filled pipe and they smoked before marching into the ceremonial bower. Four times they stopped as they approached the bower and called for Hawk and four times he brought them the pipe to smoke. They filed in to the bower from the south and seated themselves in a semi-circle around the south side of the bower. The impersonator of Moon sat at their extreme left next to the door at which they had entered. Sun meanwhile had lingered about the door peeping in. Moon called him "brother" and invited him to enter. At last he came in and took his seat with the group about the fire at the left of the doorway. These are called *Pa-te-ki*, Reversal, because Sun was to reverse the fate of the battle. He was given the young woman as wife and in return promised this reversal. [Four nights the singing and feasting lasts. At the end of the fourth night of the ceremony it is customary to beat up the four men who represent the enemy and throw the jerked meat into the fire as a symbol of this reversal. All summer one of the four must go about the village on the night of each new moon as a symbol of protection to the village.]

About the third day after the ceremony a war party came from the west, a vast horde of warriors so that the country seemed covered with them. Buffalo woman told Hawk that he must himself take the head of the Sun's son. The man would be dressed with leggings to which hung human hair, a band of white buckskin about his head, his upper body painted red, sage inserted at the back, and his face painted with a circle of black with a black spot between the eyes. It was to him that his father had promised the warriors. Hawk must cut off the head and he would find inside a stick of choke cherry wood.<sup>90</sup> He must take the scalp and carry the head to the mouth of Knife River where, on the leeward side, there is a big whirlpool. There he would find his grandfather, the Big Serpent. He must scalp the head and throw it into the pool and call out, "Here, grandfather! I have brought you a fine warrior. Make yourself a feast!" and throw in the head. The serpent would instantly devour it.

After the battle the Sun came down and looked over the field

<sup>90</sup> For the cherry-wood stick see Crow, 233.

in search of his son. He found the head gone and asked Hawk about it and Hawk told him that he had offered it to the Big Serpent. Sun asked the Serpent for it and the Serpent said he had devoured it. Sun went back to his son's body and, using black sage for hair, he tried to bring him to life, but did not succeed and went away crying. The warriors counted the slain and there were a hundred.

From that time the Gros Ventres people have disliked this gambling game. The young man who gave the ceremony has ever since gone by the name of High Hawk because he secured great honor by performing this wife-giving ceremony.



## 8. STICKS-A-FEATHER-IN-HIS-HEAD.<sup>49</sup> (O-KI-NE)

A Mandan story told by Ben Benson.

The Mandan have been following up the Missouri River, as it is told to us. When they came to a place where there was much timber they made a camp for one or two years until the firewood became scarce, then they moved on. Thus they did until they got to Red River.

A man had a wife and two children. In those days during the summer they would appoint a certain Indian to designate a winter camp where they might provide themselves with the game that abounded at that time. The man's wife died and he married again. The new wife disliked the children and made life unbearable to them and when the village moved to the winter camp the children were left behind. The boy was at this time of an age to begin to use bow and arrow, the sister was of an age to marry. They lingered behind and picked up the provisions left about the camp, then followed after in the rear. A blizzard arose and the children lost the trail and crept into some underbrush to protect themselves from the blizzard and there they stayed until the storm abated. So the sister said to the brother, "It will be useless for us to follow the camp. Let us return to the village and there build a lodge on the outskirts and remain until the camp returns in the spring. We will look into our home lodge and see what has been left behind in the way of corn, dried squashes, and snowbird snares, arrows, pails, and everything else that will be useful to us in the place where we live." They moved from the main village to a place sheltered by trees where the snow had melted. They set up four posts for the center of the lodge, laid crossbeams upon them and laid posts from the crosspieces to the ground and covered all with bush and earth to make it warm. The sister said, "Brother, we must make provision for the cold winter. So

<sup>49</sup> The "deserted children" theme is here combined with the "bear woman," which seems to take the place of the pursuing mother in some versions. Compare Arapaho, 286-294; Assiniboine, 160-162, 179-180; Blackfoot, 68-70, 138-141; Gros Ventres, 105-108; Iowa, 503-506; Omaha, 287-293.



let us pick buffalo berries, artichokes and ground beans and stow them away for the winter. Let us haul wood too and stack it for firewood. And you can use the bow and arrows and the snares to catch rabbits for meat." The girl had watched the young men trap and hunt and she instructed her brother. Day by day he grew more dependable in bringing home game. She gathered the wild foods and dug little pits in the earth inside the lodge and laid grass inside to keep them clean and there she stored away what she had gathered.

One day the boy put his snare along a deer path. The snare was arranged with a sharp stick at one end and a groove on the other through which the cord was attached with a loop. At the end a stick was tied at the center. When he came to the snare he saw that something had been caught and, following the trail made by the dragging stick, he came upon a deer. The crosspiece had tangled in the bushes and choked it to death. He ran home crying, "Come, sister, I have snared a big something, white about the tail and reddish all over with a pair of large ears!" They dragged it home, skinned it, cut it up and dried it for the winter. He went down to the timber again and set his snare. On the morrow he found an elk there. The sister was overjoyed. She said, "We can now make clothes for ourselves!" She went over to their old home and brought back tanning devices to tan the elk hide and the deerskin. On the way she saw the track of a buffalo and she told her brother to dig a pit right in the trail and see if he could catch it. She said, "If you dig the ground straight whatever gets in can escape, but if you dig it straight until about up to the waistline, then obliquely like a jug, whatever gets in can not get out. After you have dug the pit out I will throw in a stump and you can climb out. Then we will throw water upon the sides and it will freeze so that nothing can get footing. After that, cover over the top with light bush, then a layer of grass." The boy did as he was directed. The next morning before going to examine the pit he said, "What shall I do if an animal is fallen in there?" The sister said, "I will show you." In the trap he found a spring buffalo calf with skin almost black covered with fine fur. It was alive. The sister showed him how to kill it with bow and arrow. They pulled it out with rawhide ropes. The boy said, "If



a large buffalo should fall in here we could not get it out again." She said, "Make the pit larger so that you can work in it, and throw in water and chunks of ice so that when the buffalo paws with his hoof at the side he will slip back." The sister cured and tanned the buffalo skin for the boy's robe and the elk's for her own. She stretched the hide so carefully that it dried well. They now had clothing and were well supplied with food.

One day the sister said, "Brother, when I go after firewood, if I do not return you can get food for yourself. I will be back every evening." As the boy was out hunting he heard sounds from above like human voices. When he came home at night his sister came in. She sat opposite him as he sat eating at his place and he said, "Sister, why don't you give me some of what you are eating?"—"You could not eat this old withered artichoke!" she replied. This happened four nights. As he was out hunting the next day he heard a voice (and was able to make out the words.) It said, "If you go on this way, this sister of yours will eat you up." Now when he was out hunting he was constantly crying for help to the gods, so the Morning Star took pity on him and said, "You have a robe tanned for you and you must paint it black all over and in one place make the picture of the sun and below that the picture of the moon. Around the edges put strips of jack rabbit skin tied or sewed on; then fold it up and hang it in a safe place and, before unwrapping it to use, you must smoke the robe thoroughly with incense, using the plant called Big Medicine. When you unwrap it and put it on, nothing can hurt you. For ever since the world was created I have been giving help to the earth. That is why you were successful in all your undertakings." And the spirit showed him what feather to stick in his hair when he wore the robe. The next morning when his sister went out to gather firewood, he pretended to go out hunting but returned and looked into the kettle and saw a small piece of scalp with the hair still attached to it. He was very much frightened. Looking up he saw the elkskin hanging in a bundle which his sister had made for herself and his own bundle containing the skin of the buffalo calf. (So he decorated his robe as Morning Star had commanded.)

From that time on he watched his sister. One day she told



him to go on a long hunt and not return until the next morning. He took his bow and arrows and stepped out of the lodge, but then he changed himself into a spider, crawled back into the lodge and up into the rafters close to the chimney hole and watched his sister. She went outside and looked all about to see if he were out of sight and then, stepping back inside, said, "By this time he is far away, but I still smell his flesh. How can this be?" The second time she went out and returned she still smelled him. She sat with her head hung down in deep thought. Then she said, "My brother must have gone a long way by this time but his moccasins, his bedding, his clothes are here; it must be these that I smell." As she was about to take down her robe she noticed her brother's robe tied in a bundle with the bundle of incense beside it. She was curious about the robe and fearfully she reached out her hand toward it, took down the bag of medicine and held a live coal to it, then held the bundle of skin far out from her body over the smoke and began tremblingly to spread out the robe. There came a flame of fire from the robe. She did it up hastily and hung it up again saying. "Of course he is a man and I am a woman. I am what I am now and he is more than a woman!" Then she proceeded to decorate her own robe. She laid the elkskin on the floor and took charcoal, pounded it and mixed it with grease and daubed it over the skin. She reached over and took out a lot of scalplocks and began to place one on the hide and cement it on with a little shell and so on with the scalps in rows, one and then another. All this time the brother was watching. When she put on the robe only one space was lacking,—here, over the left breast (pointing). She said, "I have always loved my brother. On this vacant spot I wish to place his scalp so as to have him always with me. On my left arm I carry my food and he will thus be the first to be fed."<sup>50</sup> From this time on the boy knew all his sister's intentions. In the form of an evil spirit his sister had taken trips into the skies and collected the sky-people's scalps and eaten the flesh. The sounds he had heard were the voices of the holy beings living in the sky.

<sup>50</sup> In Dakota (Oglala), Wissler, 199-200, Stone boy in bird form watches the scalp-collecting witch count the rows which she expects to fill in with the brothers' scalps.



The boy went on a journey that day and when he returned the next evening his sister acted as if nothing had happened and he too pretended to suspect nothing. But one day he heard the voice say "Sticks-a-feather-in-his-head, be wary. Your sister intends to kill you." The next day he said to his sister, "When I bring in game I cause you much trouble because I bring it back in large pieces. Tomorrow I will cut off the meat from the bone first and strip it into small pieces." The sister appeared pleased and he went away as usual. He went up the Red river and rounded three bends. It was towards Spring and the river was thawing and freezing. There were buffalo coming down for water but at the river's edge there was ice. He killed the biggest bull and with some difficulty dragged it over the ice, which was slippery as glass. He cut pieces and threw them here and there, here and there. He heaped up the skin over the other pieces in the center and told his sister, "I have killed a big buffalo and left it on the third bend. Take along an old robe and wrap the meat into a bundle." As soon as she was gone he took down his robe, burned the incense and put on the robe. He took his arrows in a quiver on his back. He thought, "My sister is getting fierce. She has even gone up into the skies and fought the people up there and she wants to kill me." He took a hair from his own head and stuck it on the far side of the wall and said, "Now help me! When she speaks, answer for me."<sup>51</sup> He threw another hair into the timber and said, "When she calls, answer her!" Then he said, "If I go through the door she can follow me." He stuck an arrow into the ashpit and stepped upon it and sprang through the smokehole and was gone.<sup>52</sup> About one arrowflight away he landed. He went off on a trot and something spoke to him saying, "Sticks-a-feather-in-his-head, if you want to save yourself go along this valley to a point where there is burning lignite coal. If you can make the place you are safe, otherwise your sister is bound to get you." So he began to run faster.

In the meantime his sister got to the carcass, spread out the robe and threw in the meat. Then she threw the bundle over

<sup>51</sup> The "answering object" occurs in Arapaho, 9, 281; Blackfoot, 139; Osage, 18.

<sup>52</sup> In a Crow story of fleeing from a cannibal woman the arrow is shot through the smoke hole: Lowie, 125; Simms, 311.



her shoulder and started back. The bundle sagged and the pieces fell out two or three times.—“What can it be! something must be wrong.” She exerted her power, put all back into the bundle and placed it under her left arm and went home. The door was locked with a crosspiece. She called her brother by name and the hair said, “Wait a bit,—do not come in quite yet!” The next time the answer was the same. She broke the door in and went inside. No human being was there but the fire was still burning. She heard someone chopping wood in the timber and called, “What are you doing?” A voice said, “Cutting sticks for bow and arrows.”—“How is it you are out there at this time?”—“You saw me pass you and go out!”—“Come home now!”—“I cannot yet, I must make my arrows.” The hair scolded her and the sister thought, “He is right!” and she ceased to call. Finally she grew anxious, went out to the spot where the chopping sounded and found no one. She returned to the house, took her robe, stuck feathers in her hair, painted her face, put on her robe and tied the two tie-strings about to hold it. Four times she went around the lodge to look for footprints. She went inside and from the bed traced his steps to the fireplace. There she saw where he had stuck his arrow into the fireplace. Looking up through the smokehole she could see where he went through the air. She spread her robe like a wing and flew through the hole away up into the air and saw her brother still running. She went faster than he. The boy got out his arrows and strung his bow ready for battle. “Brother, do your best! I am here!” She laughed a mocking laugh. She carried an Indian digging-stick such as they use to dig out turnips. She wanted to play with and tantalize him. When she flew in front of him he shot at her through the armpit. The arrow came out at the other armpit without harming her. She just laughed at him. As he shot at her he kept making for the lignite. One arrow more he had to shoot. A voice said, “Shoot at the feather on her head. If you can split its rib in two she will die.” He stripped off the feathers on the arrow and said, “Go through the feather, but do not split the rib. I do not wish my sister to die.” The arrow did so and the woman dropped to the ground wounded. He ran to her and said, “Because you are my own sister I have let you go!”



Out of the lignite came an old man and spoke. "Young man, it would have been better if you had killed your sister, she deserves death." He said to her, "Look at this boy! you have the same father and the same mother yet you want to kill him."—"Yes, it is my fault. I have done wrong. Brother, you must go home. The people are wondering what has become of us two. The chief has two daughters. They will become your wives. As for me I shall go to the skies. But, dear brother, when you marry let them perform a ceremony so that as your sister I shall abide in your house and you will reverence me. This robe of mine is just the same as my own body. If you put on this robe and circle the village in case of danger, you will be protected. The Mandan people are your people and my people. I will be in the skies looking down at you in all your troubles."

The brother obeyed her wishes. He kept the robe and became prosperous and the leading man of his tribe. After his death the robe was handed down from one generation to the next until the last one who had the robe was Wolf Ghost who lived here in the Little Missouri. When he died the robe was left in his old shack, for the people were now Christian and dared not pass on the robe. Last fall it took fire and the robe burned with the shack.

## 22. SUN AND THE GAMBLER

Told by Ben Benson, June 19, 1931. Interpreter, Sam Newman.

Two young men, good-looking fellows, were around courting the girls. They felt hungry and did not know where to get a meal. They thought of a kind old woman on the outskirts of the village and went over to her lodge. She said, "My grandsons, come in and have something to eat. You are young and must be out sparking. I am old and care for nothing." They got a good meal and left the old woman, but after running about for three or four days more they found themselves hungry again and said, "Let us go and see the old woman again." She was glad to see them, brought them food and as she dished it out said, "My grandsons, this will be your last meal." They did not listen to her words, but ate heartily and went off again.

They met a man coming who had been into the timber and cut ten juneberry sticks for arrows. Another man was coming to meet him with two long ash sticks marked for the stick and stone game. The man with the two sticks proposed a game. The other said, "I have nothing to bet with." The first man said, "You can bet your arrow sticks, I will bet my eagle tail feather. If you win you will have my feathers to put on your arrows." The man with the ash sticks was the Sun. The other man belonged to the same tribe as the old woman. Near the field where the game was being played lay a buffalo head. This was the old woman. It was for this reason that this old woman lived away from the village. It was Sun's intention if he beat the man with the arrows to come back and destroy the whole tribe. The old woman knew this and she prayed to the spirits to be with the man with the arrows. The two men played and the old woman was fearful. They rolled the stone and threw the sticks. The man with the arrows won and he took the eagle feather. The other man said, "Now I will go my way for you have won, but if you want another game here are two eagle feathers." They were fine feathers, one of them painted red. They played and the man with the two sticks



won. He took the arrows and the feather and went away rejoicing, and the other man went on.

The two young men went again to the old woman's lodge and she welcomed them back and said, "Eat, my grandsons, for this will be your last meal." One of the men said to the other, "That is the second time the old woman has made the same remark. It sounds like a threat. We will go and report to the soldiers." The soldiers listened to their story, then sent a woman to call the old woman. She thanked the messenger and came to the soldiers. A chief asked her what she meant by her words. She said, "One day a stranger came here looking for someone to gamble with. One of our young men who is a great gambler played and won. The stranger proposed another game and this game he won. He is from above. He is coming back now to destroy our village. There is only one way to prevent it. That man up there wants me for his wife. I do not want him. But the only way to save us is for this gambler to pretend to marry me. Then we will have a ceremonial dance at which each man will offer his wife to a spirit and the Sun will be sure to take me and will then not destroy us." The chiefs sent for the gambler and asked him, "Do you recall the time you were beaten in gambling by a stranger?" At first he could remember nothing but at length he recalled how the stranger had finally won and had gone away rejoicing. They told him that he had brought them trouble and must now announce a ceremony. The Moon who was a friend to the tribe heard about it and came to the Sun and said, "Let us go down there." The old woman bathed and burned incense and made herself look young again and handsome so that the Sun would want to have her. She wore her robe over her naked body and kept close to the gambler as if she were his wife. The first night they had a dance. The Sun refused to come near. The fourth night the Moon coaxed the Sun into the group. As soon as he came in, the woman told the gambler to take his pipe and lay it before the Sun and say, "Father, take your daughter-in-law." The old woman led the Sun out, pulled off her robe and had intercourse with the Sun. She said, "This means that my people are to be saved!" and she said, "Father, give me one of your villages."

Now the Sun and the Moon are brothers. The Sun favors the

Sioux and the Moon the Mandan. When the Sun returned the people were rejoicing. The Sun said to the Moon, "You were the cause of it. A woman was given to me and I have given that woman one of my villages. My son is down there and he will be killed." When the Sioux warriors advanced upon the Mandan, expecting to destroy them, the Sun had changed his mind and our people (the Mandan) destroyed the whole band.



## 9. BLACK WOLF.<sup>53</sup>

A Hidatsa story told by Ben Benson.

Once there was a Gros Ventre who was a great gambler. A dispute arose between his opponent and himself. He took the gambling-stick made of ash and painted it to represent a snake and broke it to pieces in anger. As a result he was poisoned. Both legs became numb. He went to bed and the numbness increased until his whole body was affected and he lay helpless. The dispute occurred in the summer. By fall he was quite helpless and had to be dragged outside on a mat. He became very poor. When it came time for the winter camp the older wife thought he could not be moved. The mother and younger wife packed up their things secretly and left with the others. Only the two were left in the village.

The older wife said, "Now you have always loved your younger wife, but she is gone and I have stayed here to take care of you. So we will move all our things down near the river where there is water and firewood." The man said he appreciated her kindness. She left him by the fire with water near and went to make a temporary lodge for the winter near to the river. This she made out of limbs of trees. She worked hard all day and when she returned to the lodge there she heard her husband crying and calling the name of the young wife and lamenting the time that must pass before he would see her again. He had always loved her more than the older. Day by day she worked until the dwelling was completed and comfortably arranged with dry grass, a fire, and the doorway so adjusted that no cold could enter. Then she got an old hide and attached to it a rawhide rope and drew her husband to the new dwelling and then went back for the bedding, provisions and utensils. All was now comfortable for the winter. Fearing lest the corn would not last through the winter, she went

<sup>53</sup> In Osage, 36, a guardian spirit saves a man from going on a fatal hunting party by causing his leg to swell, then cures and provides for him. Compare Pawnee, 90-95, 106-109.



out to look for blueberries, artichokes and other plants to store away in the cellars. Coming home one evening she heard her husband crying and calling his young wife's name and saying how he would die if he could not see her again. She was angry and reproached him, saying, "If she had loved you she would have stayed with you. But she has other sweethearts now."—"I know she has other sweethearts, but it makes me sad to think about her!"

The woman told him that when she went out in the morning she saw little animals with big ears and white spots behind and asked what they could be. He told her they were hares and were good to eat and he directed her to find snares left in the village and arrange them in the path with grass over them and a limb bent to spring so that the hare could not escape. She brought the snares from the village and all day they repaired them and at night she set them out along the path. In the morning in each snare was a little cottontail and the woman was tickled to death. She said, "How lucky we are! we shall have meat and soup!"

One day as she went to the village a light snow had fallen and she noticed some whitish birds with black streaks on their wings. The husband told her they were snowbirds and very good eating; if she could find snares for them they could live on the meat. She brought back four snares from the village, the man repaired them and showed her how to set them by covering them with dirt and setting weights at the ends of the poles. She shelled out certain black seeds called *shan-she-te* and scattered them over the ground. As fast as she could take the birds out of one snare there were a flock about another. She brought a basketful of birds back to her husband, cooked the Snowbirds, feathers and all, then cleaned them and plucked off the feathers afterwards. The birds were kept frozen outside and brought in to eat as they wanted them.

Again the wife came home and said, "As I go after wood I come upon animals with horns and big ears and when they run they look red." The husband bade her look for a plant called "Rope-in-the-timber." He took out the fibers and twisted them into rope. When it was long and thick enough he made a loop and tied a stick at one end so that if the deer dragged the stick through the timber the crosspiece would catch in the timber and



the deer in pulling to free itself would choke itself to death. When it was completed, the old wife fixed the snare on the deer path. Early in the morning she found that a deer had been caught and, tracing it, she found a large doe. This she dragged to the door and her husband rejoiced and told her how to skin the deer, cut out the parts and roast the meat. That night the two had as glorious a time together as if there were a houseful.

One day she went up to the village and when she returned she said, "Today I have brought some buffalo pauch, liver, intestines, book-gut (as we call the stomach because it has the shape of a book), kidneys and fat."—"How can that be?"—"As I was coming into the village I saw a person come down from the foothills chasing a buffalo. He killed close to the timber and without speaking to me he dragged away the buffalo and left these things there." Four days the same thing occurred. The fourth time she became curious and told her husband that she would follow the man's path over the divide and see where he came from. The husband was not in favor of the plan, but she left everything convenient for him to help himself, made cornballs to take with her, and told her husband she might not come back that night but if she were gone four nights he might think that she was in some trouble.

All day she traveled and in the evening came to a camp by some timber which seemed all loaded with meat. Inside she heard voices asking whether "daughter-in-law" was on the way. A man came out to see, saw her standing there and said, "Your daughter-in-law is here." They took her inside and gave her food and when she had eaten she offered the cornballs and said, "Father-in-law, here is the food I have brought; divide it among you all." In no time they had eaten it all up. She told them about her husband lying helpless and they said, "He is our son and that is why we have provided for him. It was we who sent the cottontails and the birds and the deer because you are poor and helpless," and they promised that four days after her return they would come down to doctor her husband. They gave her a great bundle of jerked meat to take home and gave her snowshoes to make the journey easier. They said, "Prepare us cornballs, boiled corn, sweet corn and whatever you have. We shall perform a ceremony and you shall feed us and our son shall be healed." Early in the

morning she started back with the pemmican that her fathers-in-law gave her permission to carry back to their son-in-law. Late in the evening she stood at the door of the lodge. Within she heard her husband weeping and lamenting for his younger wife. She was vexed and thought, "All this time I have been helping him, yet now he is calling his younger wife's name!" and she reproached him. He told her how anxious he had been for her safety and how he had named the younger woman only because he was unwilling to call her name (trying to smooth it over!) and she related to him all that had happened and how the men were to come on the fourth day and she was to prepare cornballs and a sweatbath and have sacred objects ready and they would take the poison from his leg.

The next day she went back to the village and prepared the old lodge for the visit. On the fourth day she looked up to the divide and saw her fathers-in-law coming single file along the trail, the older carrying an old buffalo head. This she carried inside the lodge and laid in the most honored place in the center and all sat around it in a half circle. The head man told them to build up a fire and drag the sick man between the buffalo head and the fire. One carried a gambling stick. They told the man that his lameness was caused by two great bull snakes and these they proceeded to draw out by placing the stick first on one leg and then on the other where the heads of the snakes were and then drawing out the snakes, wriggling, and casting them into the fire. After this he got up and walked like an ordinary man. They told him to go over to the sweatlodge and all went in with him. They said, "This will restore your system; after this you will be as you were before being poisoned." They ate the food prepared by their daughter-in-law and showed their son how to snare an eagle and trap animals for food. "The buffalo head represents our own body and will be with you in this tent," they said.

These were Black Bear people. It was the old form of eagle trap which was originated in this story.



### 23. BLACK BALD EAGLE<sup>91</sup>

There was a young man by the name of Black Bald Eagle. He was unmarried. He had a father and mother and many other relatives. As he was a very handsome man the girls were all after him, but when they begged him to marry them he refused. At last one day he said, "My friends, you are all anxious that I should marry, so now I will choose a wife. Let all the women from middle age down play shinny. Perhaps I may see some one whom I like." It was heralded through the village that all married women were to be excluded from the game on the morrow; young widows and divorced women were to play. Black Bald Eagle was to look on and pick out a wife.

In the afternoon the women came out to the field. It was nearly two hundred yards long. At each end was a mound as goal. A judge was stationed at each mound. There were an equal number of players on each side. A ball was placed in the middle of the field and the game was to strike the ball between the mounds. Every time the ball was so struck a point was won. Black Bald Eagle saw no woman whom he liked. The next day the older girls played. All came out beautifully dressed in robes of the Rocky mountain sheep, spotlessly clean. The young men pointed out one girl and another, singling out the beauties. Black Bald Eagle saw no one whom he liked. On the third day the younger girls played, those just below marriageable age, that is, about sixteen. On the fourth day the girls from ten to fourteen played. There was one girl among them who was shabbily dressed, with tangled hair and leggings carelessly tied. She carried an ear of corn half roasted and as she played with all her might, she dug her teeth into the corn. This was the girl of his choice. His friends were however disgusted.

When the girls went home, he stayed up on the lodge watching this girl as she wandered through the village, stopping to

<sup>91</sup> Compare the Arikara story of Young Eagle, who becomes an ugly little boy when he goes home with his wife (Dorsey, 129-134), and the Pawnee story of Burnt Belly, who leads a war-party (Dorsey, 156-159. For further references see Oglala Sioux, "The Grandchild" and note 3 (JAFL 43: 391).

scure place. Everyone is busy breaking camp and bringing in the ponies. Everyone starts except the chief. He stands in front of each man's seat in the bowery and calls each hunter by his real name, shouting at the top of his voice, telling him to come along, then the women and children. This is to show that the man's spirit is come again into his body. The belief is that in this way the person's life is prolonged. If the chief should omit a name they think that its owner is to have a short life. The first camp is not very far along but must be near the water. Here they build a sweat lodge and each man brings a buckskin or jerked meat as a gift to the chief. He brings his eagle feathers to the chief and the chief takes a bunch of sage and sings a mystery song and sprinkles the man and his feathers, and so on down to the women and children, and blesses them. This ends the eagle trapping.

During the ceremony in the bowery the chief hunter alone can clean a pipe. Even if there are two pipes, he alone is permitted to clean them. A sharp stick is left standing up near where the chief hunter sits, on which to clean the pipe. He has another stick besides for cleaning the pipes. A mound of ashes accumulates beside him. This the utility man leaves untouched when he sweeps out the bowery.

Another office is that of the man who reports upon the weather. The chief appoints the man to do this and the office is unpaid. This man observes the direction of the wind. Long ago the method was to tan a bear's intestines soft like a ribbon, make a bunch of it and place it outside, tied to a long stick. The direction of the wind was to be judged by observing the ribbons on the end of the pole. If the wind was from the north-west it was regarded as a good time for the trapping because it is a cool wind and eagles fly against the wind. If the report is favorable the hunter must get into the trap before sunrise.

A small black bear hide is used for this mystery. The paw is cut with the claws on. This skin is very sacred. It is kept hung on a crossed stick with a rawhide over it for protection. In the sacred lodge it is placed at the left of the buffalo skull in the sacred place by the inner left hand post of the lodge, and with it are placed whatever other mysteries individual trappers bring to the lodge. The claw is placed with these things.



Left Hand was starting out on the war path and Coyote was going with him. Coyote ordered the buffalo skin at the door to be drawn aside. He did up his hair in the fashion called "hair extension," took his weapons, ran around in a circle inside the lodge in imitation of a coyote, fell flat on his face on the doorstep and peeped over it as if looking over a hill, then he went out. The boy watched him all the time. Four days after the war party had left the boy told his wife, "I have made up my mind to go with my brother's war party." He told her to ask her mother to prepare cornballs for the way. When she told her mother what her husband had asked for the sister said, "That is right, let him go off. The wolves may get him. My husband does not like his smell." The boy said to his wife, "I want us to go together. Take a round white squash. Over the hill I will change into an eagle and you turn into a swan. When I dive down at you, roll the squash and it will turn into a rabbit and I will catch the rabbit and lay it upon a stone. Keep looking at me until I disappear. I will go ahead of the party and kill the enemy. My brother Chickadee shall have the second honor. When I return I will stand on the lodge in the form in which you first knew me. Then bring me water in a white horn." The boy and his wife went out from camp. He pounced upon the rabbit as he had described to her, and then he disappeared westward. Swan Woman picked up the rabbit and went home. When her father saw it he wondered, because she was a woman and he saw that the rabbit had been caught by a bird.

That evening Bald Eagle sighted the war party. He took the form of a little boy and came over the hill. Left Hand seated him next to himself and gave him food. About noon the scouts came by shouting "West of here along the coolee comes a man with a dog." Among the scouts was Coyote and he turned into a coyote. The boy took his brother Chickadee and they turned into an eagle and a bird and flew through the air. All the birds were startled. He dived down upon Coyote, but Coyote dodged and ran and Eagle hit him on the side of the head only. When the two came in sight of the man with the dog, Eagle became a man, killed and scalped the enemy and allowed Chickadee the second honor. Half the scalp he gave to the war chief, the other

half he kept for his wife. As for Coyote, he never appeared again. Eagle bade them take the dog home to his wife and he took bird form and flew home to the camp and stood on top of the lodge in his first form as a young chief. When Coyote's wife saw the handsome stranger she ran inside and told her sister. Swan Woman said nothing, but rose, filled a horn of the Rocky mountain goat with water and gave it to her husband. To her sister's question she explained that this was her husband.

Four days later the war party returned and ran about the outside of the village calling the names of Bald Eagle and Chickadee. They gave the half scalp to Bald Eagle's wife and she gave it to her husband who presented it to his mother-in-law in order to gain the privilege of addressing her, otherwise, according to the custom among these Indians, he would have had to address her always through a third person.<sup>92</sup>

Now when Swan Woman had called the young men of the village incompetent she meant that they had no medicine which would draw buffalo to the village, or cause rain to fall, or gain victory in battle. After Bald Eagle had left his own village the people went hungry for buffalo meat and the country lacked rain. When their child was born Swan woman took different kinds of corn and went back to her husband's own country and village. The announcer summoned all the people to Bald Eagle's lodge. Swan Woman spread a robe on the floor and broke a cornball over it. The corn multiplied so that everyone was supplied. She filled up the corn cellars. Hence it is that when a man marries, the wife brings food to her husband, because Swan Woman brought corn to her husband's people. The husband called the buffalo and the people were supplied with meat. In the course of time, however, one of his sisters-in-law jokingly pulled at his robe and drew him toward her. The wife said, "I am going home. If you marry another your wife will die; if again, that wife will die also." The husband placed the same curse upon his wife. That is why people today are afraid to remarry.

<sup>92</sup> If a Gros Ventre (Hidatsa) wishes to address his mother-in-law directly he brings her a scalp-lock won in battle and says, "Here is a cane to be used by an old woman," and he offers the lock as if it were a cane. The mother-in-law has then the right to carry the scalp in the victory dance. See also Maximilian 2: 283.



## 10. THE HUNTER WHO LOST HIS SCALP.<sup>54</sup>

A Mandan story told by Ben Benson.

There was once a great hunter who had for his wife the elder daughter of the chief of the village. The chief's name was Sun. The hunter always left his wife at home when he went away to the hunt and stayed away a long time. As there were no dogs then, he had to tie the game into bundles and haul it a long way to some designated spot and go back for more. So he would do until it was all hauled home.

Sun's other daughter married one of the leading men of the village, but the two were shiftless and would do nothing for themselves. They stayed at their father's house and consumed what was brought in by the hunter to the father-in-law. As Sun was chief of the village he had people coming to the house all the time and these began to despise the shiftless man and his wife who were so lazy that they provided nothing while the hunter provided for the wife and his father-in-law and the other two besides.

In those days white buffalo robes were scarce, hence a white buffalo robe was a thing highly prized. If a visiting tribe brought a white buffalo robe into a village, all the people would collect such valuables as they had—skins of red birds, buffalo robes tanned, heads of meadow larks and dried bears' intestines which they used as ribbons—and give these to the visitors and the visitors would give the white buffalo robe in return. Then the people would present the robe to their chief. When this happened the younger daughter would say, "Father, my husband wishes to wear that white buffalo robe." Since she was his daughter he would not refuse her but would give the white buffalo robe to his lazy son-in-law to wear. This made the people angry. They had given all their trinkets for the robe and in their hearts they wished that he would give the robe to the son-in-law who

<sup>54</sup> Maximilian, page 404, notices among the Mandan men who "recover after scalping." For the value placed upon a white buffalo robe see Maximilian, 371, 397.

was the provider for the household. They decided that the next time they got a white buffalo robe they would give it to the hunter.

The hunter went out and as usual killed a great buffalo. He cut it up, broke up the bones for marrow, dried the meat, made pemmican and carried the meat back in two big bundles. Reaching the place where the people had their gambling games he dropped one bundle and went back to fetch the other. As he slung both bundles to his shoulder he felt some drops on his head and, feeling his head with his hand, he discovered that his scalp was gone. He covered his head and, returning to camp with the meat, he called his wife and mother-in-law and told them of the terrible thing that had happened to him and said that he could not return to the village without a scalp as he would be ashamed when people looked at him, and would hence live in the timber out of sight of everyone. Thus he left them.

The women took the bundles to the lodge, which was full of the leading men, cooked the food and placed it in front of the people, who ate and were glad. When they began to smoke the wife of the hunter stepped before them and said, "My fathers, you know what a great hunter my husband is and how he brings you meat which I stay and cook for you, and how you always gave the white buffalo robes when they were brought to you to your younger daughter. Now it has happened to my husband that from the weight of the bundle he has lost his scalp. He has gone I know not where because he is ashamed to appear without a scalp. So now I too am going to leave you. You have a younger daughter and she has a husband who is a man. Let them provide for you." So she took her bedding and went to the house of her husband's family.

The man went to a thick part of the timber where he made a lodge just big enough for himself and cried all night over his loss. During the day he killed an elk and a deer and had plenty to eat, but at night he wept and besought some spirit to take pity upon him. An owl spoke,<sup>56</sup> "Son, many nights you have caused me anxiety by your crying. Go into the woods and gather a quantity of timber-rope. At the end of the plant is a cottonlike sub-

<sup>56</sup> For the owl as soothsayer among the Mandan see Maximilian, 403.



stance. Grease your head thoroughly, put soft cotton all over it, bind the fibres over the cotton and pull the outside covering of a buffalo heart soaked in water over that. Then, whatever you do, do not scratch your head for four nights. If you have will power, when you take off the lining of the heart on the fourth night you will have new hair."

So the first night when it began to itch he remembered and drew his hand back. He sat up late and drove stakes into the ground with snares tied to them so that when he was asleep he could not put his hands up to his head to scratch it. Every night he would waken with the itching of his head and the effort to draw up his hands. On the fourth morning when he took off the lining he found to his joy that he had new hair unlike his original hair in color. It was almost chestnut.

One day as he was in camp a poor boy came along who was out looking for rosebuds and bullberries or whatever he could find. The man welcomed him, gave him a seat and cooked food for him which he devoured eagerly. The boy tried to make himself useful, and when he found that the hunter lacked a pail to draw water he ran back to the village and entering the lodge of the hunter's parents he asked for a pail for his brother. The wife made inquiries and learning that the pail was for her husband she prepared cornballs and accompanied the boy back to the lodge in the timber and there was great joy at the meeting of the woman and her husband.

The hunter had continued to be a successful hunter and had large quantities of meat stored. This they determined to bring back to the lodge of the hunter's family in the village. When all learned of the hunter's return with a new growth of hair they were glad and went to visit him. He fed them with meat and they brought him presents. From that time the people ceased going to Sun's lodge and instead formed the habit of visiting the lodge of the successful hunter. In course of time they appointed him their chief.

## 24. THE PET MAGPIE

Told by Ben Benson, June 19, 1931. Interpreter, Sam Newman.

When I went away out west trapping eagles I heard a story. I will tell it just as it was told to me. A party went out eagle trapping, a man and his wife and younger brother and another man and his wife, five in all. Now the boy had some time before found a nest of magpies and he had taken one home, fed and reared it. When they started out, he took his magpie along with him. His idea was to use the magpie at the pit-hole to signal the approach of a bird. They first put in a few days hunting deer and buffalo for meat to live on during the eagle-trapping season. When the trapping began, the older brother had no luck but the other man caught many eagles. When it came time to start for home, the older brother said to the boy, "It must be that your magpie brings bad luck. Better let him go." The boy felt badly, but he took the magpie over to the pit and put pounded meat, tallow and water there in the pit and left the magpie. Then they went on the road toward home. As evening came, the boy sat about without speaking. When his brother asked him why he was sad the boy said he was thinking of his pet bird and he insisted on going back to get it. Early in the morning he started back to the camp. He went over to the pit where the bird was, and there was the bird singing. He gathered up scraps of meat, pounded it up and fed the bird, then filled up a buffalo horn with water, made a fire, and lay on the floor of the pit crying. About midnight the bird told him to stop crying and come count his tail feathers. There were twelve feathers in the magpie's tail. The bird said, "Tomorrow morning leave me by the hole and we will catch twelve eagles, then we will go home." The boy still lay crying. The bird said, "If you are not satisfied with that, count my wing feathers also." He held up one wing and the boy counted sixteen wing feathers. The bird said "The next day you shall catch sixteen more eagles." Still the boy kept on crying, crying,



crying, crying, until nearly daylight. The bird said, "You have counted my tail and one wing. Come and count my other wing." The boy counted sixteen feathers more. The bird said, "The first day you shall catch twelve eagles, the next sixteen, the next sixteen eagles more. Take only the tail feathers and scatter the rest, then some day there will be many eagles. On the fourth day an enemy will approach. He will fall back and I will peck at his eyes, then you come and kill him and take his scalp. That will be the first enemy you have killed. It will make you a warrior, it will make you a leader. After that we will gather up the tail feathers and go home."

All this happened. After killing the man they ran for their lives, carrying the magpie tied to the boy's head. They looked back and saw a band of warriors pursuing them. The man they had killed was the enemies' scout. The warriors had come upon his body and seen the feathers scattered all about. They had searched a long time for the tails and this had given the boy a start, but now they were almost upon him. The magpie said to the boy, "Put me down." It stood and shook its feathers and a sleet fell and blinded the warriors. In the storm the boy and the bird came safely home.

When they reached a place outside the village where brush grew along the creek the magpie said, "You and I are now brothers and we want a companion to cook for us. Leave me here and run about the village and show that you have won a scalp. The chief will offer you his daughter. She will wear a white buffalo robe. This will be yours. Take the robe and say, 'My pet magpie, here is my robe!' and I shall hear you. Then make the robe into a bundle and put it up in the tent. But do not forget me. Be sure to come back and take me to your new home or I shall starve." The boy ran about the village several times and there was great excitement. The feathers he gave to his brother. The chief told his youngest daughter to dress up and invite the young man in, as he might come to be a prominent man. All happened as the magpie had promised. But the young man did forget the bird. The girl was so beautiful that he could think of nothing else. One day he said, "I remember something."—"What is it?"—"Ask your mother if she has dry meat."—"Yes,

she has."—"Make some pemmican and take a horn of water." When they came to the creek the magpie was almost dead, but the food and drink revived it and they all came home together, the bird flying a little in advance and then resting, until they reached the lodge.

The young man arranged a pole across the bed for the magpie's perch. Sometimes the bird would fly out at the chimney hole and fly about outside all day, then come back through the hole at night. One day one of the old women was cooking corn when the bird flew in and some of the soot fell into the pot. The old mother said, "That big-nosed bird comes in and dirties our food!" That night the bird sat with its head down and would not eat. The next day it flew away and did not come home. The young man said, "Where is our bird?" The story came out. One man had seen the bird on a tall tree. They cooked pemmican, filled a horn with water and carried it to the tree; there they coaxed the bird to come down and eat and made excuses for the old woman.

It was winter time and the magpie was now full grown. The bird said, "Go and tell the people to gather in wood, ice, water, and have plenty of food on hand. There will be a storm for four days. I am going up north and will drive hundreds of buffalo down here. I shall be gone four days." The storm came. The wind blew so hard that the buffalo had to run with the wind and the magpie thrust its beak into their backs and urged them along. When the storm cleared there were hundreds of buffalo about. The men killed all they could the first day, all they could the second day, all they could the third day; the whole village had all the meat they could use.

One day when the corn was high and the cornsilk just coming out, it thundered, the rain fell and washed out all the corn, washed off the dirt roof from the lodge, filled up the coulees and ravines with water. All the people were frightened. The magpie flew away and disappeared. When it returned it said, "There are two young eagles who want to marry your wife here. They are jealous and are bringing this storm. We shall all die unless we go out and kill these two men." The magpie flew above the two eagle men who were causing the rain and sent hail down, small,



thick, and cold. The two men froze and died and the weather cleared. But when the magpie came back he said that he had done wrong in killing these two eagle men, although he had to do this to save the people. He must now leave them and go west, but the young man might still pray to him and he would listen and help him.

The buffalo told the young man to get the skin of another magpie and tie it with a string to the top of the lodge and let the skin float over his lodge to show that the magpie was with him, helping him.



Mr. and Mrs. White Owl.  
a Mandan couple.



## 11. THE LOST BOY.<sup>55</sup>

A Crow story told by Bear's Arm.

The Gros Ventre are one people with the Crow. The tales we tell they relate also over there. This is a Crow Indian story.

The Crow were once out on a hunt. The buffalo grew scarcer and scarcer. The people had eaten all the meat and grew hungry. The leading men of the camp said, "Let us go to a certain river that abounds in game so that we may eat meat again." The announcer went through the camp and soon they were on the way and made camp along the river. As was the custom of those days, the fast runners went out ahead and surrounded the buffalo herd as best they could, then they drew in closer and the buffalo began to mill around while the people began the killing until they had despatched the whole band. The women and dogs then came and hauled in the best meat, leaving some parts lying outside. The next day they sighted a second herd. The announcer sent them out to surround it and warned the women to look out lest a child should be lost, for at that camp a boy was known to have been lost. The children must be kept in at night; it was a little after noon that the child had been lost.

One man who had an only son about ten years old warned his wife to keep watch of the child. The camp lay on either side of the river, which was fordable. Along the bend the land was high, the water having washed away part of the land by the river. As the child was out playing with the boys while the mother watched him, an old woman came along to her and said, "I just came over here to tell you what evil things those people are saying about you!" While the woman listened the boys disappeared. When she followed them the son was not among them and they knew nothing about him. She inquired from tent to tent and the old men had the boys called in but he was nowhere to be found.

When the husband returned he tossed in a bundle of meat and

<sup>55</sup> Compare the story of disappearing children among the Cheyenne, Kroeber, 172-174.

said, "Take this and give some to our boy."—"I have lost our boy," she said, and she told what had happened. He ran from tent to tent but could find no trace. When they broke camp he watched each boy pass but could not find his son. He resolved to remain behind four days, sending his wife on with the rest. He came back to the lodge, doubled up his fist and pounded the earth, bled at the nose and wept. For three nights he remained there and on the morrow about noon he noticed a raven flying toward him and cawing. It came closer and closer as if it feared nothing and lighted only a few feet away. During all this time the man had neither eaten nor drunk. The raven spoke and said, "On top of this big hill you will find buffalo manure flattened out to cover a wide space. Remove this and at noon the sun will reveal the entrance to a chasm. There your boy is. From every tribe that comes here one is drawn in. They begin to intermarry. All kinds of tribes are down there. On a cedar tree hang all kinds of head bands. The being down there talks the sign language and is readily understood. His face is concave and has one eye on the forehead. He has long hair and a horn that curls over the head. His tail is a snake. His kettle walks by itself to the fire. His servant is a human being held as a slave. When he wants to eat the servant takes a headband, fits it to the head to which it belongs and kills the person, chops him up and throws him into the kettle. They do not fear death but stand quietly to be slain. The river is called 'the river of plenty;' there is always game on which he fattens the captives before he eats them. Your child is there now and he will not be killed at once. Follow your camp and gather up the old men and ask them to select six of the bravest young men and bring them here armed with stone hatchets and a pipe of tobacco. On this side of the hill is a buffalo trail leading down to the water. When you get to the deep part of the water, hold together and you can go just as if you were walking on dry land. Say nothing but walk up to the being and place the pipe in front of him. He will say, 'What is it?' You say, 'I want to kill you.' Let all the men be ready to jump on him and pound him to death, then cut him up, throw the pieces on the fire and whatever bones are left put in the kettle and boil them. Ask the servant what kind of a spirit he is and if he says a human being,



then spare him. Cut the cedar tree up and throw it also on the fire. Lead out all the people and they will fill the hillside, some holding children by the hand. The spirits disapprove of this stealing of children and have sent me to tell you this. Do not fear the swirling water. When you have lead out all, hold them together on the hillside and I will fly over and caw and the people of different tribes will separate themselves and know their own language. So remember the raven in this matter."

It was thus that these Indians got the name of the Crow.

## 25. CEREMONY FOR EAGLE TRAPPING <sup>93</sup>

The story of the Old Woman's grandson explains the origin of the ceremonies connected with arrow and basket making. Coyote is the utility man and fire tender in these two ceremonies and in a third called the Bear ceremony. A fourth ceremony, which is employed by eagle trappers, is the Wolverine (or little black bear) ceremony.

Old Wolverine<sup>94</sup> is in charge of this ceremony. It opens with the trapping season, which begins late in the fall and lasts until the first snowfall. The symbolic object which is the main mystery in the eagle trapping ceremony is a Wolverine's paw dried. This they call Boney-feet. The eagle catcher has the right to trap eagles through this Boney-feet. Any person, even though he does not belong to the same family or clan as the person who owns the ritual, may purchase the right to trap by giving clothing or ponies or provisions to the person who owns the mystery and asking him for the ritual. He is then instructed until he knows all the songs. One medicine man has the right to teach the ritual to only four persons. They in turn may teach four others. Even a son must buy the right to the ceremony.

During the ceremonial season all in the camp personate wolverines. They must always be so called, by prefixing the words "wolverine" or "female wolverine" to their own name. Certain things also have different names from those used in ordinary seasons. Water is called "no tendon," hence "flowing, liquid." The word used for the act of the eagle in lighting upon its prey is the same as that for hugging a girl. Ceremonial names are given to the four classes of eagles. Ordinary names are never

<sup>93</sup> For Mandan and Hidatsa eagle trapping see Maximilian 2:348; Wilson, PAMNH 30:99-245.

For the four kinds of eagles trapped see Arapaho, 17. In a Cheyenne story (JAFL 13:163-164) the use of eagle feathers as ornaments is taught by eagles, who shake themselves so that the feathers fall out.

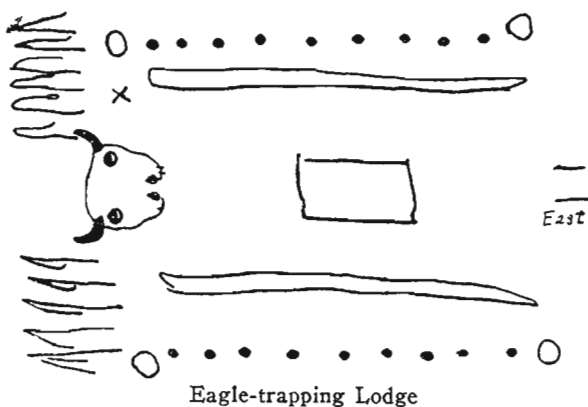
<sup>94</sup> Dr. Bowers thinks that the small black bear, not the wolverine, is the sacred animal of the eagle lodge. Bear's Arm insists upon the wolverine. *Ha-si-da i-tā-kā*, Wolverine grandfather, is the name he uses, which Wilson translates "black bear."



employed. When a command is given one says "Boney-feet asks you to do so-and-so." During the trapping season men must refrain themselves from their wives and keep the body pure. The women do the cooking and bring in food to the bowery. Only such songs may be sung as belong to this special ceremonial. [During the season, that is, a special order of society prevails and a particular ritual marks the occasion as one presided over by a special order of beings.]

The leader of the ceremony, the Old Wolverine, appoints the person who is to serve as utility man to tend the fires, bring water, and act as general entertainer.<sup>95</sup> From this time on he is called by his official name throughout the ceremony. This is true also of the Old Wolverine's assistant and the two men next him in office. All others are Expert Shooters and are so designated in order of rank.

The bowery is not arranged like an ordinary ceremonial lodge. It is set on four posts, but is rectangular not round in shape, and faces the east, where the entrance to the bower is placed. Opposite, at the west end, is laid the sacred bear skull, for the Wolverine ceremony is a branch of the Bear ceremony. The fire is in



Eagle-trapping Lodge

the center, but, as in the snakes' lodge in the story of "Grandmother's Grandson," two logs are laid longitudinally of the rectangular space on each side of the fire, on either side of which

<sup>95</sup> Wilson says that the grizzly bear is the utility man in this ceremony.

are ranged the members of the company. The Old Wolverine sits at the extreme right hand of the Bear's skull. Beside him sits his assistant, and directly facing him sits the leader of the expert shooters with his assistant beside him. The utility man sits on the left hand side of the door. When everything is ready within the sacred bower the utility man announces, "Since you are impersonating wolverines, from henceforth none are to sing old songs. If you wish to sing, this Boney-feet has many songs. So anyone who wishes to sing must sing these songs and no others. If you are tempted to get angry, put away from you that temptation and show gladness instead of hatred. Humble yourselves, fast and do penance, for these things bring you luck. And if any of you are so lucky as to trap enough eagles, I shall stop your trapping and lend your trap to some one who is less lucky."

In the evening a great sweat lodge is arranged and the men must sit around it in the same order as in the bower. Sometimes women come in also by the doorway. The chief pours water upon the redhot stones and sings. All on his row sing with him. Those on the opposite row wail. The women sing along with the men. Sometimes it is exceedingly effective.

Sometimes candidates present themselves at this time for torture. This is voluntary, but all are glad when a youth thus presents himself. He brings a pipe to the expert shooter, who passes it to the chief, who sings religious songs. He has the utility man prepare the incense. The utility man takes a coal and passes it to the chief. The chief takes two gourds lashed together to serve as rattles. These are first censed, then he sings to the beat of the rattles. At the end of the songs the man who is to endure torture is lanced by the chief hunter while his skin is held up by the assistant, and thongs are inserted. This hunter is painted on face and head. A sacred feather is inserted across his head. Then comes the censuring. A pipe is lighted by the utility man with a live coal and passed to the head man, who takes puffs and offers it to the skull or to any other mystery. The man is taken out to a tall tree where a rawhide is tied for the purpose. The rawhide is inserted to the two sticks and the man must run back and forth during the whole time that the singing continues.

[Bear's Arm underwent this initiation at the age of eighteen.]



I was lanced, then I was taken outside and almost suspended by the thongs and I had to run around with my feet barely touching the ground. It was late in the fall and it was cold. [Like the other novitiates] I was stripped naked. The head man sang a long time. Then he told the expert shooter, "He has cried long enough and it is late." The man came out and took off the rawhide from the stakes and I was brought in. They could not pull out the stakes because they were frozen tight. They had to warm their hands to thaw the stakes out. The whole skin was torn loose and it was when it settled back that the pain was hardest to bear. I consider this the severest pain that a man can suffer. The flesh swelled up at the places where it had been lanced, but the heat of a sweat bath was the only doctoring used to reduce the swelling. For that night and the next day nothing was expected of the novices. After that they were asked to perform services. The utility man would say, "Boney-feet asks you to do so-and-so." On that occasion I caught three eagles, two of these a pair from the same mother, so that was enough to complete a war bonnet. [Twelve feathers are taken from each eagle and thirty-six are used for a war bonnet. Eaglets are born in pairs, a male and a female.]

When an Indian has trapped an eagle, he brings it home on his back, alive if it is to be used as a decoy, with feet and wings tied together. If the eagle is killed at the pit, it is brought home in the same way, but the feathers are pulled and tied together on the back of the bird. As the trapper approaches the lodge, he must cry so that the women, whatever they are doing, may drop their work and run inside the tents with the children and dogs and remain there until the man has given over the eagle. He stands at the door of the bower, not at the right where a door customarily opens, but at the left, and cries for joy upon the spirit. The utility man, or another for him if he is not within, says, "What is it, mysterious one?" as if representing the spirit. The man must name the eagle, not by its common but by its ceremonial name, like "Tips-are-black" for a young eagle. The utility man takes the feathers, burns incense over them, and places them at the sacred place at the end of the bowery. If the eagle is brought back alive, it is staked at the back of the bowery in a

small enclosure where enough stakes are set for each hunter to keep his decoy. Whoever speaks first for the eagle may buy it from the trapper, if he is already supplied with a decoy. The chief hunter performs for the purchaser the service of attaching the rawhide to the eagle's leg and lashing it down to the stake. After the season is over the purchaser must give the eagle back to the one who trapped it, whose privilege it is to have the eagle killed and take its plumes.

When the eagle is brought in, Boney-feet is brought out. The sacred pipe is filled with Indian tobacco. Without lighting it, the Chief Hunter goes over to it on his hands and knees and says, "How sweet is the pipe and tobacco of Boney-feet!" This is a prayer to bring the eagle down close to the trap. His assistant does the same, and so on down that row, then the other row begins. If the men want to look over the eagle feathers, the utility man who has taken charge of them brings them all out. He takes out a [bunch of] feathers and passes it to the head hunter and says something like this, "Take it and use it as you think best—you may like it to cool your squash with!" As the bunch passes around the circle, each may add some feathers just as if it were a real gift. Then all goes back to the chief. He takes them all in his hand and places them on the bear's skull saying, "Here, Old One, take these feathers and stick them on your head. But really they do not belong to you. They belong to your offspring. All they want is to have you keep them for them. We have heard that this Old One has a very broad back and we wish to have that back filled up."

When every man on each side has a live eagle to use as a decoy the chief declares, "You are all supplied with decoys. From now on, if you catch an eagle, put him to sleep in the place where you are [that is, in the pit]." The trapper conceals himself in the pit. The eagle swoops down, then up, then settles down, looking up not down. When the trapper catches one leg, the other is quickly pushed after it. He must catch that leg and hold the two with one hand while he catches the wings in the other. He lashes the wings together. then the legs and sometimes the feet are tied down also. Then the feathers are worked out and laid side by side and laced in the order in which they occur. To kill the eagle



a man places the snare about the neck, lays the eagle down on the ground facing the east, and, with one leg bent on the back of the eagle, pulls the noose until the bird falls asleep. He must however first chew black medicine and spit it over the snare.<sup>98</sup> [It is the medicine introduced by Two Men. If it is spit upon a snake the snake will lie helpless.] Eagles cry with a whistling sound, Whe-e, whe-e. When the eagle is dead he carries it to the bower crying and the dead eagle is handled just like the live eagle and placed in the same corral with the live eagles.

On the nights when they have brought in an eagle the utility man gets up and dances to the song and the men give a war-whoop. He acts the clown and creates laughter. He may stare at a man until the man says, "Do you see anything behind me?" then he will answer, "Yes, I see a beautiful woman!" or "I see a beautiful horse!" meaning that all his wishes will be fulfilled.

The head man gives each person a name to go by during the eagle-trapping and the person goes by the name given during the season, but if he should stumble, he reports such a fall to the head man and is given another name. It is as if he had died.

The time to end the trapping season is in the hands of the head man. Generally it is before the ground freezes and when the slush ice begins to run on the Missouri, but it may be prolonged if any man has failed to trap an eagle. When all have been successful, the chief says, "It is now spring and the flood of water is here. Let everyone rise up." There is a commotion. The utility man builds a bonfire. Each man who lent his decoy calls upon the chief hunter in succession to put his decoy eagle to sleep. They take the dead eagles and those killed earlier a little distance away in the patch of wood or the coolee where the bowery is usually built. Each man remembers where his own eagles are laid. They send out a scout and pretend that the eagles are the enemy. The scout returns and reports that he has seen so many of the enemy. They start out as if going to attack an enemy, go to the place where the eagles are, give a war whoop, then each takes his own eagle and cuts off the feathers and wings that he wishes. The head man takes down the poles, secures the ashes from the fireplace, the skull, and carries them away to some ob-

scure place. Everyone is busy breaking camp and bringing in the ponies. Everyone starts except the chief. He stands in front of each man's seat in the bowery and calls each hunter by his real name, shouting at the top of his voice, telling him to come along, then the women and children. This is to show that the man's spirit is come again into his body. The belief is that in this way the person's life is prolonged. If the chief should omit a name they think that its owner is to have a short life. The first camp is not very far along but must be near the water. Here they build a sweat lodge and each man brings a buckskin or jerked meat as a gift to the chief. He brings his eagle feathers to the chief and the chief takes a bunch of sage and sings a mystery song and sprinkles the man and his feathers, and so on down to the women and children, and blesses them. This ends the eagle trapping.

During the ceremony in the bowery the chief hunter alone can clean a pipe. Even if there are two pipes, he alone is permitted to clean them. A sharp stick is left standing up near where the chief hunter sits, on which to clean the pipe. He has another stick besides for cleaning the pipes. A mound of ashes accumulates beside him. This the utility man leaves untouched when he sweeps out the bowery.

Another office is that of the man who reports upon the weather. The chief appoints the man to do this and the office is unpaid. This man observes the direction of the wind. Long ago the method was to tan a bear's intestines soft like a ribbon, make a bunch of it and place it outside, tied to a long stick. The direction of the wind was to be judged by observing the ribbons on the end of the pole. If the wind was from the north-west it was regarded as a good time for the trapping because it is a cool wind and eagles fly against the wind. If the report is favorable the hunter must get into the trap before sunrise.

A small black bear hide is used for this mystery. The paw is cut with the claws on. This skin is very sacred. It is kept hung on a crossed stick with a rawhide over it for protection. In the sacred lodge it is placed at the left of the buffalo skull in the sacred place by the inner left hand post of the lodge, and with it are placed whatever other mysteries individual trappers bring to the lodge. The claw is placed with these things.



In one band of eagle-trappers there was a Crow Indian named Dwellers-in-the-sod-lodges'-horse. When the utility man said "Boney-feet wants you to do so-and-so," he said, "Who is this Boney-feet anyway that we have to fear and obey him." After he had said this four times and no one answered the chief said, "You have spoken four times now of Boney-feet and it is about time you saw him." So the chief called, "Boney-feet, this man has doubts about you. Don't kill him but scare him so that he may know who Boney-feet is." So one day the Crow Indian was out in the breaks and came to a place where a bear was hiding. The bear charged on him and chased him back to camp keeping a little distance behind while he ran and called for help. The camp heard the man calling. Dogs barked, the men turned out, and the bear went back to the breaks. From that time on he was always ready to do anything for Boney-feet and never questioned the service.

According to Ben Benson, the Mandan do not use a claw. If they catch an eagle they take the tails and say, "Old-man-with-ears-back" (so they call the buffalo head in the lodge<sup>97</sup>), we ask you to keep this for us and bring us more." Thus they pray to it. The man brings the eagle to the door of the lodge crying "I burn incense." A man comes and asks what kind it is. The trapper tells what kind of eagle he has caught. He takes the tail feathers and offers them to the buffalo head and kills the eagle.

Eagle trapping time is the time to tell old stories about former eagle hunts, besides other stories. One such story is that about

### **Old Brown Man.<sup>98</sup>**

Old Brown Man said that in his younger days he was a bird. In old age he told trappers how the eagle flew eastward from the Rocky mountains, down the Yellowstone, to Kildeer mountain, down Knife river and back to the northward to a long range of hills and thence to the Rocky mountains again. He said, "I used

<sup>97</sup> Wilson's informant explains the address to the buffalo skull by saying that "in the beginning, when the black bears gave a ceremony, the leaders were always buffalo who gave themselves to be used for food by the [human] people." Compare Arapaho, 327-329.

<sup>98</sup> See Wilson, 187-194.

to fly at one time with two flocks of eagles and see the trapping places and the people. And I thought how I should be reborn among those people and be as one of them." One day when he was very old he was working with his wife in the garden and he told her, "When I was a bird, on those eagle trapping expeditions I went along and bargained with the men how many eagles they should trap — six, eight, ten — under condition that they would favor me. I have done my part toward men. Now that I am old I mean to visit those trapping places and tell my story and they will pay me for it. I will send them to you with the presents and you shall see me again." He stepped on a stone, sprang into the air and flew westward in the form of an old eagle until his wife could follow his flight no longer. When he came to the bower at a trapping place he told the men that the man at the pit to which he came must take him by the leg and offer as sacrifice whatever he could give. The man did so and placed him in the eagle pen in front of the eagles. He stayed for four days, and favored each trapper with success, then he bade them take the gifts to his wife and flew away westward. So he went from one trapping place to the next westward until he had visited four places and the fourth time he flew back to his wife.



## 12. CROW NECKLACE AND HIS MEDICINE CEREMONY.

A Hidatsa story told by Mrs. White Duck, interpreted by Thomas Smith, July, 1929.

Long ago in the fall of the year the Mandan and Gros Ventre Indians used to go out far away from their camps to catch eagles. During the long winter nights they used to sit down and tell stories. My stories I had from old Black Tongue and another old Indian and from my father who died at the age of ninety. My grandfather used to know about medicines and he made out the reservation boundaries for the three tribes. He knew the country, —the names of the mountains, the creeks, everything.

There was a party of Gros Ventre Indians who went out for a hunt from Knife river where the old camp was and, while they were hunting, the Assiniboin came and attacked the hunters. Some got away and were saved. A young man among them looked for his sister and could not find her. So he trailed them to their camp. This man was an Assiniboin who had been as a little boy captured by the Gros Ventre and made a slave. The girl called him brother but was not really related to him. When all was quiet at night he went through the camp to look for his sister. He came to a big tipi and heard talking. Looking through a hole, he saw two men wounded whom he recognized as his own brothers. Now he had shot two Assiniboin in the conflict [and he recognized these as the two he had shot]. Drawing his robe over his head he entered and sat down beside their father, who was his father too. The wounded men told their father to fill his pipe and smoke with the stranger. The boy had not forgotten his own language, so he spoke to the old man and said "Father, it is I." When he told what had happened to him the father put his hands about his neck and fainted; the mother did the same. When he told them it was he who had shot the two brothers they all laughed over it. He told them that he was looking for his sister and the wounded men advised the father to call in the chiefs and tell them about her. So the chiefs arranged not to move camp for four days but to have a

feast and call together all the slaves taken from the Gros Ventres and let them eat. Then they had a dance called the scalp-dance, but the sister was not there. According to the Indian custom, slaves are supposed to belong to the tribe by which they are captured, so the slaves too got up and danced with them. All the slaves knew the young man. They called him "Crow Necklace."

Before the four days were passed he said to the slaves, "Go steal some moccasins and dry meat and one of these nights we will run away." On the last of the four nights they were all prepared. They stole sinew and cut pieces of buffalo hide from the tents for moccasins. It was storming when they left,—young women, old, and children, the young women carrying the children on their backs,—and they ran north instead of east in the direction from which they came. Coming to a dry lake, they lay down in the deep grass and the snow covered them. Meanwhile the Assiniboin discovered their absence and tracked after them but could not find them. They came to the lake but, seeing nothing of them, went home except one who stood looking. Him Crow Necklace crept up and killed and took his scalp.

That night they went until daylight, travelling north-east until they came to another dry lake thick with grass. There they stayed all day. Four days they travelled in the night and hid all day. By this time they were up at the head waters. From there they came around toward the Missouri river and came out where Byron Wilde lives at Armstrong at a place we call "Timber coulee." At that time it was full of timber. Crow Necklace was about to push down an old tree which had an owl's nest on top. An old owl said, "Don't push down that tree or my young ones will get cold. We are the ones who have helped you get around to your home again. It will be best for you to go back to your own tribe; there you will find a chief's daughter waiting to marry you." So when they wanted him to marry some of the women he refused and said, "No! the young ones are my sisters and the old ones are my mothers." The owl directed him, "After leaving this place go directly to the Short Missouri to camp, then on to Wood-trap (right across the river



west of here). Here all the spirits will set traps to catch all kinds of wild animals for you to eat. When you get there, build a tipi out in the bush. Go inside and do not go out, and they will bring you meat themselves." So they did this,—fixed it up nice and went in. Outside they could hear the noise of butchering going on around them. When the noise ceased they went out and found meat cut up or wrapped in hides and laid up on scaffolds. The owl told Crow Necklace that they were now not far from the tribe,—at the next move they would reach home. The next day they moved on until they came to a high hill. Crow Necklace fixed up a skull and painted their faces black. As they approached they saw a woman crying on top of the hill and some one pointed her out to Crow Necklace; it was his sister. He called to her and when she saw him she fainted. Then the whole camp came out to meet them and everybody made much of Crow Necklace. He told the story of their adventures and brought the food for them to eat.

All the hides he had asked to have tanned in order to make medicine after he got back home. Among them was a white buffalo hide. So after he had married a chief's daughter as had been foretold he made medicine in order to worship all the mysterious beings and leave out none of them and that cost him everything he had prepared,—a hundred moccasins, a hundred robes, a hundred blankets—everything in hundreds.

They kept up that ceremony until it came to my grandfather, and my father was the last man who made that medicine, (but this was before the narrator was born). When he joined the church he gave up the old ways, but he taught me part of the ceremony, not the whole. Its name in Gros Ventre is *A-wa-dá-shi-a-dí-a-ke*, which means "Universal worship of the earth," and there is a song but I do not know it. At the time I was a little girl my mother taught me to make one of the ceremonial robes, and when I was a young woman I made one of the ceremonies myself, using calico and blankets and whatever I could bring together.

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The older women of the Gros Ventre dance the Goose dance, those of the Mandan the White buffalo dance. They claim that

they have a cold winter when they dance it, so they do not like to do it. In the dance called "Creek dance" by the Mandan and "Wreath" by the Gros Ventre they wear a wreath of braided grass on their heads made out of a kind of tall grass with a top like oats. After dancing, they throw the wreaths off and the wreaths turn into snakes—the common little green snake, green as grass. Another dance for the young women is the Enemy dance. It sounds as if it came from another tribe. Very little girls dance the Skunk dance, not as a regular thing but when they have killed an enemy. Then they paint their faces black and put white clay over the nose like a skunk. My younger sisters have danced it.



## 26. THE ORIGIN OF EAGLE TRAPPING

### a. Buffalo-walking-alone.

Told by Ben Benson, June 17, 1931.

At the time of this story the chief in a certain Mandan village was named Black Wolf. Just where the village was is uncertain, as there are other chiefs by that name. In the same village was a young man, the son of Buffalo-walking-alone. He was the only boy in the family; all the rest were girls. He dressed very finely and did no work, only walked about in the village courting. One day in the early fall when the leaves began to turn brown one by one on the trees and the moon was bright, as the young man stood at a lodge door waiting for his sweetheart, he heard the town crier going through the village calling certain young men by name and saying that they were asked to go to buttes far away toward the north to look for signs of buffalo. The young man wished the crier to call his name for his sweetheart to hear, so he said to him, "I ask permission to join these young men." The crier said, "You have never been known for swiftness. These men are all long distance runners and I do not believe that you can keep up with them. You have never even been to the outskirts of the village and your endurance has never been tested." Still the young man begged for permission and finally the crier yielded and called his name. He told him to report at the lodge of Black Wolf.

Since the young man was greatly beloved he had all the equipment necessary for the journey when he entered the lodge. Everything was neat and decorated. Even his quiver was tied with eagle feathers. The other young men were not pleased. They agreed among themselves to run as fast as they could until the young fellow was exhausted and then to abandon him. It is the custom on these trips for some one to set the pace, either fast or slow. On this day they ran in the direction of a hill near which they slept for the night. As he was young and strong he kept

pace with them this first day. In the morning they rose early and started out again, leaving him asleep. When he awoke they were gone.

Since it was in the fall of the year the morning was misty and when he started after them he did not know the direction of the buttes. He shouted but found that he was left alone. As he wandered on from place to place he took off his feathers and trinkets and offered them to the buffalo skulls he passed and to stones and boulders until he had given away everything he had and was getting tired. As he rested by a high butte, he saw an eagle flying overhead. It lighted on a flat rock table, flapped its wings, and disappeared. The young man remembered how his father used to decorate himself with eagle feathers and as he thought thus he saw a person emerge from the ground carrying the eagle on his back. When he went over to investigate this strange sight he saw eagle feathers scattered all about the place and a footpath leading away from it. Thinking he could but die otherwise of hunger, he followed the path to a heavily wooded coulee watered by a spring and came to a bowery. All about it were scattered tail feathers such as his father prized. Within he heard people saying, "Buffalo-walking-alone is coming." He thought this strange that they should call him by his father's name. When he entered, the head of the lodge bade prepare food and he ate heartily.

The young man stayed a long time with these people. Every day one of the boys would go out to the trap and bring in eagles one at a time. He asked to go with him. The boy had first to get permission from his father, and the father cautioned the boys to use precaution. When they got inside the pit they could see through the trap an eagle flying. The lad stuck up his hand as bait and the eagle came flying down. The stranger got permission to catch the eagle by the legs and pull it in. Then the boy wanted to go home. Buffalo-walking-alone argued that he could carry two more eagles. The boy protested. Another eagle flew above and the boy put out his hand. Buffalo-walking-alone pulled it in. A third eagle, a spotted one, flew down. The boy refused to put his hand out because his father had warned him against attempting to catch an eagle of this kind because its



descent is so swift it is likely to tear the hand.<sup>99</sup> Buffalo-walking-alone insisted, as it was a fine large bird. Finally the boy was prevailed upon. Down came the eagle so quickly that Buffalo-walking-alone was unable to catch it before it had torn his brother's hand.

The boy cried with pain. Finally they were able to dislodge the bird, then they went home, the younger boy crying with pain. Buffalo-walking-alone followed. The boy's father said, "This would not have happened if you had obeyed me." He put tallow on the wound and wrapped up the hand, but the pain continued. Buffalo-walking-alone felt sad. He knew that it was his fault. He went outside, and as he walked along he saw a plant which, upon tasting the root, he found pleasant and sweetish in flavor. He took it back to the lodge and asked the father to bite off a piece of the root, chew it and blow it upon the swollen hand. The boy was much relieved by this treatment. "We shall always use this root in case of wounds," said the old man. The Indians call this root "black medicine."

After Buffalo-walking-alone had been with these people a long time, one day he climbed a high butte and when his younger brother came to him and asked why he sat there alone so sadly, he said that he was thinking about home. The boy said that he would speak to his father about it. "If he wants to go he shall do so," said the father. The boy told Buffalo-walking-alone that when the father asked how soon he wanted to go he must say "Right away" for if he used the expression "tomorrow" that would mean that he must wait a whole year. So the young man answered "Right away," when he was asked, and the father said, "Very well, you may start tomorrow. It is not very far away, you will reach it by evening." Then he told his son to take his brother out and gather as many eagle tail-feathers as he could carry, as his people valued them highly. The boys gathered a big bunch and wrapped them in a kind of grass that grows in

<sup>99</sup> The prohibition is against the white-headed eagle, according to Wilson, 137.

Compare the Kiowa eagle-trapping story (Parsons, 47) in which the younger brother, against advice, catches hold of a red bird, and the Cheyenne (JAFL 13: 188) in which an eagle carries a man to the sky, but Sun saves him. Both of these adventures are related to the story of the two brothers and the "Big Wind Bag" and to the Spring Boy's disappearance into the heavens.

high places. The old man said, "When you get home, the chief will invite you to his lodge. He has two beautiful daughters and he will give you these in marriage. They shall be my daughters-in-law." The younger brother led him aside and said, "When you return, bring a big cornball with you and keep crying as you come, 'I want the skin pulled off from the body.' Keep insisting upon this and do not forget it." Then they led him outside of the camp and told him to pick two bundles of sage brush and take four steps, placing his foot alternately first on one bundle and then on the other and pushing the bundle each time a step ahead. The old man said, "After you have taken four steps you will see your own village. When the chief invites you into the lodge, and gives you his daughters, he will give you a white buffalo robe. Take it outside the lodge and say, 'Father, this is for you to wear,' and I shall hear you. Then say, 'Father, I wish to keep you and I shall put you in the honored place in my lodge!' When you return here, bring the pipe, a cornball, and my two daughters-in-law, then I shall let you know in how many days I shall go to you."

At the fourth step, the young man found himself on a high hilltop overlooking the village. The sun was low in the west. He sat there watching the familiar sights of the village and the smoke curling up and floating into the air, for he would not go home at once lest the people flock about him. After dark he descended the hill and made his way to his father's dwelling. The door was barred. He cried, "Father, open the door." The father answered, "Even though he says this, I shall not see my son if I open the door." His wife said, "That is my son's voice. Get up and open the door." It was opened and in he came with his bundles of eagle feathers on his back. His father and mother embraced him, they built up the fire and there was joy in their dwelling that night. The next day the father had the eagle feathers arranged in a row behind the fireplace and he went out and called, "My son that was lost is come back. Come and see, all of you, young maidens and all." The people flocked in and were astonished to see him. He described to them the pit for trapping eagles.

Chief Black Wolf sent his oldest daughter to invite him to



their lodge and made a place for him between his two daughters. "Sit between your two wives," he said. He ordered a white buffalo robe placed about his son-in-law's shoulders. The boy told them to set it before him instead as he wished to give it to his father for bedding. Then the old chief knew that something unusual was to happen. The young man went outside and offered it to his foster father and the foster father heard him. He asked the chief and his own father to give him buffalo robes for a ritual ceremony and he asked his wives to pray. When the robes were ready he set out again for the north, taking with him his pipe and a cornball and one of his wives as his foster father had instructed him. When he came close to the camp, he began to cry for the "skin pulled off from the body," and came and stood in the doorway of his foster father's lodge inside the camp. After he had cried a long time they brought him in with his wife and placed them near the door where the younger boy sat at the end of the head man's row. He presented the pipe and the cornball to the old man. All the men of the band had now come inside the lodge. The old man took them, thought a little and said, "My holy one, (for all the men were banded together as if one body) your son here wants a skin. I wish you to think about it." He passed the pipe and cornball to the chief hunter and said, "Use your judgment about this that your son wants." The hunter took the pipe and cornball and said, "I can do nothing," and he passed the gifts down the line until they came to the boy, who passed them along without deliberation until they came again to the head man. Again they were passed with deliberation. When they came to the boy again he said, "Well, I will take it myself," and he broke the ball in two and took the bigger half. [The ball was about as big as a football.] His father said, "Light the pipe before you eat the cornball." The boy passed the lighted pipe to his father and said, "I disapprove of you men, but take this corn and divide it," and he handed on the smaller half.

The next day when the boy was out playing the old man said to his foster son, "Go and find your brother and as you two play together put him to sleep [kill him] by tickling him." Then he showed him how to skin the body without breaking the skin. The young man went out and began to tickle the boy. He begged and

screamed and laughed until he was exhausted and went to sleep. The young man took his flint knife and cut the skin from knee to knee around underneath and worked the skin off. He stuffed the hide with grass and sewed it up where he had cut the hide and left it sitting. In a few days it was dry.<sup>100</sup>

When the young man was ready to go home the old man said, "The fourth day from now, in the evening, we shall come to you and I shall bring your brother along. Prepare cornballs, corn mush, sweet corn, squashes and other vegetables. Make a generous feast. Then I shall show you the mysteries." When the time came, the chief and those with him formed in line ready to start. A lone buffalo appeared and said, "My holy one, I consider that I am the first to be honored in this ceremony. You have adopted a son and will make his children and grandchildren your own. I live in this country and if you take me as your leader, your children will be provided with the meat which I can furnish them." Coyote appeared and said, "My holy one, I consider myself a powerful one and able to bring blessings upon your children and I want to be included in this ceremony." Bear appeared and said, "I am strong and able to perform any service you wish; include me also. I am quick at making pemmican and I will bring some on my back to the ceremony and you can distribute it among your children." Snake came along and said, "My holy one, I am the wooden pillow to be used during the eagle trapping. I will bring you luck. What I like best is the eagle plume. When you are successful, make offerings of the plumes and I shall stick them in my head. While the ground is still unfrozen break up the camp so that I may descend into the ground." Crow came and said, "My holy one, consider me also. I shall serve as a decoy and

100 In Wilson (223-225), Little Bear accepts the pipe. "The little lean man who had lighted the pipe was really a bent-stick snare (spring snare). He became a man and lived with the other hunters in the eagle hunters' lodge."

In the Piegan tale of the origin of the Beaver bundle (JAFL 24: 238-244), Orphan is advised to choose the stick that is the Beaver's chief medicine. This stick is the Beaver's son. In Winnebago (JAFL 44: 161) a boy with whom the son of Red Horn has played offers himself as the "case" for the thunder weapon which the Thunderbirds bring down. The birds eat his flesh and his bones are placed in a white deer skin. Compare also the bow and arrows chosen by "Grandson" in this collection.

In an Omaha story (Dorsey, 185) the hero is advised to choose the otter skin bag. Compare for the otter skin as medicine bag Winnebago, RBAE 37: 362, 366-368; Menomini, INM 4: 47.



when the eagles see me, they will descend upon your trap." <sup>101</sup>

The old man sang a mystery song and the earth trembled. In his lodge at home Buffalo-walking-alone heard the sound and said, "My father is already on his way." Four times the old man stopped and the fourth time they were at the door of the lodge. They carried the skull and the stuffed skin. The young man's wife carried these inside. All went into the lodge. One of the older men inside the lodge went outside and said to the young men outside, "Make preparations to aid your friend." All the young men prepared food and brought it and their wives to the place where the ceremony was to be performed. The head man in the lodge was the old foster father. He said to the young men, "present the food and your wives to these men and they will bless you." Several young men did so, saying, "Here is your daughter-in-law, take her." Then they returned and blessed the two and ate. This they did for four nights, but people thought it was a single night, for the sun did not come out when it was day; the sun was concealed.

The old man said to young Buffalo-walking-alone, "Henceforth you shall trap eagles by digging a pit," and he gave him instructions and told him to dig the pit on the west side of the hill. He showed him how to catch fish in traps, a hundred, two hundred, three hundred at a time. But after a heavy rain he might catch fish with a line right near the village or an eagle from the top of the lodge. The old man gave him the skin of his brother and told him to take good care of him and feed him well. He spoke to his son (the skin) saying, "Look to your brother and see to it that you help him. You are quick-tempered, but be content with your brother."

At the end of the ceremony Buffalo-walks-alone placed the skin on a scaffold in the place of honor on the lodge and the two wives took turns presenting him with food. Each morning the dish was empty. One day one of the wives was roasting corn

<sup>101</sup> Of the animal spirits who attend the ceremony, Buffalo is impersonated in the buffalo skull; Coyote appears as a person dressed like a scout in the open prairie; Bear is impersonated by the person who acts as utility man during the ceremony; Snake is represented by the two ash poles extending the length of the lodge on either side of the fireplace to serve as pillows, to which a picture of a snake is attached; Crow (or Magpie) is said to be impersonated.

and she burned her finger. She was vexed and said, "That sharp-nosed thing over there is always eating and that is how I burned my finger!" The brother was hurt and wept; the tears streamed from his eyes. When Buffalo-walks-alone came home he saw the food still on the plate and the skin crying. He asked what had happened and the skin said, "My sister-in-law spoke sharply to me and called me a hard name so I am going home." Buffalo-walking-alone begged him not to leave him after all these years. The skin promised that he would remain if his brother would stay up with him all one night without sleeping. The young man invited some of the older men in the village to stay up with him and smoke and tell stories all night. One would begin a story and so on down the row. One wife remained up to tend the fire. At midnight food was passed. The wife grew sleepy, so she wakened her sister and herself went to bed. They wondered why the night was so long. When it grew almost morning the brother would cause the sun to reset so that it was still night. The fourth night Buffalo-walking-alone leaned against the pillow, took a puff at his pipe and began to snore. The spirit in the skin left the lodge and went back home. When this spirit reached the outskirts of his home he sang a song. His father heard him and said, "What that rascal attempts, he does not carry through!" The boy told his father how the woman had insulted him. He said, "I came back in the spirit, but I left my body with my brother. So my body lives with him and he shall be successful in trapping eagles, snaring birds, and trapping fish. This his father approved.

Ever since that time the mystery has been given to one man and so on down the line. I am the thirteenth to own the mystery. My father was seventy-seven when he gave me the mystery and I was thirty-eight. I am now sixty-seven. I have been a leader several times in the eagle trapping. At the lodge I give each one a name after something sacred in our race. This is my own mystery; I cannot tell mysteries which belong to others. It originated in the villages down the river east of Bismarck. These are the persons through whom the eagle mystery was handed down to me:

1. Buffalo-walking-alone.
2. White Cloud.
3. White Claws.
4. Bull's Leg.
5. White-strip-on-his-arm.
6. Mad Bull.
7. Dump-it-into-his-dwelling.
8. Hermaphrodite.
9. Cloud.
10. Sticks-



cedar-in-his-head. 11. Wears-arrows-for-earrings (grandfather of Ben Benson and of Arthur Mandan). 12. Iron Eyes (Ben Benson's father). 13. Bull Head (Ben Benson's Indian name).

#### **b. Told by Bear's Arm.**

A long time ago, the story goes, there was a party on their way toward the south-west. In this party was the young son of the chief of the tribe. Up to this time his father and mother had refused to let him go out, but as he was now old enough, he joined this party without his father's consent. When they came within sight of the mountains, they all rested during the intense heat of noon, lying on their faces while the war chief and leaders smoked. Now it is a rule on these war parties that if one falls asleep he is not to be awakened. A man must learn to be alert and ready to move. So when the boy, who was very weary, fell asleep, no one awakened him. They said, "Perhaps his spirit is at home talking with his sweetheart and he is having a good time with her!"

The boy awoke and found himself alone. He started to follow the party, but was unable to find them. He ate sparingly of his roast corn and cornballs, knowing that he was far from home, but he kept on west looking for the party. When his food was exhausted he became weary, but could still find abundance of water. He was no skilled hunter and could not even wound a buffalo. Far away he saw a hill rising above the surrounding country. He went toward it in order to survey the country from its summit. There he stretched himself out face down, made his arms into a pillow and slept.

When he sat up he saw a flock of magpies attracted to a particular spot. He was curious and, descending the hill, made his way to the spot where the magpies had assembled. They flew away and he saw a piece of meat staked to the ground. All at once a lid opened in the earth and out popped a boy, who caught him by the ankle saying, "I have caught you anyway." In spite of his surprise, the young man was glad to see a human face. When he told the younger lad how hungry he was, the lad invited him to his own camp where there was plenty of food. There he saw jerked meat of all kinds hanging on poles from tree to tree.

It was toward evening and he could smell the aroma of cooking and he felt less weak, for even the smell of food is stimulating. The lad led him to the bowery and called to those inside, "I have caught an Indian and have brought him here [as my older brother]." From within they called out "Well! well! if he is an Indian bring him inside!" On one side of the bowery he saw a woman's camp with fat, tallow, and jerked meat in abundance. All about were piles of corn-cobs and eagle tail feathers. He was made to sit on the side of the Old Wolverine. When he said, "My people prize these eagle-tail feathers highly." Old Wolverine said, "They are no good to us. He can have as many as he can pick up." The Old Wolverine was his captor's father. The lad said, "Since I have called you my older brother, he will be your father also."

Day by day the boy picked up the feathers, sorted them into lengths, and aired those feathers which had become stained with rain until they were clean again. The people showed him how to lace them so that they lay side by side. The Wolverines prized the flesh and would eat other meat only when they could not trap enough eagles. At night the Old Wolverine took two gourds tied to handles, clapped them together and sang. When they occasionally brought in a number of birds, all would get up and dance to the song [but generally only the utility man danced]. All carried snare and plumes and would make a gesture as if about to throw the snare. The women sometimes came in and danced too. Old Wolverine said, "You listen closely and see how everything is carried on. I will teach you the songs and the ritual in this bowery. At this time of the year, in the fall, the ceremony will be conferred upon you. Now you are under instruction."

He told his son, "Take your older brother to the trap and teach him how to snare the eagle and manage him in the pit." The next morning the wind was in the right direction and they were awakened early. The boy got the meat ready for the trap by smearing over it blood mixed with water to make it look fresh. The pit for snaring eagles is dug on a side hill, about as deep as a man's height. A framework is made for a lid and bog brush is stuck between the cross pieces, with grass over the whole, but



not too close lest the man inside be unable to see through it. The bait is staked down to the side of the pit inside. A little hole is dug out in the side of the pit and a stone placed inside. To drive away the magpies which are such a nuisance to the eagle trapper, a sharp-pointed stick is used. The trapper longs for the eagle to light, but when it does so he is nervous lest the eagle strike him with its claw. Should it catch his hand it is dangerous because it will not let go. The trapper must reach his hand through the trap door and catch the eagle by the leg, lift the trap and pull the eagle down into the pit, holding it always by the two legs. To kill the eagle, he takes the stone from its niche in the wall, lays the stone upon the eagle's back and rests the knee upon it, then removes the stone, puts the snare about the neck, rests the knee on the back and pulls on the snare. The stone is used as a protection. The eagle is a sacred bird. If the eagle tries to harm the man, the poison will go to the stone not to the man.

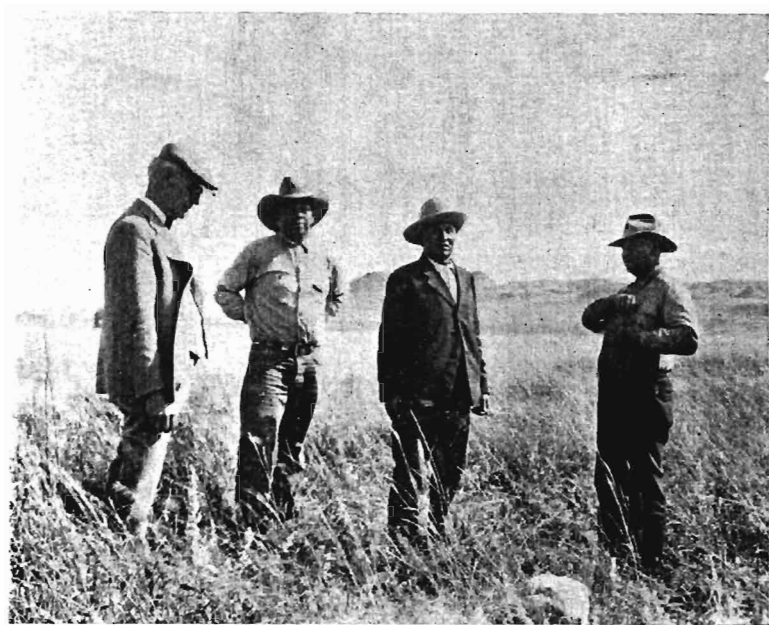
The pit lay down at the foot of a high hill. When an eagle descended the magpies cackled. When he saw an eagle in the air the younger boy signed to his brother. He caught the eagle by one leg, the new boy caught it by the other, they freed it from the bait, and the boy took it by both legs, lifted the lid and drew it down. An eagle's nest always contains two eggs, one male and one female, and the first year they fly together as brother and sister. The new boy soon caught this eagle's mate. His friend showed him how to pull out the tail feathers. They are deep rooted and must be worked loose from the skin with the thumbnail before pulling. They are lashed together in the same order as they are pulled from the bird. The younger boy then "put the eagle to sleep" by means of the stone and snare and then went back to camp. The older boy followed. As they approached the camp the younger boy cried and the women and old Coyote heard him. The women ran inside the tents, Coyote lighted the fire in the bowery. Old Wolverine asked what kind of eagle they had caught, the eagle was brought in at the entrance to the left and smoked with sweet grass and placed in the corral behind the bower with the other eagles to be cooked and eaten. Other men now came in one by one. They had caught some twelve eagles all told and among them some with fine feathers. It had been a

lucky day. The two boys took their eagles a little distance from the camp and pulled the feathers with care. The women cooked the birds and all came to the bowery and danced to the song of old Wolverine, feasted on the eagles, and made merry.

The fourth time that the boys went to the pit they pulled in three eagles, then came a fourth. It was a bald eagle. The younger boy had been forbidden to catch eagles of this kind; they live to be a hundred, know everything, and are not easily frightened. The older boy however coaxed until he finally caught hold of a leg. The eagle caught his wrist with its claw and scratched at it as if it were just mud. The boy groaned.—“Surely I meet my death today!”—“Bite his leg and he may let go.” The boy bit and the eagle let go its grip. The older boy tied the eagle’s legs and wings together and put the eagle to sleep, then the two boys returned home. [Incomplete.<sup>102</sup>]

102 In Bear’s Arm’s version the spirits live in the south instead of the north, there is but one wife, and the incident of returning home on the sage brush does not occur. The magpie takes the place of the crow, as in the Crow Indian story, number 23 in this collection.





Lodge-site of the Old-Woman-who-never-dies  
showing Red Bank and the stone that fell from the skies.  
Bear's Arm is the third figure from the left.

### 13. OLD WOMAN'S GRANDSON <sup>56</sup>

Told by Bear's Arm, Elbowoods, June 10-12, 1931.

There was an earth-lodge up in the sky and in this lodge lived an old woman who had two sons. One was the Moon, the other the Sun. Their duty was to light the earth with sunshine and with moonlight. When they came home the old woman cooked for them. One day, the Sun asked the Moon what nation he thought had the handsomest maidens. Moon said, "The Gros Ventres are the handsomest. They live in earth lodges and do not burn from your rays because they paint up and protect themselves from the heat; they bathe often, they take care of themselves. Other peoples do not attend to these things, hence I consider the Gros Ventre maidens to be the handsomest." The Sun said, "I do not agree with you. When the Gros Ventre maidens look at me in the daytime they squint their eyes and turn away their faces so that one side is in shadow. Now the Frog maidens look straight at me without blinking their eyes and twisting their faces and they are the handsomest maidens." So in order to decide the matter, the two agreed to come down to earth, the Sun to secure a Frog wife and the Moon a Gros Ventre maiden, and to bring them both up and compare their beauty within the lodge. Thus it was agreed.

They came down to earth. Moon went to a certain place where there were a man and his wife and three daughters. The two older were already married, the younger was still unwed. She was virtuous and beautiful. Moon transformed himself into a

<sup>56</sup> Arapaho, 321-341; Arikara, Dorsey, 45-60; Assiniboine, 171, 176; Blackfoot, Wissler & Duval, 58-61; Caddo, 27-30; Cheyenne, JAF 34: 308-315; Crow, Lowie, 52-74, Sims, 299-301; Dakota, Riggs, 90-94; Oglala, JAF 43: 408-411; Gros Ventres, 90-94, 100-102; Kiowa, Parsons, 1-8; Mooney, 238; Mandan and Hidatsa, Maximilian 2: 302-304, 334-337, 373-374; Beckwith, VCFL 10: 53-62; Otoe, JAF 6: 199; Pawnee, Dorsey, 56-58, JAF 7: 197-200; (Skidi) Dorsey, 60-65; Shoshone, JAF 22: 268-269; 37: 184-189.

Compare also such Blood-clot stories as Blackfoot, Wissler & Duval, 53-58; Gros Ventres, 82-90; and the Nanabushu (Menapus) stories of the eastern woodlands; for example, Menomini, Bloomfield, 133-153.



porcupine, and the maidens, who were out with their axes looking for wood, followed him. They came to a tree with a straight trunk which branched at intervals. The porcupine climbed up from limb to limb and finally ran out to the end of a long slender limb. The sisters bade the youngest climb after it and strike the animal with her axe. The sister climbed. The limbs of the tree were so arranged as to make the ascent easy; they invited to climbing. When she came to the limb to the end of which the porcupine clung it was slender and as she climbed it began to rock. The sisters bade her straddle the limb and creep along until she reached the animal and then strike it with the stick she carried. When it fell they would hit it with their stone axes. Just as she reached the end of the limb and was about to strike, both porcupine and girl disappeared; only the club dropped. The sisters were amazed. They began to cry. They went back home without the firewood and told their story. A crowd of relatives and friends went down to the spot where the girl had disappeared. They examined the place all about the tree. The parents began to mourn, but some said, "Surely she can not have died here. It must be some mystery from above. She is still alive and will return." So they comforted the parents. From time to time the parents came to the foot of the tree and wept, but by and by they forgot the incident.

The porcupine who disappeared with the maiden, that was the Moon. He brought her above and left her outside the lodge. He said to his mother, "I wish you would invite your daughter-in-law to come in." The mother went out and brought the girl in. She was proud of her son's choice and said, "How beautiful she is, my daughter-in-law!" A little after, in came the Sun. He commanded, "I wish you would invite your daughter-in-law to come in." The mother went out, looked all about, could see nothing. She returned and said, "Son, I cannot find my daughter-in-law." Then on the doorstep a Frog began to croak and grumble, "Here I am on the doorstep and the old woman almost stepped upon me!" The old mother put Frog next to the fire beside the pot. Then Moon said, "Both wives are here now. Let the old woman cook tripe and the one who can cut the tripe with her teeth with a crackling noise, just as if she were crushing ice,

let her be kept, and the one who slobbers over her food and does not crack it neatly, let her be turned out." He put this test because he did not want to offend his brother, for he saw that the Frog would not get on well in the house. The Sun agreed to his brother's proposal. The mother cooked the tripe and the daughters-in-law chose each what part she would take. The Gros Ventre woman took the thin part, the Frog took the thick. They cut it up with flint knives. The girl chewed and cracked loudly. Then Frog chewed and she made a crunching sound. Moon got up and moved the pot beside her. The Frog had been taking the charcoal from the pot and it was the sound of its crunching that they had heard. Now she slobbered and messed with her mouth. Moon took her and threw her into the fire. She jumped out and landed on Moon's front. He threw her back again and again she jumped and landed higher up. The fourth time that he threw her she landed on his back. She said, "You two do not want me here, but here I shall stay where you cannot reach me, and I shall never die."

So the Frog will leave its image on the Moon as long as the Moon shall endure. The Gros Ventres say of the dark spots on the moon, "That is the Frog on the Moon." It is not the green frog, but the big sand toad that Sun took as his wife. The Gros Ventres call these big toads "Grandmother." Since the Sun took the toad as his wife they call the sun "Grandfather." They all show respect to the toad. Because she left her image on the moon, they believe that she has mysterious power and they regard her as holy. Hence they call her "Grandmother." All Gros Ventre children are instructed to honor a toad and talk to and pray to her as their grandmother. [But this is not because they think themselves in any way descended from her.]

In course of time Moon's wife gave birth to a boy. Moon said, "You may do anything you like up here except one thing. I forbid you to dig the male turnips, you may dig only the female." [It was like the forbidden tree in the Old Testament.] As the boy grew older, he asked his father to make him a bow and arrows. Moon told his son, "You may shoot any bird but the Meadow-lark." This bird has grey feathers and a yellow breast with a black spot right under his throat. The boy obeyed, but one day a Meadow-lark flew around the boy and kept right



at him as if enticing him to shoot. The boy thought, "I was commanded by my father not to shoot the bird, but she makes such a good target I might as well try a shot." The arrow grazed the Meadow-lark and she said, "Will you shoot at me, you who have never seen your own people or your own village?" Then the boy knew that he did not belong to the people up there and he came home crying to his mother. She related to him the whole story of what had happened to her before he was born. She told him of the deer, the antelope, the corn which they ate in her own country and how beautiful it was down on the earth and of how it was the will of his father that they should live up there, and how he had forbidden her to dig the turnip. The boy said, "I wish you would dig just one and see what would happen." The mother answered, "O son! I am forbidden by your father." The boy insisted and said, "I take the responsibility. Tell my father, if he says anything, that I commanded you."

When she dug the turnip, it seemed as if the thickness of the sky was cut right through and she could see the Missouri River down below and the buffalo and other creatures roaming around, and it was beautiful. The boy said, "Let us go down." She said, "No, I am a human being and I cannot go. But you have mysterious power and you can go." Then the boy asked his father to kill a buffalo and bring him all the kinds of sinew there were in the buffalo. The father asked "What do you want it for?" The boy said, "Never mind what I want it for; go and get it," for he thought that if his father should bring all the sinew and forget nothing, he could twist it into a rope which would reach to the earth. Moon killed a buffalo and brought the sinew of all kinds, but forgot one particular sinew, a thin bluish sinew just beneath the T bone [on the thigh]. That the father forgot. The mother took the sinew and cured it, then they went out from the lodge and came to a big Spider and the woman spoke pleadingly and said, "I want to go down to the earth on this sinew just as you go up and down on your web, and I want your ease of climbing." The Spider said, "Leave the sinew here to unravel and tomorrow it will be ready." Early in the morning they went over to the Spider and, sure enough, the Spider had it all prepared. So they went home and had breakfast, then they re-

turned, took the sinew, and went to the hole where the woman had dug the turnip. She laid her digging-stick over the opening, tied one end of the sinew to it, then she tied her blanket about her and bound a rawhide about her back and breast and tied the boy to it, and the blanket she tied to the sinew. Then they began to descend as easily as a spider runs up and down her web.

The Moon came home and did not find his wife. He asked his mother and she said that the wife usually told her where she was going, but this time she had gone out without saying anything. The boy had been playing about as usual, but all of a sudden he had disappeared. Then Moon went out and found the hole with the stick laid across it. There below swung his wife and son at about the height of a small cottonwood tree from the earth. [The spot over which they hung lies just across the Missouri river.] The Moon wrapped up a stone until it was about so big [forming a round with his arms] and said, "I command you not to hurt my son, but to land on the woman's head and club her to death." Then he spoke to his son and said, "Son, surely I would have provided for your going to earth, but your mother has disobeyed me." The boy heard these words but not the mother. The stone struck the mother on the head and she fell dead to the earth and the boy fell on top of her. The boy freed himself and went over to a cornpatch and began to eat the corn, and he saw smoke rising from a dwelling. This was the lodge where lived the Old-Woman-who-never-dies. [I have myself seen the place where the stone fell to the ground. It is sunken like a basin and the Indians placed offerings there in the old days. The stone was in the center, about two feet high. It has been removed since to the lodge-site of the Old-Woman.<sup>57</sup>]

57 The lodge site of Old Woman is still shown on the bluff above the river flat on the south side of the Missouri nearly opposite Elbowoods. Red (or Brown) Bank lies above to the right. In the marsh below can be seen the clump of cottonwoods said to conceal Short River. In the center of the lodge circle lies the stone said to have been brought from the spot where the woman fell from the skies.

A circular depression about a quarter of a mile along the bluff (said to mark the site of an old buffalo wallow) is the traditional site of this adventure. The depression is said to have been made by the child as he walked about his mother's grave in sign of mourning.

Eight miles south on an elevation outside the reservation lies a second lodge circle with its entrance to the east, said to be the last camp of the Old Woman when she left the Mandan-Hidatsa country.



The Old Woman began to notice that every morning some of her corn was missing. She saw the footprints of a child and she told her husband that it must be a human being who took the corn. "I am going to find out if it is a boy or a girl," she said. She made a shinny stick and ball and a bow and arrows and placed them together on the path.<sup>58</sup> The next morning the bow and arrows were missing. The ball was pierced with arrows and most of her squashes were shot through. She said to her husband, "I made a mistake in putting that bow there. It is certainly a boy and if I do not catch him my garden will be ruined." She finally caught him coming for corn, and when he started to run she coaxed him over to the house and fed him with what corn she had there. She asked him where he came from and he told her all the events of his life, where he was born, how they came down, how his father had forgotten the sinew, how the father had been angry and thrown the stone, how his mother lay dead and how he had stayed to weep over her body, which was even now decaying. He brought the Old Woman to the place where his mother's body lay. She took her hoe along and dug a hole and laid grass within, and they lowered the body down with withes and covered it over and placed the stone on top of the grave.

The Old Woman took the boy to live with her. She said, "You may roast all kinds of corn except the red." "All right!" One day he grew curious to find out why she did not want him to roast the red corn. He roasted some, and, as it began to pop, blackbirds flew out all about the room. He stuffed up the chimney, brought in a stick and, as fast as the blackbirds flew out of the popping corn, he clubbed the birds and laid them out in rows. When the Old Woman came in he said, "Grandmother, here are the birds that destroy your corn. They will be tender to eat." The Old Woman was displeased, but she concealed her displeasure. She took the birds outside, pretending that she was taking them out to pluck, and commanded them all to fly away.

Another day she said, "Grandson, do not go to the hills. There is a great bear over there. He is dangerous and likely to hurt you." "All right!" But one day when the Old Woman was

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Oglala, JAFLL 43: 430 note 1.

away he walked over to the foothills. Inside the timber the Bear began to growl at him and rise upon its haunches. He said, "Stop your fooling and come along with me or I will put an arrow through you!" He cut sticks for arrows and bound them on the Bear's back with his bowstring and led the Bear back to his grandmother's dwelling. Outside he called, "Grandmother, I have something here for you!" She came outside and saw the boy leading the Bear with his bowstring. He said, "This creature must be strong. I see you carrying corn; make him a beast of burden to haul the corn on his back. He can do it for you." When the boy went away the Old Woman asked the Bear how it was that he had let a little boy lead him about. The Bear said he was powerless before the boy.—"He is the son of Moon, and his father is watching from above." The Old Woman sent him away and told him to keep away from the boy lest he be recaptured.

Old-Woman said, "Grandson, do not go near that red butte."—"All right, grandmother." He was by this time able to bring in meat and to feed them well. One day he wandered over to the butte and there he saw a number of men (but they were really Snake People). He saw an antelope grazing and was about to shoot at it to take home to his grandmother when all at once it dropped dead. One of the men had turned into a snake, coiled himself up and shot straight through the animal, then turned back into a man again. The men cut up the meat and carried it into the lodge and invited the boy to enter.—"Here comes Grandmother's grandson!" they said, as if they were glad to see him. The lodge was arranged inside like the pit where men used to trap eagles. In the center was a fireplace with an ash log lying on each side on which the men laid their heads to sleep. The men asked him which part of the animal he preferred. He said that his specialty was the tripe and they began to prepare him food. When they had cooked it over the fire, they passed it about to see if it was done and each man left his fangs inside as he tasted it. The boy said it was not half cooked and he would finish it himself. As he roasted it redhot the men rolled over in pain for they felt their fangs burning inside the tripe. First one and then another man went outside, turned into a snake, and at-



tempted to creep up inside the boy's body, but he had brought in a flat sandstone to sit upon and each time the snake struck against the rock and had to go back. The men now laid their heads against the log, placed the meat before him and asked him to relate the history of his origin. He said, "That is not very creditable to me. Instead I will tell you another that will be more interesting."—"Well! well!"—"There is a high butte. You can hear the wind rustling over the butte. Then in a moment the rustling ceases as if the butte had fallen asleep." At the end of the story, half the men on one side of the fire had dropped off to sleep and had turned into five snakes with their heads resting on the log. He went on, "You hear brooks of water making a lapping sound. In a moment the lapping stops as if the water had gone to sleep." Then the other half of the men on that side of the fire went to sleep and turned into snakes with their heads resting upon the log. He told another story,—“You hear the wind blowing, blowing, then all of a sudden it dies down just as if it had gone off to sleep.” Five of the men on the other side of the fire fell asleep. He told the fourth story,—“You hear the leaves of the trees rustling and flapping, and all of a sudden you hear no sound any more, just as if those trees were all fallen asleep.” That finished it! they were all sound asleep. He said, “Those Snakes were trying to harm me, so now I will put an end to them.” He took his flint knife and began to cut off their heads one by one as they lay on the logs. But one snake awoke and as it escaped into the ground it said, “Whatever you do, beware of lying down to drink water.”

For a time he was afraid to follow his habit of drinking water as he lay on the ground. Instead he stood up and made a cup of his hands. This was unpleasant to him. In a dream came his father Moon and said to him, “My son, drink water in the way you like to drink it, for even if you die my power is such that I can bring you to life again.” So the boy drank as he liked, the snake crawled into him and crept up and lay in his skull, and he began to decay. The Moon bade the Wolf take the skull and place it in a hole in the earth upside down so that the opening of the skull was even with the ground and the rain would run into it. Then the Moon commanded the Rain to descend just enough

to fill the skull and then pass by. Then the Moon said to his brother Sun, "Now I wish you to look at your son." The Sun approached the earth and cast down his rays so that the water within the skull began to boil. The Snake inside felt himself scalding. He thrust his head out and then withdrew it, saying, "I know he is dead, but he has mysterious power and may come back to life again." He came out again and then ducked back. The fourth time he said, "What have I to fear! I know he is dead." He came out and was just about to run into the earth when Grandmother's grandson arose and caught the Snake and pulled him up again out of the ground. He said, "You got into my head and caused me annoyance, now I shall punish you." The Snake begged for mercy. The boy said, "Since it was my head you entered, I shall make you suffer in your head." So he took the sandstone and rubbed away the Snake's long sharp nose until it was almost even with its eyes. Then the Snake promised to be forever tame and humble and to harm no one. [That is the snake we call today "Ground Woman." Once in a while we find one on the flats. It is about a foot long, of a grey color, with a head about the size of my thumb and concave in shape. You can handle it and it is tame. If you treat it roughly and then throw it on the ground, the head flattens out just as it did when Grandson crushed it.] The boy said, "You may live now, but when the generations to come treat you roughly, your head will flatten out just as it looks today." On these conditions the Snake got his freedom.

By this time a long time had passed. All this time his grandmother was wondering where he was. When he appeared again he related the whole story. Now every day the Deer (who were the Deer Women who cultivated Old Woman's garden), would come to till the garden, and every day the Grandson came out and killed the deer. The Old Woman got afraid of him. He noticed that every day she placed a plate of food under her bed and that when she took it out it was licked clean. When she was out one day, he peeped under the cover and saw a great snake, and he said, "That must be the one who is eating all grandmother's mush!" So he took his bow and arrow and killed the snake. When the Old Woman came home he called, "Grand-



mother, I found an intruder under your bed, so I have killed it." The Old Woman said, "My grandson, I am glad that you have killed the snake." But this snake was the Old Woman's husband. When the boy was gone she went to the snake. He was not quite dead. She said, "What shall we do now?" He said, "I am no longer safe here. He is a person who can not be killed. His fathers are powerful. They cast their heat to the earth and make things grow. Their helpers are the Rain and the Thunderbirds. If I remain, I may be destroyed by the Thunderbirds. If you can, remove me and put me in the stream not very far distant from here, but it will take all your strength to do this." Old Woman put the head on her shoulder and dragged the snake along, resting from time to time, until finally she got to this water. The Snake said, "This stream shall be known henceforth as the Short River. From this story men shall know that I am resting in this stream." He commanded his wife to come and visit the stream and bring cornballs to throw to his spirit. While he was alive she had protected the Snake by drawing a skin over the bed to hide him from the sight of the Thunderbirds, so that he might not be killed by their lightning, but the Grandson had found out the secret, hence it was that the Snake asked to be placed in the water. The Old Woman did as she was commanded and used from time to time to visit the stream. [Indians in the old time used to regard Short River as a sacred stream and would fast there to get the aid of the Snake spirit.<sup>59</sup>]

After this, the story goes that in the spring as the boy was wandering down along the river, he chanced to meet two men butchering a buffalo cow. These two men were Spring Boy and Lodge Boy. The cow had an unborn calf, hairless. The men welcomed the boy. They cut up the cow and placed the parts eaten raw, like the liver, lungs and kidneys, in the stomach of the cow, tied it up like a bag and dragged the calf toward the boy, saying, "I know your grandmother will enjoy this; it is tender." The boy was frightened. He ran away and climbed a box elder tree close by. Spring Boy lifted the calf to a lower limb and said, "When you are ready to come down, take this to your grandmother." Lodge Boy said, "You should not do that,

<sup>59</sup> For the great snake cf. Maximilian 2: 380-382.

you know well he is afraid.”—“It is all right,” said Spring Boy, “he will take it home to his grandmother.” So they piled up what meat they wanted to carry and left the boy up on the box elder tree.

The two roamed all about the country killing only the fattest game and eating what they liked. One year later they came back to the spot where they had killed the buffalo cow. There, sure enough, was the boy still sitting on the box elder tree. He was in the form of a ghost; there was nothing left of his body but skin and bones. The wolves and birds had devoured the calf, but its traces could clearly be seen on the tree. Lodge Boy said, “You acted foolishly. You knew he was the son of a great spirit. We must bring him down.” So they scraped the tree clean and brought him down. But first they asked the boy to promise them his grandmother. They said, “We have been making love to her all this time.<sup>60</sup> She is a good woman, but we do not want her for herself alone but for her food. She raises all kinds of garden vegetables. Her corn is sweet. She mixes it with beans and fat and we desire it. If one of us could get her consent to marry, we could have all that she raises. Now she loves you dearly and you must get her consent, and you and your grandmother must perform a mystery ceremony. If you do so, we will let you pick out whatever bow and arrows we have that you like the best. They shall be yours.” As soon as the boy’s feet touched the earth his flesh returned. They asked him what meat he wanted. He said, “You two are great hunters, so you two choose for me.” They said, “Take the buffalo when it is getting old and the teeth are worn down; at that age the fat and the lean are about equal.” Lodge Boy took his bow and arrows and shouted and shot an arrow through the air. When it fell they saw a buffalo running and then it fell to the ground. They butchered it, built a fire and roasted the rib. Then they invited the boy to come over and drink some of the blood four times from his hand. They said, “This will give you new strength and new life.” [So was originated the Indian practice of eating raw liver and kidney

<sup>60</sup> My informant pointed out to me the traditional bluff, in sight from his house, where the men stood to make love to the Old Woman on the opposite side of the river.



and drinking some blood of a butchered animal, in order to prolong life.]

They carried some of the buffalo meat near to the Old Woman's lodge and the boy took it inside. She was overjoyed to see him. She said, "I was about to mourn for you but I knew that you would return. What has happened to you?" The boy related the whole story. He said, "It was a year ago that I climbed the tree. When these men came by I was nothing but a skeleton. They agreed to let me down on one condition—that I consent to your marriage with them through a ceremony which I am to perform. I knew that you would consent and I promised to perform the ceremony." Then he told her that he was to have his pick from their bows and arrows. She in turn was to give them the corn secured through the basket ceremony. Now Spring Boy's bow and arrows were the most mysterious. She said, "When you make your choice, take the bow that is all patched and mended with old cords as if it were almost worthless. That is the most mysterious. Say to them, 'You are such great hunters that I will leave you the fine-looking bows and arrows and take only the old patched one.'"<sup>61</sup>

They prepared for the ceremony, the boy bringing in hides of deer and provisions of food. The hinds in the garden turned into women who came to attend the ceremony. The Two Men went off to the Kildeer Mountains to invite the holy spirits to attend the ceremonies. All night long the ceremony lasted. Coyote was invited to act as utility-man to kindle the wood and keep the fire burning. The two men sang the songs that go with the bow and arrows. They spread down a buffalo robe and laid out their bows upon it with four arrows tied to each bow. Most of the bows were new and finely painted. Coyote was asked to burn sage and incense them. They told the boy to take his choice. He glanced at the new and good-looking ones, then he went over to the old bow and said, "Since you are such hunters I will take

<sup>61</sup> Compare Arikara, 61-62; JAFI. 43: 389, for the trick of concealing a mystery under a careless exterior. A person with mysterious power constantly so conceals himself. A survey of the sacred objects in the collections from the Plains Indians in the Field Museum in Chicago seems to bear out this idea. See the Winnebago story of the tenth son who visits the Thunderbirds and is given his pick of clubs (JAFI. 22: 298-299).

this one so as not to hurt your feelings." They sat as if dead. They could say nothing. With this bow they lost the mystery of killing game by calling the name of the animal before shooting the arrow. Thus they lost their most mysterious bow and arrows.

The two men now followed their pursuit of hunting. All winter they hunted. Toward spring game became scarcer. Then came a blizzard. Old-Woman said "Now I shall repay them for what they have made you suffer." She made him undress and daubed his body with white clay. She took dried grass and wove it into ropes and tied it with buckskin about his ankles, waist and neck, did up his hair in two bunches on each side of his head and tied them with grass and buckskin, and gave him a flute [made out of box elder], and a bow and arrows strapped to his back and lashed across his breast. Then she sent him to a point above where the Two Men were camped and said, "Play a tune on the flute, turn it downward and revolve your body, making a sweeping movement with the flute. This will drive away all game. Then lift the flute upward and make the same motion and this will cause a blizzard. Come down a little lower and repeat the same, playing another (?) tune, then come again lower and play a third tune; the fourth time they will hear the tune." She took her own robe and put it over him and tied it across his breast, cut holes in it and filled them with dead grass and said, "Of all female life upon this earth I am head. Whatever I attempt, that I bring to pass. Cold and blizzard I subdue. This grass that I have bound about your body indicates heat. You need not fear the cold for you will be kept warm. You have the sacred arrow. I make whatever I plant to grow. This shall be a sign that we are in the locality, when there is not too much sun or too much storm, when there is storm from time to time so that the people are not in want but have vegetables and game. By putting this robe upon you I make my body yours."

The boy went skyward, came to where the two men were camping and caused a blizzard. The two men were hunting with a new bow and arrow. When they shot, instead of shooting what they wished for, they got something smaller. Instead of a buffalo, they got an elk, then a deer, finally a rabbit, and at last a



mouse. Then at the end the arrow went through a bank of snow. They said "Now we shall starve!" They were up the Little Missouri at this time and as the boy played on the flute and drove away the game the snow came thicker and thicker. They fixed up a shelter, but it was almost covered with snow. The fire smoked, then finally they grew too weak to get wood. The fourth time the flute blew Spring Boy heard the tune. Lodge Boy listened and heard it also. He said, "It is your folly that has brought this misery upon us." The two were helpless. They put their heads out and called (using the call with which one summons spirits) "He-e hay-ay! Old-woman's grandson, come down to our aid. We are in misery and want. Come down and save us!" The boy came down and, rubbing his flute as if to clean it, made a circle with his arm to the sky. The clouds began to part and the sun shone bright. The snow melted. He built a fire and asked the men what kind of a buffalo they would like to eat. They asked for an old one in which fat is mixed with lean. He shot an arrow from his bow, called for the buffalo, and there it lay beside the fire. He skinned the buffalo and laid half of the skin down as a mat and the two men sat upon it. He butchered the animal and told the men to drink four times of the blood just as he had been himself commanded, and he gave them the liver and other parts that are eaten raw. Then he roasted a rib and the Two Men regained strength. After this the boy took the sacred arrows and rubbed those of the men with them and said "Since you live by hunting you shall go again on the hunt." They reached their arms over the four arrows of the boy and, making a sweeping motion, they took back their own arrows. He did the same thing with the bow. This was a sign of imparting some of the mystery from the sacred bow and arrows back to the men's bows and arrows.

The men promised to perform the Old-Woman's ceremony, but they told him "Before performing this ceremony, kill that big buckskin antelope on the other side of the mountain west between the two ranges and bring the hide to be used for a basket in the ceremony." As the game was scarce, he bade them go to the Kildeer mountains and then turn downward. He went back to his grandmother and she put his clothes and flute away in a

bundle to bring out again in case of trouble. She said, "I know that you are so powerful and dangerous that all the spirits are seeking to destroy you," and she rehearsed to him the story of the misery that had befallen the two men (of which she was aware without his telling her)." When he told her about the buckskin antelope she said, "That is nothing to worry over! Wait until the Juneberries begin to ripen. At that time of the year the prairies are red with antelope. In the meantime bring in a supply of meat (for the women who worked the garden) and I will care for the garden." When the time came the old woman made him take a bath and daubed yellow ochre over his body and made streaks of white under his neck with white clay so that he looked like an antelope, and she made him lean to the southward and sang mystery songs over him and circled him, and she did the same toward each of the other four directions. Then he became an antelope, the size of the big buckskin. She roasted corn, made cornballs, filled the sacred pipe with tobacco, and told him to go to the antelope and have him smoke the pipe and eat the balls. About noon the antelope would get drowsy and fall asleep, then he must kill him and skin him but be careful to make no holes in the hide, and bring back the hide to her. She for her part would help him all she could by drawing the land toward him so that he would not have far to travel. On the way home he had only to look at the horizon to be at the place he thought of.

When he came to the Knife river the antelope all flocked about him and followed him, thousands and thousands of them, until the whole earth trembled. But as he had eaten well before he started, his bowels moved and the smell was that of a human being. The animals all took fright and thundered away, and he came home and told of his failure. The old woman made him get seven pieces of rabbit dung and she took it and blessed it and sang a mystery song and made him swallow the pieces and then gave him a drink out of a horn dipper. So now when he went out a second time, the dung which he passed was like that of the antelope.

The first night at sunset he came to a wide valley. There he rested surrounded by antelope. At dawn they started on. The third night they were in the foothills. They took an early start



and just before noon he came to the place where the buckskin antelope was. This antelope was also surrounded by antelopes. The two herds met and his herd pointed out their chief. The antelope was astonished, but they said that the antelope lived in the north where there were meadows and a great open place, and the antelope believed them. The boy-antelope placed the pipe and corn-ball before him and said, "The River people have given them to me, but I saved them to honor you with." The antelope was pleased, lit the pipe, and the two ate the cornball. Now it was the heat of the day and the antelope lowered his head until his nose touched the ground and he fell asleep. The boy carried his sacred bow and arrows under the skin at his side. He took good aim and shot an arrow through the antelope's heart. The antelope ran about in a circle and dropped dead. He skinned it and wound the hide about his waist and journeyed home in his own form. As he climbed the hills, where his eye fell upon the horizon he would be immediately at that point. So he made the journey home in one day.

The Old Woman placed food before him. She staked out the hide on the ground to dry, after removing the meat, and tanned it to use for making the basket. She made a shoulder strap also to carry the basket on the back.



They all got together and the two men asked their uncle Coyote to act as utility man. His duties were to keep up the fire, fetch water, and raise the drinking vessel for them to drink. In return they had to furnish the outfit, such as leggings, knife, and so forth, which Coyote needed in his travels. They swept

the floor, spread a rug between two posts, and made the Old Woman sit down upon it. Between the posts they stretched a

rawhide and hung on it articles of clothing collected for the ceremony. They had a sweat lodge prepared and Coyote put four stones inside and poured water four times in succession upon the stones. They asked blessings for their own needs as well as for rain and good weather.

Food was provided and sacrificed to all the spirits as a prayer for aid. After the ceremony the old woman presented the basket [to the hunters] as the symbol of her body. She told her grandson to ask the two men [to teach him] the right way to trap buffalo by driving them over the cliff, and to trap the antelope. Those who perform these ceremonies are entitled to make traps for the animals and also for the fish. [The last time that buffalo were trapped, about 1840, Owns-a-black-shield performed the ceremony. Poor Wolf was at that time twenty years old.]

The grandson said, "I give you back the mystery of the arrows by rubbing the arrows." He gave back also one black and one red arrow, saying, "We shall be equal." The Old Woman was pleased. She said, "These men have revered me and all the spirits on earth who are connected with this ceremony will look upon me as a person highly honored."

### EXPLANATION <sup>62</sup>

Old-Woman's grandson existed long before the events in this story. When he left this earth he went to live with the Morning Star and is sometimes identified with him. The Morning Star is the Moon's son. The Sun is helper of the Sioux against the Gros Ventres, the Moon is for the Gros Ventres. When there is an eclipse of the Moon they say that the Moon dies. The Gros

<sup>62</sup> Compare this myth with the origin myth of the Winnebago medicine dance (RBAE 37: 350-359) which represents a prayer for long life, and with number 26 in this collection, in which one of the spirits in the north is born on earth in order to help the people.

In the Winnebago myth, Earthmaker sends four beings in succession to earth to help mankind. All fail. A fifth spirit, Hare, succeeds in entering the body of a woman and when he is born as a human being, the mother dies. He addresses his "grandmother" earth and accuses her of sympathy with the evil spirits whom he has killed in the hope of gaining life for the people. Overcome by the contemplation of death, he is restored by his friends and taken to the home of the Thunderbirds, who teach him the medicine dance in order to bring blessings to his tribe. He builds a ceremonial lodge. The Bird, Bear, Wolf, and Snake participate. Grandmother Earth opens her body and shows the sacred corn. First he himself and then his grandmother



Ventres mourn and it is a strange sound to hear, but the Sioux go out and shoot arrows at it.

This is why the boy's society have the Moon and the Morning Star on their stone clubs (symbol of the society) but not the Sun. The stone club is a symbol of the stone which Moon threw after the woman who fell from the sky. The lines drawn on the upper part of the stone represent the paths of the Moon and of the Sun. There used to be a saying that this society would persist as long as there were Gros Ventre people. Today there are only three men living who belong to that society—Tom Smith, Bear's Arm himself, and Louis Wolf (or Sheepish).<sup>63</sup>

Moon had forbidden his son after he was grown to eat or touch an unborn calf until after the hair was grown on its body. Before that, it is covered with blood and is unclean, like a woman during her menstrual period. To touch it would be dangerous.

show themselves to the people at four stages of growth, from youth to old age. The life of the spirit after death and the power of reincarnation on earth are insured to mankind through this ceremony. The "four stages" seem to be a prayer for long life.

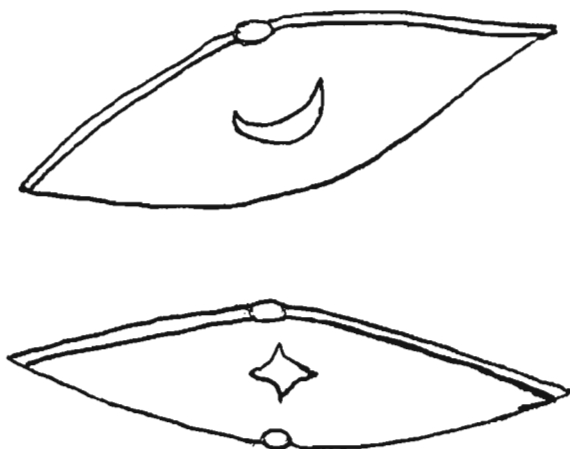
The woman-who-never-dies in this story obviously represents Grandmother Earth in other tales. The four stages of growth from youth to old age are, in the Pawnee origin myth (Dorsey, 23) identified with the phases of the moon, and in a Crow story (Lowie, 91-93) the grandmother of "Grandson" is identified with the moon. Arthur Mandan's grandmother used to tell him how the Old Woman renewed her youth by bathing. So the "Woman-in-the-north" in the Cheyenne origin story (JAFL 20: 171) "never grew any older." In the Menomini origin story of the medicine ceremony, Manabus gives to his grandmother, "who is the earth herself personified," the care of the medicine plants (INM 4: 65-71).

The grandson is here associated with or identified with the morning star. Variants almost identical with this are the Arapaho story of Little Star (Lowie, 332-338); the two Arikara variants, and the Crow stories. In the Arikara there are four men instead of two, and they teach eagle trapping and hunting. In the Arapaho, Little Star when he returns to the heavens leaves to a certain young man the mystery of his bow, which "contains the gift of the father, of the earth, the animals, mankind, rivers, woods, of what is on and under ground, of breath (life)." So in a Crow origin myth, food bags are exchanged for Coyote's arrows. The Blackfoot variant describes the setting up of the ceremonial lodge for calling the buffalo, which is decorated with star symbols. In the Crow (Sims, 307-309), two boys have a bladder with which they call the buffalo. Within the bladder are two stars, who are the boys' medicine. The keeper of the bladder was formerly one of the big stars.

In old Cheyenne tales (JAFL 20: 169-170; 21: 269-270, 280, 298-299) medicine arrows are brought to the tribe by the culture hero of one division of the tribe, called Medicine-root, the sacred buffalo cap by the culture hero of the other division. Medicine-root leaves his body on earth in the form of sweet root, whose ceremony is described (JAFL 21: 318). Compare number 4 in this collection.

It seems likely that an old medicine ceremony shared with the Winnebago before the westward migration has been elaborated by assimilating Plains star myth and Cheyenne medicine arrow myth.

<sup>63</sup> See Lowie, PAMNH 11: 239-251. Cf. JAFL 36: 44-45 for Morning Star beliefs of Wahpeton Dakota.



Two sides of the stone club of the boys' society

The boy would have lost some of his mysterious power had he disobeyed this prohibition.<sup>64</sup>

There are men who practise this prohibition to this day. It is their mystery, like Samson's hair in the Bible. The grandfather of the man (named Baker) who came in here just now practised this mystery. I know of two times when he made use of it. Once they were pursuing an enemy. He sent his own men back and went on a little way toward the enemy. He raised his hand, then he smoked and sang a song. The enemy became confused and were afraid to proceed. They were like drunken men. His company pursued and killed them all.

The sweat lodge originated with Charred Body. He and Coyote built the sweat place for persons afflicted with disease or for those who are fatigued, to restore such and to heal diseases. These sweat lodges were given to Charred Body and Coyote. Other Indians have learned the custom from the Gros Ventre nation.<sup>65</sup>

The bow and arrows which the grandson chose were those given to the two men by their mother's brother, Charred Body.

<sup>64</sup> See page 52 note 36 in this collection.

<sup>65</sup> See the Blackfoot story of Scarface, Wissler & Duval, 61-66.



He was in reality an arrowhead. So were the two men. The weapon was given to provide food and clothing for the children on earth. This bow was in reality their body. With the bow went four arrows, two painted red, two black. They were marked with a zigzag pattern to indicate the killing property and the swiftness of lightning.

It was Charred Body who introduced to the Indians the art of arrow-making. Only experts make the arrows; those who want arrows have to furnish the materials for their manufacture. They are made in groups of ten. For the arrow-head flint must be used which has been buried in the earth and is not weathered in the sun. The rock is buried in a lump of earth away from the sun and kept moistened with water. It is then chipped into shape with a hardened flint and the heads are spread in the sun to dry, perhaps on top of the lodge, and turned in order that the rays of the sun may strike upon both sides and harden them. For the shaft the Indians use the wood of the Juneberry bush. With a splitting instrument made by chipping out a thin piece of flint, they saw down a slit in the top of the shaft, measuring it to see how long it must be for the arrowhead to fit into it, and glue the head firmly into this slit by means of a preparation called in the Indian speech "cooked hair," composed of the hair, tendons and hoof of a buffalo, boiled just to the proper consistency and stirred until the expert pronounces the mixture perfect. Sinews are used to bind the shaft firmly below the point so that it will not split, and to bind on the ends of the feathers, three for each arrow.

Bear's Arm does not own the art of arrow making and he has no right to the ceremony of the arrow making. It may become the property of a man or of a woman. The man entitled to this mystery today is Robert Lincoln, who is part Gros Ventres and part Mandan. It may be that he did not sufficiently attend to his father's instruction and so his father may not have taught him the mystery.

The chant used by the Indian arrow-makers is the same as that used by Charred Body, Lodge Boy, and Spring Boy in the story of Charred Arrow. When Charred Body and Coyote had sung songs over Spring Boy he grew so fast that he was four fingers taller than Lodge Boy. He was darker in the face and

more muscular than Lodge Boy. He is said to have been so strong that to turn over a buffalo was nothing to him. In some stories he is represented as of a mischievous nature. It is he who shoots the wind bag. The Gros Ventres still remember the mystery song used by Charred Body but they have forgotten Coyote's. Mrs. White Duck sang the Charred Body song to Bear's Arm, but being a woman she forgot Coyote's.

All the songs which Spring Boy learned in the sky and which belong to the Sun Dance belong to this ceremony of the arrow-making. By the singing of those songs, the power of the spirits is supposed to reside in the arrow. Bear's Arm inherited these songs from his father. He regards them as sacred. He once cured a boy who had been given up by the doctor by singing these songs. He prayed that he might live to see the boy's growth and marriage and that he might come to his house and be received and fed, and this came to pass. The people believe that after the ceremony of the sun-dance they are blessed with rain and sunshine and it is since government has prohibited this dance that they are no longer blessed with rain. (This story was told during a period of severe drought).

When the Gros Ventre go through the Sun Dance they represent the passion of Spring Boy when he was taken up into the heavens and was crucified and learned the songs in the bowery. Those who undergo this passion must have four wounds, two through the breasts and two through the shoulders. They are tied to a tree by thongs and look up into the tree as they run about it within the bowery. The person giving the Sun Dance must fast. Often he cuts off a finger and offers it to the sun.

When Spring Boy left this earth, he left the Black Medicine as his body or symbol on earth for the protection of the people. That is why it is used in the ceremonies [to represent the presence of Spring Boy].

Here is another thing. A pregnant woman is warned against scratching herself on the abdomen lest even after the child is born the scratches show on her skin. The itching is believed to be the work of an evil spirit, since the mother of the twins was killed by the monster in the story.

This ceremony (of the basket and arrow) was held every



spring, combined with the Old Woman ceremony. In this ceremony a basket is used to indicate the old grandmother as a gardener; it is a basket of plenty. The Old Woman gives corn to the warriors; the contents of one little pot represents an acre of corn. Basket-making is a mystery, but anyone can make a basket for his own use.

Corn is a kind of mystery. If the corn bursts on an ear they say that some one must have stolen an ear of corn and the spirit has come back and grown on another ear of corn. The stolen corn always comes back in that form. If you set the swollen ears aside you can tell how much has been stolen. Corn which has a bare streak across the cob is called "the palate of the goose." It is the goose society among the Hidatsa which has to do with the corn planting. In the harvest time other tribes come to visit and to buy corn, which they carry away. The ceremony therefore represents the coming back of the spirit of the sold corn. The ceremony comes after the basket ceremony.<sup>66</sup>

Here is the ceremony for the distribution of corn. — In the spring the medicine man goes on top of his lodge and calls to the village women to bring their seed-corn. He stretches a blanket on the ground and seed-corn of the nine different varieties of corn is brought and put in piles, each according to its kind. Each family may cultivate some special variety of corn. In planting the corn the different varieties are put in different rows and pumpkins or beans are planted between the rows, otherwise the kinds of corn will be mixed. This is called an intermarriage. The medicine man asks blessings for rain and crops. He blesses the seed by singing songs over it. He then calls to the woman of each family to come over and select seed from whatever varieties she cultivates. He gives her two or three kernels of the blessed corn to put with her own seed corn. This the woman receives with a gesture of humility, putting both arms out in front and sweeping them down to the ground. The last priest who blessed the corn used to sing the songs in an undertone so that

<sup>66</sup> For the Goose society see Lowie, PAMNH 11: 330-338. For Mandan and Hidatsa corn dances see Catlin 1: 213-214; Maximilian 2: 334-336; 376. For the stolen corn see Cheyenne, JAF 20: 191-192.

So secret were the activities of the Goose society that Bear's Arm was unwilling to have me even mention them under his name.

no one could hear. Others wanted to learn the ceremony from him and offered to pay him well, but he refused. Ordinarily the son of the medicine man carries on the ritual. A man named Moves-slowly was the performer of the ceremony for the Mandan. Bear's Arm has seen this Mandan ceremony performed. The priest may use a sacred bundle or an ear of corn as a mystery but Bear's Arm does not know the real mystery. The words of the song are sacred. The Gros Ventres also have corn and tobacco and a man has the office of blessing each. Bad Horn was the last one [who knew the old ritual (?)]. He died about 1836 and his son Bear's Heart died about 1899.

It is not known with whom the corn ceremony originated, but it is believed that the Gros Ventres took the ceremony from the Mandan. Mrs. White Duck's father, Poor Wolf, bought the ceremony from Red Bird. She has a right to tell the story but does not have it complete. It is said that the ceremony came with the corn, so that must have been before the flood. The tobacco was also used in those early days and there are songs about the tobacco which are used in a religious ceremony.

The Mandan say that some of their tribe disappeared, drifting to the south-west, and they have never been able to trace them. A few years ago a Winnebago came to the village. Some Winnebago words were found to be similar to the Mandan, so the Mandan think that the Winnebago are the lost people of the Mandan. Once a young man from the Oto tribe came here at a celebration and used words like horse, knife, water, identical with the Mandan. Hence some think that the Oto are the lost people.

Coyote is utility man in three ceremonies—this ceremony of the arrow and basket making, that of the Bear, and of the Wolf. Through friendship with Coyote, Charred Body's sons belonged to the three clans — Low Helmet, Alkali tents, Bought-with-a-butcher-knife-in-marriage, (Bear's Arm's clan). Bear's Arm belongs to the group of three clans, although his father belonged to the four, because he takes his clan from his mother.<sup>67</sup> The origin of the Low Helmet clan is told in the story of the Thunder-birds. The man who was taken under water wore the helmet to

<sup>67</sup> See Lowie, *PAMNH* 21: 19.



hide the electricity that sparked from his eyes. It was his sister's offspring who originated the clan. There are only about six or seven on the reservation now belonging to the clan. Some of the women married among the Sioux, some are on the Crow reservation. Mr. Deans belongs to that clan. The Alkali tents belong to a band who went out to hunt in the north and received their name from the alkali dust that collected on their tents. The Butcher-knife band originated from a certain woman who used to go about from one man to another until she was bought in marriage by the gift of a butcher knife. From the offspring of this marriage the clan is derived. Probably these knives were brought by the Frenchmen. These three clans are always up to something and yet always escape, just as Coyote always escaped by transforming himself into a coyote. They have adopted Coyote's characteristics and hence have adopted Coyote [as their patron]. On a war party Coyote is the patron of the scouts.

The group of four clans are the Prairie Chicken and Dripping Dirt, who seem to go together, and the Water Bursters and *A* (or ik)-*de-shuka*, who also go together. The habit of the prairie chicken is to roost in the grass and fly out with a loud noise when a person passes by. Hence when this band begin to talk loudly and boast, to quiet them down people say "Just like a prairie chicken!" The Mandan say that the prairie chicken had a daughter. The spirits took pity upon her and promised her offspring as long as the earth lasted if she would name them after the prairie chicken. There are more members of the Prairie Chickens living today than of any other clan. The Prairie Chickens were once attacked by the rest of the tribe and they moved away and had a village of their own at Expansion for a time. While there they made an alliance with the Dripping Dirt clan, who brought them back to the main village and promised mutual protection. "Chicken Dripping Dirt" they were called from that time.

The Dripping Dirts were named from a band who went for winter camp up the river on the west side of the river from Williston to a piece of country that looked white like the sea beach as if dirt had been dripped over it. Three winters they camped there. Others objected and called the band Camping-three-times-near-

the-dripping-dirt, abbreviated to Three-dripping-dirt. The Water Bursters were named from a quarrel that arose in a village. A bag of water was hung up and one of the men got angry and burst it open and let the water run out.<sup>68</sup> The last clan was named from a custom this band had of sitting in a row after a war party on a high divide or range of hills and singing. Only three men are left of this clan on the reservation. Off the reservation there are some six.

Certain sacred mysteries are kept within the clan, others can be bought outside the clan. For example, the barricade across the river in time of flood, which was taught to the Mandan by Lone Man, is kept by one man on the Mandan side, and such a barricade must be made by a certain one of the Mandan clans. The clan get together and appoint a distinguished member of the clan with whom no fault can be found to keep the properties for this mystery.

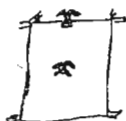
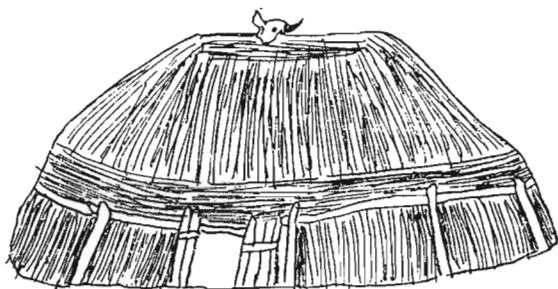
<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-26.



## 27. CHIEF-WHILE-YOUNG; ORIGIN STORY OF THE OLD WOMAN'S SOCIETY <sup>103</sup>

This is a true Gros Ventre story. For these stories are like the branches of a tree. All go back to the main trunk. The old Indians who know the stories, if we relate a branch can tell where it belongs on the tree, and what comes before and what after.

Far off in the regions of the north was a high hill and inside this hill was a dwelling in which all was arranged like the dwellings of the Indians. Inside, in the honored place, a buffalo skull was placed. The family consisted of a man, his wife, and two boys. The older said, "Father, as I wander through the country and look at the different tribes who live in these lands, it is the Gros Ventres who please me most. I want to be reborn so that I may be head man and chief in the Gros Ventre tribe and anything



Lodge and Door-screen

<sup>103</sup> Compare for this story the origin story of the Winnebago Medicine Dance (RBAE 37: 350-351). Five brothers attempt incarnation into the tribe in order to help mankind. The first one fails through foolishness. The next teaches the art of war and leads on the war path, but fails. The next, Bladder, leads a war party of twenty men, but all are killed.

For the Winnebago belief in reincarnation see *ibid.* 314-316, 355; for the Menomini, INM 4: 116-117.

I say they will obey." His father said, "Very well, if you want to be so reborn it is your privilege. But take my advice. Look over the lodges carefully until you come to one that is as large as ours, with a flat place on the chimney-top where rows of buffalo skulls are placed. Peep in and you will find men of importance in the tribe sitting in rows about the fire relating stories and the women cooking. Find the right maiden, change yourself into any variety of corn, but not into meat, and when she eats the corn it will turn into flesh through the woman and you will finally find yourself sitting in her womb. The first three months you will pass through the process of shaping your body. After that time you can hear the chiefs of the tribe when they come together to talk around the council fire. Listen carefully and take in what they have to say, for by this time you can hear. Remember what they tell." The man made his son take a bath. Then he burned incense of sweet sage and placed it between the boy's legs and drew the robe tent-shape about the boy's neck. In this way the boy was waking up or getting new life. Then he took the boy up on the lodge after sundown and seated him on a buffalo skull and shouted in a loud voice to the spirits, individually or in bands, "This boy of mine has conceived the idea of going down to be born among these river people. He wants to be chief and leader among that tribe. He is doing this to bring a blessing upon these people in their wars, their hunts and their agriculture. I have given my consent, and I ask all you good spirits to bless my boy in his attempt to become a leader. I shall do all in my power to stand behind him and push him forward." To his son he said, "My son, always remember who you are. The good spirits have enemies who work against them. These enemies may create a mystery whereby you may forget your true self. If you do forget who you are, I shall try to remind you in some way." When these words had been spoken, the boy made a movement as if he were flying and shot through the air like a meteor so that good spirits and bad alike saw him go, and disappeared in the direction of the Gros Ventre village.

Arrived at the village, he went from lodge to lodge in spirit form, peeping in at the chimney hole, until he found a lodge like that described by his father. There the people were eating corn



mush ground fine. A maiden was eating the mush and he leaped into the mush and the girl ate it. After three months he regained his sense of hearing. He overheard people saying, "This maiden is pregnant. If the child is born after ten months he will be heavy and clumsy and lack life, but if he is born at the end of the ninth moon he will be sturdy and active." Hearing this, he determined that he would be born at the end of nine months.

All that was said after his birth he understood. An old woman came in, bringing a piece of an old tent taken from that part near the smoke-hole called in Indian "bad-part-of-a-tent." It was the color of tobacco and smelled of the smoke. She said it was to be used to wrap the baby in like a diaper because it was soft and would not chafe the baby and it was spongy so that water would pour through and thus the baby would be kept comfortable. As soon as the baby was wrapped in this tent-cloth, he remembered no more what was happening to him.

There came now a lapse of thirteen years. In the fall after the harvest when the corn had been husked and shelled, the cobs were dumped away from the village. There the boys played battle. They divided into sides, built a fire and heated the cobs in the fire, after inserting them into a ball of mud at the end of a willow-stick. Then they would throw them and the cobs would go through the air like a flame of fire. [We used to go naked, adds Mandan, and they hit hard and hurt like anything]. This boy was in the thick of the battle. As it grew late, the big boys sent the little boys home. The boy's spirit father thought it was now time to bring the boy back to consciousness of the work he had come to do. Between the lodges he met the boy face to face. The boy dodged to one side, but the father caught him. The boy looked up at him but did not know him. The father said, "Son, you told me that you were coming here to rule these people as a chief and bless them. I gave my consent because I wanted to have the honor of a son who was leader of his people. You have forgotten yourself." The boy said, "I don't know who you are. I never said I wanted to be chief. What are you talking about?" The father left him and came again to the far north and said to his wife, "This thing that we wanted to have come to pass has not worked, it has been destroyed." He told his wife about the

corn-cob battle and how he had caught the boy and tried to bring him to his senses and how he had failed. "I might as well call him home. It will not do him any good to die of old age. So now I command him to come home." When he had thus spoken the boy's spirit came home. Where he had been born his body lay dead.

The younger brother said, "Since my brother has failed in what he attempted, I will ask for your consent to go out and try again to do what my brother failed to do. Even if they wrap me up in the tent-skin, even if I lose recollection of myself, I will strive to regain consciousness and do you try to help me." The older spoke up and said he would like to try again, but the father rebuked him and said he had not heeded the father's warning and had failed utterly. He might have tried again if he had regained consciousness and then died in old age, but now he must let the younger brother make the attempt.

The younger brother bathed, was smoked, taken upon the lodge, and presented to the spirits. The father said, "You know that I sent my older son and he came home a failure. The second son will now make the attempt. I give him my consent and ask for your blessing." The boy shot through the air like a flame and disappeared. He came to the village, looked around and found a big lodge inside of which he saw a maiden eating corn mush. He entered the mush and the girl ate it and conceived. The same things happened to him as to his brother. When he was born he heard and remembered everything. He was washed and his navel was cut. In came the old woman with a piece of the same smoked skin she had given his brother. (She may have been a relative and have saved the skin.) The boy knew what would happen. When he was wrapped in it he forgot everything.

His spirit father knew that this had happened. He thought, "I made a mistake the first time in going to my son when he was a mere lad of thirteen. This time I will wait until the boy is twenty years old before I go to him. I will work through the mind of a man of his own clan who has attained honor among his people to advise my son to secure through fasting a good spirit to guide him. That will be the right moment for me to visit my son."



One night when the head man and the chiefs were gathered together telling stories, the young man came into the tent. One of the men had already been influenced to advise the boy. He said, "Listen to me, friends, I want to speak to this young man, for he has reached the age of twenty." Then to the boy he said, "Brother (nephew), give ear to me. I want to speak to you tonight. You belong to my clan and a young man should not disgrace his clan. It is time for you to think about your position. You see that your father is a highly honored man because all the war chiefs and leaders come together here to eat what he has to offer of the fruit of his own labor. Such men are worthy of honor. The only way to acquire honor is by fasting to the good spirits and crying on the high buttes for their aid. They will hear you if you are worthy and come to you in spirit and advise you and impart a blessing. Now is the time for you to do this while you are still a bacnelor. Take my advice and fast."

The young man answered, "I hear, brother (uncle), and shall act on your advice this night. I will sleep on a high hill and when the sun peeps over the horizon I shall begin to wail for a good spirit to come to my aid, and I shall wail all day long until the sun sets and continue thus for four days. At the end of four days, when the sun sets, I will return home. Until then I will abstain from food and water."

His father said, "My son, I am glad that you have heard your brother's advice and will act upon it at once. Before you go, prepare for this event. I advise you to bathe and smoke your body. I will give you of my own mystery in the sacred bundle which hangs between two poles." The other men in the lodge also expressed their pleasure in the boy's resolve and encouraged him, saying, "It is well to have listened to your uncle and taken his advice. This is the only way in which a man can attain to honor—by fasting. You can see yourself how much glory and honor your father has achieved by this means. Do not let this be your last fasting, but fast often."

The boy found a place almost at the top of the hill where he could lie down in a sitting position. He strewed sage for his bed, smeared himself with dirt, and put up a rest for his head. On top of the butte he built up two mounds of stone between which

he was to walk to and fro. The mystery bundle he tied to a stick and staked it. At sunrise he went up to the top of the hill and walked to and fro, wailing, between the two mounds until sunset. Then he went back to his resting place.

On the night of the third day as he was becoming exhausted he heard some one at the foot of the hill clearing his throat. He thought, "Perhaps it is my uncle coming to encourage me." A man arrived. The boy looked up. The man said, "My son, I have come to talk with you. This fasting was my plan for you. I worked through your clan brother to give you this advice. You are now exhausted. I thought, 'Do not wait another day. This is the time to go and speak to him.' I have heard all. Remember our old dwelling and how your brother attempted to become a leader and failed. You thought that you might succeed. You too forgot yourself. It is now time to recollect yourself and become a leader and chief. Do you now recall yourself?" The boy sat up. He said, "Father, I remember now who I am." His father said, "I command you to take this sacred mystery of your foster father and go home tonight to his lodge. Tell your people to cry out through the village that they shall no more use this smoked skin to wrap a newborn child, lest if a good spirit seek to incarnate himself into the tribe he shall not succeed. Do what you can to prevent this from happening. Within ten nights, when your strength is restored, call this clan brother of yours and look upon him as your announcer. Go on the warpath toward Mouse river and there you will come to a single man, an Assiniboine, looking for birds' eggs, with his weapons laid aside. You shall be victor over him. That will be your first honor. Next summer you shall go again and conquer two. The next summer you shall be victor over three. The fourth summer you shall put to sleep four more men. Always take this clan brother of yours as your chief announcer. In this way he shall be honored."

At dusk the boy returned home. Men were congregated at his foster father's lodge. When they saw him they were disheartened and drooped their heads. (He was coming home too soon.) Nobody spoke. The foster father said, "Son, you promised to come home at the end of the fourth day. You should fulfil that promise. Make this whole night the fourth. Do not put

the mystery away but place it on top of the other sacred bundles and the floor in front of it shall be swept for you to lie upon." The boy obeyed without telling his story. The men were asked to leave him alone another night.

Next morning when the sun rose the boy got up, bathed, drank, vomited,<sup>104</sup> and ate, but sparingly, as his foster father warned him. All this time he obeyed his foster father. About the eighth day he sent for his clan brother and said, "Brother, I am going out on the warpath. I am misty with fasting, but can perhaps conquer a single person. You have encouraged me, so I appoint you to announce to the village that I am going up to this side of Mouse river as a war chief." The uncle said it was well, but advised him, "If I go through the village and announce this a number will follow you. I will pick out a special band of our clan (the Prairie Chicken) so that our clan may acquire honor." So the boy consented.

This is the way in which a secret war party is conducted. The announcer may select eighteen young men and command them to prepare for the warpath with moccasins for their feet and cornmeal for food made into cornballs or roasted (because this is especially nutritious and keeps a person from sleepiness), and to tell no one, but to come over to the lodge in the dead of night so that they may all start together. The announcer, the chief warrior, and eighteen young men make up the band. They do not use bull boats lest others follow. They go up the river and find driftwood and make a raft by tying logs together with crosspieces, upon which they place their weapons. They find buffalo, roast ribs, and have a merry time. Each carries a piece of meat with his load on the journey. At night as they camp they sing war songs and whoop. They are at the height of their glory. One day the warchief picks out two young men as scouts. Their duty is to go in advance in the line of march. They get up early, before sunrise, and go ahead without breakfast. If they see an enemy they report to the rest, who follow in the rear. The party string out in a line and sing a war song such as is sung by all

<sup>104</sup> It was an old custom of the Indians to clean out the system by inducing vomiting in this way, and "no Indian [says Mandan] ever had appendicitis in the old days."



Indian tribes. The scouts howl in imitation of a wolf.

Disheveled, disheveled they may be, but they come home lucky!

the men sing. The band set up a stone or a mound of buffalo dung and the scouts jump over it one by one. The scout who sees the enemy first jumps over the mound last and scatters it with his foot.<sup>105</sup> Some one who has been appointed to the office questions the returning scouts. The scouts go out in couples. There may be many couples of scouts, but the first four who see the enemy are the only ones who get the honor.

The war chief is called "Old Wolf," his warriors are "Young Wolves." The band prepare for battle. They strip naked or leave on an antelope skin shirt, paint themselves, put on their moccasins, and place their "mystery" in their hair. If an enemy falls, each man tries to reach the body first and deliver a blow. The first, second, third and fourth man who reaches the body strikes it. This counts as an honor. The enemy's scalp is presented to the chief of a war party. This serves as proof of the killing. It is preserved by lashing it within a hoop of wood and exposing it to the sun. On the return, some woman relative receives the scalp and brings it in to camp.

As the victorious band near home they burn wood, mix the charcoal with tallow, and daub their bodies all over, even their faces. They daub the stick also that bears the scalp. At the outskirts of the village they prepare for the entrance. Just as the sun peeps over the hills they enter, shouting. The man who killed the enemy shoots an arrow into the air, shouting "I am the one who shot the enemy." The others who have struck the enemy do likewise. All the people rush out to see. The warriors line up, first the man who first struck the enemy, then the other three. The woman who receives the scalp is made to march with the four. Uncles and aunts on the father's side run up to the warriors and relieve them of their weapons. Later, when they go to their lodges, the relatives sing

Here is your weapon, come and get it.

<sup>105</sup> The scouts jump the mound, says Bear's Arm, as a symbol that they are telling the truth. If they are sure that they have seen the enemy, they toss something in the air as they return, and in jumping over the mound the last one crushes it flat with his foot, but if they are not quite sure they merely jump over it.

The parents bring presents. The war announcer orders breakfast and announces a victory dance. The four honored warriors are brought inside the circle one by one by an uncle on the father's side and given an eagle feather. The war chief also is brought inside the circle and given a tassel made of the hair taken from the scalp of the enemy. This trophy distinguishes the war leader.

There is always a vacant place left in the center of an Indian village for the dancers. The announcer goes from house to house of the clan to which the war chief belongs and blackens up all the clan members, women and babies and all, for the dance. All the clan members, even the women and babies, of the victorious war leader come to the dance to show that they have a claim to the honor. All the singers belong to the clan. Other clans may also join in the dance. The warriors go around the circle a couple of times and are then brought inside the ring, one by one, by the most honored man of the father's clan. They say, "Look at this young man. He will defend the village. He is brave." The new war chief is then given a name. He represents the prince of courage. After the dance the warriors go about the village in bands of two or three singing songs of praise while the young girls dance about them in a circle. The next afternoon the dance begins again. There are four victory dances during the summer. When the snow falls, that ends the dances.

On his first war party the young man was successful. His party proceeded up the left bank of the Mouse river and saw a man robbing a duck's nest. The man made for the shore through the water and reached for his bow and arrows. He was shot and killed and his body sacrificed to the young war chief's spirit father. The honor of this victory was claimed by the Prairie Chicken clan. All the clan turned up for the dance and the singers were all Prairie Chickens. They gave the young man the name "Chief-while-young."

On the fourth war party many followed him, so many that he appointed forty scouts. There were bands of Assiniboine roaming on the north. Among them was a mystery man who knew that Chief-while-young was to take home four scalps. This mystery man had for his mother a mystery woman up in the sky. She had fastened to his forehead a spider-web and every time he was

shot at she pulled on the web and lifted him off the ground. Thus he could not be struck with an arrow. [You will notice that in these stories there is one superior being and then another superior being who covers him.] This mystery man knew that Chief-while-young was to take home four scalps. He camped the bands together up near Minot and told them that there was to be a battle in which he would kill seven Gros Ventre warriors. The scouts found a hunting party of the Assiniboine butchering a buffalo. They attacked them and killed four. The rest made their way back to camp and reported the attack. The Assiniboine came out to fight in such numbers that the scouts ran, pursued by the enemy. The mystery man unraveled his hair and let it dangle down his back. He stuck two magpie feathers on his head and painted his forehead and cheeks red. He was a swift runner. When he was directly behind them, the scouts turned and shot but they could not hit him, so they all ran. When a Gros Ventre lagged, the Assiniboine struck him down with a hardwood club. Thus he killed seven. He was almost upon the war chief but he knew him and turned back, telling his men they had killed enough.

Chief-while-young took off his moccasins and wept over the loss of his warriors.<sup>106</sup> There was no victory dance, everyone was mourning. For seven days and seven nights he remained on the butte wailing, then he came home and ate and returned for another seven days and nights and so on seven times. All this time his mystery father never once appeared to him. On the forty-ninth day he took a sharp stone and cut off a finger and sacrificed it to all the gods. He saw bands of old women coming from the four quarters of the wind. They came and sat about him and told him to go back to the village. They said, "We have given you on that same battlefield thirty tents of the Assiniboine." He said, "I am glad of your favor, but what I want most is to get the man who killed my warriors. I want him among the tents." They said, "We know that you want this. The reason why your father does not appear is because of your sister. She

<sup>106</sup> In mourning for his dead warriors a war chief does not walk back and forth between piles of stones but either sits on the ground or walks about as chance takes him.



is now living away up in the heavens. She has a house with a door turned toward the southwest and everyone has to do as she says. Each time when you conquered the Assiniboine you sacrificed them to your father and to other spirits but you sacrificed none to your own sister. She is the cause of these seven fallen warriors. She has adopted that Assiniboine as her son. She has



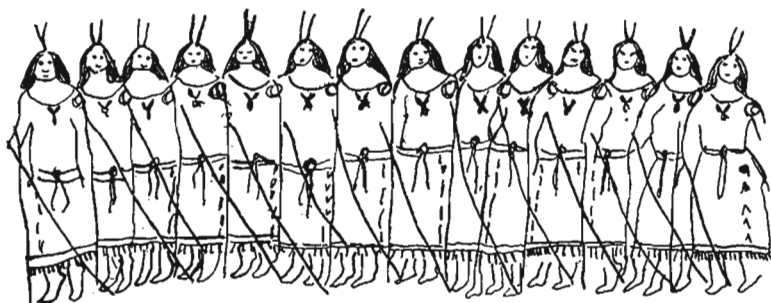
A member of the Grandmothers' society

made an image of that man and has placed the image next to her neck and that is why he is unconquerable. We bands of women are secret societies. Go back to the village and build a sweat lodge and have a society of old grandmothers to represent us. You see how we are dressed. We have our robes tied together behind, two magpie feathers stuck in our hair, a circle of sweet-grass bound together on the left shoulder, and we carry a cane of Juneberry bush. This cane

we plant on the ground and lift ourselves with it in the direction we want to go. Our robes fly out like wings and thus we fly in the air through the heavens. So prepare the lodge to receive us and we will all fly down through the chimney. Be sure that all the dogs are muzzled inside the lodges. Any stray dog, have it shot and thrown over the bank. Make an image of the man who killed the seven and have a couple of forked sticks to thrust between the stones of the fireplace. We will tell you when to put the image in where the stones are. Then pour on water. If the image bursts with a popping sound you will know that you are to conquer the man. It is a sign. When all are inside the lodge, sitting in a row, offer

a piece of jerked meat on the point of a stick of cherry tree and a pipe of tobacco to the person sitting next to us and say, "Mother, I wish to conquer this Assiniboine who has killed seven of my warriors and many others." She will pass the offering along to the end of the row where sits the old old woman who lives with you in your village. This woman is a spirit. She reports to your sister everything that goes on here. The woman who has taken the offering will look up to this old woman and ask her to take these things—the choke cherry stick and the pipe—to your sister and tell how the man has fasted in sorrow. By this time it will be near noon. The old woman will take the things and fly out through the smokehole. We shall all swing our skirts and command the sun to stand still."

Chief-while-young came back to the village. He ate until he was strong, then he summoned his uncle and had him announce that the dogs were to be muzzled and all human beings were to remain indoors until noon, after which they might come outside. So the crier announced this and then called to the four winds the name of his brother and how he was going to perform the ceremony. A new sweat lodge, new straw for the floor, new pots, jerked meat, all were prepared by the warriors. Then came a sound from the west and in flew an old woman and alighted, cane first, on the floor. One by one others arrived. At last they said,



A Line-up of Grandmothers

"The society from the west is all in." Then came the society from the east, next the north, last the south. They arranged themselves in rows and called for haste. He passed about the jerked beef, repeating the proper words. The old, old woman came in also and looked about among them and mocked them, saying, "There are many of you. Why not depend upon yourselves? This young man has fasted seven times seven days. Are you helpless to aid him?" They answered, "You belong to the village, we are from without. It is your place, therefore, to carry the pipe up to the sky." So she consented, saying, "Son, if I succeed in bringing the image, you shall hear me singing as I come through the sky. Then be prepared and place the image in the pit and put in the redhot stones, take a few puffs of smoke, then hand the pipe to the image as if offering him a smoke, then pour on water. If you hear something pop you may know that your enemy will be killed. At the proper time I shall appoint two young men to kill this warrior for you." Then she turned to the women and said, "You must try to keep the sun high so that its rays may cause drowsiness in the woman in the sky." She ascended to the sky. The woman of the sky would not let her in; she knew her mission and said, "You are trying to deceive me. They have given this young man thirty tents of the Assiniboine. I consent to it. You need not come in." The messenger asked her if she would consent to anything the old women promised him. She refused and said he had enough. Then the messenger offered her the meat and the pipe, because it was the duty of this woman in the sky to cut the meat and light the pipe for the spirits in the sky [to whom the things were offered], so she had to let her in. The woman of the sky turned her face and the sun cast its rays down upon her; the women below were making the sun stand still. The woman of the sky at last took the pipe by the stem as if to light it and ate a little meat and again urged the messenger to go. She yawned and stretched and the messenger began to massage her hair. The woman went off to sleep. The messenger pulled a hair and touched the image with it, then she left the place. The woman of the sky stirred and felt for the image, but finding it there she went off to sleep again. The messenger returned through the air singing a song of bringing down the image. They heard it in the lodge,



prepared the sweat bath and placed upon it a drawing of a man. The messenger threw down the hair and there lay the image. Four stones were placed upon it and the pipe lighted and the smoke blown down upon it. Water was poured on and the stomach of the image burst with the sound of a cannon. The old woman of the village said, "This is a sign that your enemy will die. I will choose two young men to kill him. One is Swallow, the other is Hawk. These two are swift. They belong to the Thunder. Whatever they do they perform it in the form of lightning. The mystery man knows that you are attacking. He will get his forces together and have the tents pitched where you have been promised them, but you must take the main band in another direction. He will be confident. Near time for the attack, let the announcer call to the warriors to assemble themselves in groups of their own societies. These two young men belong to the Stone Club society (the society of the youngest men). You may know them by the feathers they wear. Call the warriors to a knoll and tell your announcer that the men have been selected. When they have killed the mystery man, let them bring his head to you. Your sister who is the cause of all the trouble will ask for the head. You must send to the enemy's camp a thousand men in all, stationing a hundred men near the camp, two hundred farther back, then three hundred, then four hundred. Since there are four societies of us women you are to kill four hundred of the Assiniboine and sacrifice a hundred to each society."

The old woman who directed him did not go out to the battle, but stayed in the village. All happened as she had said. During the battle the women flew over the battlefield and made a cloud for the sun. They left no opening for the woman of the sky to look down and see what was done. When at last she could see the battlefield, the Assiniboine was dead. The chief had a pipe ready filled with tobacco. He lighted the pipe and made an offering of the head to his sister, saying, "Sister, my warriors have killed many warriors, but none other was worthy to be sacrificed to you." She took the head and walked away without a word. She plucked sage and, placing it upon the skull, turned it into hair. She placed the head back on the body and four times com-

manded him to stand. When she did not succeed, she flew back to the sky and they could hear her wailing.<sup>107</sup>

As for the fight at the camp, the Gros Ventres came early to the tents. Some boys came out and two young men killed a couple. This started the battle. Not a single Gros Ventre was killed. Each band fell back and joined the band coming up behind. The battle was fought at a butte this side of Minot where a stream runs through a coolie into Mouse river. Even as late as the early 90's bones and arrowheads were to be found there.

The Old Women's or Grandmothers' society began at this time, the members of which impersonate the spirit women who took part in this battle. After the fight, the young chief's uncle taught the songs and the dress and other paraphernalia for the society. All the women dressed alike—before white men came, in robes of the Rocky mountain sheep, tanned white, afterward, in buffalo robes. They wore magpie feathers as their symbol because the magpie is not afraid of heat or cold but stays about during the entire year. It is a symbol of fearlessness. After a victory, members of this society would go about from lodge to lodge singing songs of praise to any young man who had been brave in battle, and his relatives gave them such presents as they could afford. If the village was attacked, the women came out and danced and, taking off their robes, made a sweeping motion as a sign of the retreat of the enemy. Thus they impersonated the spirit women on the day of the famous battle when they hid the light of the sun until the warriors were victorious. When Bear's Arm was about twelve he saw this women's dance society singing and dancing in front of the returned warriors' lodges. A man named Cherry-necklace sang for them. Since he has died no one knows the songs, and there is probably no one living today who has taken part in the dance.

This society of old women was made up of women who were inspired by the spirits of the mysterious women who live everywhere on the earth.<sup>108</sup> From the time the dance was instituted, if a young man had a successful hunt he would cook up food for

107 In Shoshone, JAFI 37: 69-70, Blue-jay throws the heads of his victims to his mother until he is himself beheaded and his own head thus offered.

108 Lowie, PAMNH 11: 338-339.

the society and give them presents and they would give him their blessing. When the women of the society talked it was as if the mysterious women were talking. They protected him from arrows or bullets. Also the Gros Ventres respect age. If they meet an old person on the path they will give up the path to the old person. This pleases the aged person.

People still believe in the mysterious women who inspired the members of that society. They make offerings to ash trees and to a kind of vine with inedible berries called "Berries-of-the-mysterious-women" in which these women are supposed to live. They do not live in cottonwood trees but in trees of a thick growth. These mysterious women are all over the earth. They feed on human flesh. If one of them is killed the body must be burned. When you hear stones popping in the fire, that is the flesh of one of these spirits. They appear in many forms, sometimes as animals, sometimes even as little children. Wherever they wish to go they can travel to in no time, just like thought. *Wa-hu-pa Wi-a*, Mysterious woman, they are called.

There used to be a good many hermaphrodites among the Indians. People say that they are lured by the evil spirits whom we call "mysterious women" who live in the coulees although we never see them. When people have the mouth twisted out of shape it is caused by these women. About four years ago a hermaphrodite among the Crow died here. He wore the dress of a woman, but earlier he had been a great warrior.



#### 14. DOG-MAN FROM DOG DEN <sup>69</sup>

[A chief's daughter was beautiful but proud. She refused all the young men of the village. At last one night a man came to her in the dark and she took him for her husband. Three times he came and left her before daylight.] The fourth time as he walked toward the door the woman threw her little bag of red ochre at him and scattered the ochre all over the white robe which he wore over his shoulders. The next morning she went all about the lodges examining the young men in the lodges, but her search was fruitless. On her return she saw a white dog lying in the shade asleep. This dog had the marks on his coat. She took up a long stick such as is used to dig corn and tried to kill the dog, but she missed her aim and only struck his face and drew blood, whereupon the dog awoke and ran out of the village.

Four months later she was about to deliver. She went outside of the village to a place where people went to haul earth for their lodge covering. There she gave birth to nine male pups. As these were her first born she was worried about them and used to go back to the place to nurse them. Just when June berries were ripening came a thunder storm and the woman was worried about her children. When the storm was over she went out early in the morning to the hole where they lay but could not find them. In the mud she saw the tracks of a large dog and little tracks following.

She followed the tracks to a ridge and beyond that into a valley, where she saw a white tent. As she approached the tent her little last born came out in the form of a little boy. "Mother has arrived!" he called out.—"Let her in, breakfast is now ready," a brother answered from within. Then a gruff voice said, "If you had had a mother you would all have been born in her lodge. Even when the storm came she did not come to save you." She entered the lodge and saw the boys sitting in a row and their father at the head. He had a scar on his face where she had hit

<sup>69</sup> This wide-spread tale of the dog husband was related from the Mandan by Maximilian (2:343). Lowie relates Arapaho variants of which one (207-209) is identical with this from the Hidatsa. Among the Arapaho the story is told as an origin myth of the dog soldier society. The dog husband is the Sun. In a Cheyenne version (JAFL 13: 181-182) the seven pups go up to the sky as the Pleiades. For its distribution see Arapaho, Lowie, 209, and Thompson, *Tales of North American Indians*, note 247.

him. They were roasting ribs and the little one spoke up and said, "Give mother the short rib near the end." To this day we call this piece "the woman's rib."<sup>70</sup> At night the woman slept with the youngest. He whispered to her to follow them and see what kind of a home they had. The man hated her and tried to prevent her having food or following them. Four times they camped and each time the same thing happened. Each morning when she awoke they had gone, but she followed the trail. The fifth day she turned to the west of a hill, circled it and there on the north side stood the little one. "This way, mother," he said, and she entered the hill where their dwelling was.

For some time she stayed with her sons. Although their father did not harm her he showed that he hated her. So after a time she kissed her children goodby and returned to her village. She had been gone for a long time and all in the village had looked for her. She told how she had followed her children and ever after they have called the hill "Dog Den.." Today when a person is fatigued he says, "I have come back from Dog Den."<sup>71</sup>

Because of the dog coming to this woman young girls as soon as they come to marriageable age are, by the uncle's consent, given in marriage between the ages of fourteen to seventeen lest they be visited by some spirit. The name "Red Woman" is that which red corn goes by. It is seldom given to girls. The two oldest boys in the story were named Cedar-between-his-eyes and Hole Blower. The youngest was named Last-born. Since the oldest boy was strong and robust and always brought game home from the hunt, when a hunter is lucky we say "Just like Cedar-between-his-eyes." Hole Blower is the name of a kind of flute through which this boy blew. It is the same as the flute through which Grandmother's grandson blew out the corn and the cold. In old days such flutes were owned by special persons as a mystery. In recent days they are sometimes used for singing love songs.

<sup>70</sup> Compare Gros Ventres, 105, where a Gros Ventre girl sends her playmates after food and says "Whoever does not bring the last rib is not loved by her parents." In the Arapaho version it is the leg bone called "taking-it-out" which is given to the wife.

<sup>71</sup> Dogden butte lies directly east of the reservation, just south of a branch of the Northern Pacific railroad. A band of Indians who had been surprised and scalped by an enemy band are supposed to have made a settlement here.

## 28. HAWK AND SWALLOW; A BIRD CEREMONY ORIGIN STORY <sup>109</sup>

This is a mystery story which tells how the medicine of these two bird spirits is secured, that is, of the hawk and the swallow. The hawk is the white-backed variety with a striped tail. It is a clever bird. It will dive into the bushes for its prey. The swallow is the kind with a notched tail. The Indian observes that it will fly near to a horse [hence this bird is associated with the origin of the horse].

The story begins in the Gros Ventre village on a big flat near the mouth of the Knife river. It was in the Fall and people were coming up the river looking for a place to establish winter quarters where there was plenty of game. They traveled slowly with their dogs on account of the women and children. Their fifth camping place was at Prairie Dog town. It lay where Crow's Heart's place is today and extended down to the river point where Ben Benson's house stands.

Among them was a young man belonging to the Lump-Wood society. He was poor and a gambler. As he did not even own a garden, his wife helped other women who had gardens and they gave her in return corn, squash, and tobacco, which she carried on the journey. She carried also a pot for cooking which she had begged of some one. Her husband was a smoker. He would first offer a smoke to the spirits, then light his pipe and smoke. So with food, he would take particles and strew them backward and offer them to the spirits. For a dwelling they would just make a clearing in the bog brush—"lying like dogs" it was called.

Hawk and Swallow were the spirits of two men who had died and been buried up the Missouri. These spirits followed the Gros Ventres. They saw how the young man offered them food and they took pity on the man and his wife. They said, "Let us take him up where we are and put him on his feet again." That eve-

<sup>109</sup> See Wilson, PAMNH 15:142. The first horses are here said to have been had from the western Cheyenne at the time when two mystery men who were birds transformed into men joined an Assiniboine mystery man on a successful war party.



ning the young man went over to the big Lodge, a big tent belonging to a young man whose father and mother had a separate tent, and said, "This is the fifth night that my wife and I have been camping in the bog brush. Let me move in here with my wife. She is hard working and will help your wife." The other consented gladly and it did not take long for them to move their belongings and arrange their bedding by the door. The other members of the society came in and welcomed this arrangement. They moved over by the fire and began to strike their round drums and practise their society songs, for each society strives to outdo the others in song.

Presently they all fell sound asleep, but the young man could not sleep. After midnight he woke his wife and whispered to her, "I have been thinking that we had better separate from the camp and go up the Little Missouri. We will hide in the brush until the camp goes by us and then move up farther, make a lodge of brushwood and live there in comfort. We must go tonight, for if we try to leave in the morning the soldiers will catch us and beat us. So they took up their belongings and started out. The next day they could hear in hiding the noise of the people crossing the Little Missouri, calling to their dogs and making clamor until noon. That night they traveled on, traveled on, traveled on, and camped for the night. A third night they traveled on, traveled on, traveled on. On the fourth day they found a good location for a camp where a bank faced the east. The man dug into it and made a kind of cellar, brought wood, arranged a cross-piece and walled it in with sticks and dead grass. There they were contented to live. She made a fire and put on sweet corn to cook. Outside it was snowing. It grew dusk. While the corn cooked he ground the tobacco leaves and made them ready to smoke. Just then he heard what sounded like two men talking. He called his wife's attention to the sound and they were frightened, fearing lest the police had followed them up. It was now snowing heavily. At the door they could hear men thumping their feet as if clearing off the snow. Then the door opened and two men came in. The young man gave them a place to sit. He could not make out who they were. The wife placed the pot of sweet corn before the two men and gave them two new shells to

use as spoons and they ate up all the food greedily, then handed it back to the woman, saying, "Sister-in-law, take back the pot." The man filled his pipe and handed it to the one nearest him. The visitor took it, thanked him, laid it on the live coal to light, then smoked it all out and handed it back to his host to refill for the other visitor. The man filled it with the tobacco which he had laid out on a piece of rawhide.

Then the visitor who sat nearest him spoke and said, "My friend, you do not know who we are." The man answered, "True, I do not recognize you among the men of our tribe." Said the visitor, "My friend, you may have heard stories about the battle at the point where the Mouse river forks when Chief-while-young fought and two of his men killed the son of the Grandmother in the sky. We are [the spirits of] those two men. A war party went up west. I went along as warrior. We got into the Black-foot territory in the Rocky mountains. They saw us first and gave battle. They pursued us and we climbed a cliff. They built fires below and stood about in bunches. Our war chief said that we must try to escape by breaking through. So we slipped down the cliff and made a dash through the line. In the darkness we had a great battle. They followed our retreat and I was wounded. Toward daylight I crawled into the pine tree brush. Then, with the aid of my bow as cane, I made my way to the head waters of the Yellowstone. I crawled into holes along the bank. Buffalo came to drink. I shot one, skinned the hide and made a bull boat. I sliced meat and made jerked meat. Then I came down the river to a place called Porcupine Den. I had cut my foot and as I came along the wound grew worse. At this point I could go no farther. I placed my bow and arrows in a crevice in the cliff, crawled in myself and died there. The next year the Gros Ventres came west again and this friend fell ill. His lodge did not want to leave him. They made a stretcher and took turns carrying him until they reached this place. So I went over to him and said, 'We have been friends from infancy up. I feel lonely here. Why not give up and come and lie beside me?' That night he died. They placed him beside me, and ever since we have been sleeping together. At night we wander through the camp, and because of your offerings of food and smoke we have taken pity

on you and we spoke to you as you lay in your friend's tent and moved you to think of coming up here to live. Now we will take care of you and give you success. From this time on you are our friend and we have blessed you. Down by Spring Creek (called Little Knife river) is a herd of antelope and one very large male we have driven near and it is resting on the hill. In the morning take your bow and arrows and walk right up to this antelope and bring him here and butcher him at your doorway. Whatever game you see, walk right up to it; the game can not see you. Refrain from eating sweet corn or smoking tobacco. Leave these two things for us. But of meat you shall have every variety and other things besides, only at night when we come, let our sister prepare sweet corn for us and we will smoke tobacco.

"Furthermore, far up in the forests of the north there is a family of buffalo, the youngest a yearling, the next two years old, the next three, and a father and mother—five in all. In the herd of buffalo there is one white buffalo. We will drive them all westward to a coulee west of Saddle butte. When they are slaughtered the grandmothers will prepare the meat for you and tan the hides. The one white hide they will tan for our sister. The people will be coming back hungry from the west. Make up four bundles of meat and tell them to place them before the chief. Tell them to leave all their corn and tobacco with you in the camp, and tell the announcer to look up all the young men who have capable wives to tan the skins. And the chief is to come to your camp and receive instructions, for you are to perform the bird ceremony as we shall teach you, and these hides are to be used in payment for the dance.

When the meat is distributed, the chiefs and leading men will try to repay you. They will make you a fine tent of skins. Tell the people to camp in a circle on top of the divide as close as they can pitch their tents, leaving an opening to the north. They are to hunt on the south side of the Little Missouri but not a single one must come to the north side. We will bring to you the five animals in the family band and give them to you. They have long knotted manes hanging to the ground. Our sister-in-law must ride the stallion. Let her not fear, the animal is gentle. She must tie a rawhide thong about the jaw and through the mouth as a



bridle to guide it by. Place a travois for the mare to draw, heaped with your belongings. Thus you must enter the camp circle through the entrance to the north. The people will marvel, saying, 'What mysterious creatures are these?' Our sister-in-law is to wear the white robe with the hair outside. The chief will send his sons with food and offer you his daughters for wives and will place over you a skin of a yearling buffalo calf and a white robe. They will say to their clan sister, 'We are your servants.' Then they shall receive us (Hawk and Swallow) in the bird ceremony. Observe all that we have said to you."

The next day he killed the antelope, ate, and went over to where the two men were laid in the crevice. A small whirlwind used to rise from their grave and the spirits of the men used to go out in the wind. Three times they visited him, the fourth night they again promised him the animals described. All happened as described. He butchered the buffalo and the people came hungry from the west and he gave them meat and took their corn and tobacco, but not their pipes. The two robes brought by his two new wives he offered to the spirits and a bunch of eagle-tail feathers which he had won in gambling, six feathers to each. His friends the spirits made him faithfully promise to gamble no more.

### Explanation.

The Gros Ventres have nine societies or "clubs" for the men into which they advance according to age.<sup>110</sup> The first is the Stone Club for boys from ten to sixteen, although Bear's Arm was taken in at the age of eight. It is a mischievous club. At certain times the boys plan a feast and go about singing that they are going to steal. However carefully the people hide things, the boys find them. If a boy is caught the other members of the club will have to pay to release him. Among the Highland Gros Ventres the Shaving Stick society corresponds to the Stone Club. They use as symbol a shaved stick cut in grooves like a saw, across which they draw another stick, to the sound of which they

<sup>110</sup> For age societies of the Mandan and Hidatsa see Lowie, *PAMNH* 11, parts 3, 13; *Maximilian* 2: 291-295, 371. Among the Cheyenne, all eat in order of age (*JAF* 20: 180).

sing.<sup>111</sup> The second society is the Young Dog, the third the Fox, the fourth the Lump-wood (named after knots on a tree), the fifth Foolish Dog, the sixth Black Mouths or Soldiers. These men act as police for the village. They are very fierce and if anyone fails to obey orders they may even kill him. The seventh club is the Buffalo Bull; the eighth the Half-and-half (Half-shaved) because they pull out the hair from one side of their heads; the ninth is the Old Dog, composed of very old men. On the Mandan side these old men are in the Black-tailed-deer club; they go thence to the "happy hunting ground." At the last dance for the Half-and-half society, held down at Old Berthold, Bear's Arm's father danced backward and would have fallen into the river if someone had not caught him.

Bear's Arm has not a right to the Bird mystery, although he has the right to tell the story of its origin. The person who owns the mystery is White-Finger-Nail of Independence. It is similar to the Mandan ceremony [whose origin story is related by Ben Benson in the story of Black Medicine and Sweet Medicine and the big wind bag, Number 4 of this collection], but there may be some differences. The hides of a young buffalo calf and a white buffalo are used in the ceremony.

The place where they camped in this story, on the Little Missouri this side of Kildeer mountain, is called the "Land of the Beginning," because at this place was the beginning of plenty and the place of introduction of the horse. "Dog-with-red-hair" the Gros Ventres call the horse. When they find a horse with a long twisted mane they leave the mane alone because they believe that it has been twisted by the spirits. Such a mane is called a "ghost bridle." It is a sign of productiveness in the mare. But in cases of mourning they may clip the mane and tail.

Kildeer is called "the singing mountain." It was here that a certain man heard performed the Earth mystery in which names were given to the different parts of the country [as if they were the parts of the body of a man]. To this ceremony all the spirits of the hills came together to a place called *Ba-hish*, Has-sung,

<sup>111</sup> See Lowie, PAMNH 11: 237-239. Among the Cheyenne one of the dances is accompanied by an elk-horn carved like a snake and notched to make a sharp sound (JAFL 21: 302-303).

because each spirit sang its song here. The mystery man picked out nine different hills named in this song; for example, the heart-shaped hill back of Saddle-back is "The-heart-that-sang." Kildeer mountain is the head of all.

When a man goes to bed at night, he should point his mocasins toward the west, for if he points them toward the east the spirits say, "He is getting ready to come."

When an offering is made to the spirits, they say that the spirit nearest to the person offering it is to get the food.

Spirits of the dead are thought of as coming in the form of small whirlwinds. Such whirlwinds are commonly to be seen in cemeteries even when there is no wind. Bear's Arm has seen them many times. Arthur Mandan tells of riding once with a friend when he saw such a whirlwind ahead. All at once it turned and came alongside his horse and the animal jumped and crowded the other horse off the road.<sup>112</sup>

The Gros Ventres bury a person very soon after he is dead, for they believe that the body has become mysterious. Even touching the bed on which it lies may poison people and they are afraid to touch the dead. Relatives prepare the body. Some one on the side of the father's clan, man or woman, buries the body. No one else may do this. When the body is lowered, persons appointed for this service, an aunt or an uncle, stand at the head of the dead, facing eastward, and command the spirit in a pleading voice to go east where the good spirits are and never come back, not even to look back. This custom persists to this day. If this is not properly done the spirit lingers about where the man has died and frightens people at night. The Mandan customs are about the same. Long ago they thought that if they buried people underground they would not go away east.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Compare for a similar belief among the Blackfeet, Wissler & Duval, 126. In an Oglala Sioux story (JAFL 43: 388) when the father is taken up into the sky, the son follows his trail, which is in the form of a whirlwind leading up into the sky.

<sup>113</sup> Compare Maximilian, 2: 360-362, 374, 384-385; Lowie, PAMNH 21: 51-52.



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## 29. GIVES-AWAY-HIS-ARROW; THE WOLF MYSTERY ORIGIN STORY

There was a woman named Wolf Woman.<sup>114</sup> She was a wolf who had been born into the Gros Ventre tribe as a woman (with the name of Lifts-the-hearts-of-others). She had two lives, the life of a woman and the life of a wolf. She learned that a certain man named Gives-away-his-arrow was going away on a war-party to the south. She said to him, "On the fourth night of your journey cut branches and prepare me a place to sit and roast me a rib to eat. I shall come to you. In the morning I shall start and in the evening I shall arrive." Early in the morning of the fourth day after the warriors had set out, the woman made ready to follow them. The people objected that she might get lost. She took a strip of wolf's hide cut down the back, leaving the head and tail attached, and tied it across her body at the breast. She did up her hair so that there was a roll of hair at the front and some locks that fell back. Then she sang as follows:

My woman companion, I have been longing all day for game;  
When the roast is made ready I shall arrive.<sup>115</sup>

After she had sung they heard her going through the door.

That night the warriors were camped in a coulee beside a spring. The leader told the young men what the woman had said. He knew that she had the life of a wolf. They roasted her a rib and cut branches for her to sit on. They were astonished to see her come in. After the meal she said, "Do not be afraid, I have come to help you. Even if you meet a stronger foe, do not fear. None of you shall be killed. I have white clay and this I shall daub upon you here and there. Follow me and the

<sup>114</sup> Details in the life of the wolf woman are given by other narrators, but they do not contradict the story as related by Bear's Arm.

<sup>115</sup> In this song the woman addresses in her character of a wolf the "woman companion" who represents her life as a woman. Literally the song reads:

My companion, how nice it used to be to burn  
fire in the daytime. I am getting impatient.  
I shall arrive when the rib is roasted.

enemy shall see you as wolves, strung out in a line [as is the common way for wolves to travel]." They all took good care of her. When they skinned a buffalo she carried the hide along on her back and when they stopped she scraped off the hair, tanned the hide, and made them moccasins. They thanked her, saying, "Since Wolf Woman has joined us we have no fear. Our footgear is taken care of for us." When they camped they sang songs and she sang with the men.

One day the scouts came running back. They had seen the enemy. Each man painted his face with the clay and did up his hair in a knot in front with dried grass and tied it with strings just as the Indians have always done on the warpath from that day. They killed two of the enemy, scalped them, and ran, lest the rest of the tribe find the bodies and surround them. Wolf Woman ran too. Even after running four nights she was not in the least out of breath.

Thus originated the wolf ceremony. After that she would join certain war parties, not all, but only those which she chose. She never once made love to a man, but lived as a virgin and was well respected by all. As she grew old she transferred the mystery to a daughter of a sister of hers named Has-many-young.<sup>110</sup> The niece asked her aunt if she too should live as a virgin and the aunt said No, that she should marry and hand down the rite to her daughter. From that time the rite was handed down from one woman to another until the time of the last ceremony.

<sup>110</sup> The name is chosen as descriptive of the wolf.



### 30. THE STORY OF HUNGRY WOLF;<sup>117</sup> A WOLF MYSTERY STORY

A young man and his wife were up hunting in the breaks north of Little Missouri, back by Kildeer mountain. The man camped there with his wife. He was successful as a hunter and his wife cured the hides and dried strips of jerked meat. One night he told her to pack up everything as the next day they would be leaving. The next morning early he went out to get some fresh meat for the journey and returned with parts of a Rocky mountain sheep and its hide, which the Indians regard as very valuable. He found the packages on the scaffold just as he had left them, but his wife and dog were gone.

Circling about the tent he found no trace, but the fourth day he found a few tracks of men with the tracks of his wife and dog heading south. He went back to camp and pounded and roasted the fattest meat and stored it away in bags to eat on the way, then he followed the trail. The fugitives hid their trail by spreading apart and then coming together again, so that the tracks were hard to follow. Thus he followed a party which he judged to consist of twelve persons. When he came to Looks-like-a-chicken-tail butte he turned south-west and saw smoke rising from a camp. He waited until sunset, then walked into camp. There he stood a while considering. He covered his head with his robe, carrying his bow and arrows under his robe in case of attack. He could see young men walking about engaged in courting. As he went from tent to tent listening for signs of his wife, their dog ran out from a tent and jumped about its master. He gave it meat. The dog returned inside the tent, whined, wagged its tail and ran out again to its master. He went and stood in the door-

<sup>117</sup> In an Assiniboiné story of the betrayed husband, it is the Buffalo people who torture the captive. He is rescued by his brother, his wounds cured by applying grease. His wife turns into a buffalo cow and is burned as a witch, but in the end she is restored to life and killed for her treachery. See Assiniboiné, 213-215. In Wilson's version of the Old Brown Man (PAMNH 30:193) it is a woman who is bound to the posts. She is blinded by her indignant husband and cured by Wolf and Owl.

way. Within he could see his wife sitting. An old woman came in and to his surprise his wife spoke to her in Gros Ventres. She was an old woman who had also been taken prisoner and had lived among the enemy until she was old.

He surveyed the situation of the camp. On the outskirts was a ravine where a spring had made a small pond. A trail led down to this pond, made by the women going after water. Beside the pond grew beaver grass, long and fine, right down to the water's edge. There he hid, hoping that when his wife came down to get water they might plan an escape. His plan was to start in the night, make a big circuit, go west toward the mountain, and come back home. In the morning a stream of women came down after water. At noon fewer came. In the early afternoon he saw the dog coming down the bank wagging its tail. His wife came to the edge of the spring and, standing on a stone, leaned over to dip water. He said, "Stay just where you are, my own heart,<sup>118</sup> I heard you talking last night with the old woman. My plan is for you to come out here when everyone is asleep. The people will expect us to go back to our old camp, so we will go toward the mountains and live on game on the way home. Afterwards we will go back and get our packages at the camp."

He lay behind in the grass. In the evening after the women had left who came down after water, the men came down and encircled the pond. They overpowered him, took away his bow and arrows and carried him away to a tent and gave him food. His wife came and looked into the tent. He said, "I believe that it is you who have betrayed me."

They dug two holes in the circle, set in two posts, lanced his muscles next to the bone at wrists and ankles, stretched his arms and his legs to the posts; then they scalped him and, tying the scalp to a long pole, they sent out drummers and all came out and danced the victory dance and carried his scalp about on the pole. They brought firewood and made a pile of it before and behind him, intending to burn him; but just then an old man came out who seemed to have authority, and stopped the dancing and made signs toward the sun, but his words were unintelligible.

<sup>118</sup> Fat-of-my-heart is the literal expression. The woman's name denotes a squash blossom when it is opening, hence "Opening-flower" it may be translated.

The old Gros Ventre woman came to him and said, "My dear, it is all your wife's fault. You communicated with her when she went down to get water. When she returned she told the camp that there was a corn man down in the waterhole. I was taken away when young by these people and have been here ever since. I married and have children and grandchildren and hence have been contented to live among them. When they brought this Gros Ventre woman here, as she was one of our tribe I went over to her tent to comfort her. It was your wife who advised that you be captured and tortured to death. You can not expect a woman to keep a secret. The man who spoke to the people told them that when we fight and kill an enemy we kill him quickly. [He said] 'The great god in the heavens is looking down upon us. If you burn this man, that Great Spirit will some day avenge this deed. He will punish us. Let us wait and see what will happen'."

The next day when the people broke camp some came over and pierced his eyes, then they left him and went away. For four days he remained hanging. On the fourth day toward dusk he heard an owl hooting. It came nearer and hooted again. He could hear the grass rustling as from a man walking close to him. The steps stopped in front of him and a man said, "My son, the hooting of the owl was myself. I have come to see what I can do to restore your sight." He heard him spitting on his hands and rubbing the palms together.<sup>119</sup> The man told him to look up and he rubbed the palms of his hands over his eyes and his eyesight was restored. The man told him, "Fear not, the torture from which you are suffering has been caused by your wife. But you shall live and see your own home again. You must stand and listen and at daybreak when the sun comes over the hills you will hear the earth trembling and the sound of something falling to earth. That which you hear falling and whose vibration you feel is white clay which is being made for you in the sky and dropped from the sky to the earth. You will find it near Red Grass butte beside Knife river. When you get home, when you give a dance let the Grandma society clean a lodge site and pile the grass in the center as a symbol of your standing here. Strip a cane in

119 Literally "heels" of the hands, that is, the palms.



four places as symbol of the four days you have stood here without food and water. It will be a token of long life and prosperity. Give another such cane to a brother or some relative. The two canes are symbols of the two torture posts. There shall be a circle for the Wolf society and the old scouts shall circle around you. Take one winter to prepare all the articles for the dance. Ask all your friends and relatives to help you. They shall make arrows and give them as payment to the scouts who sing and tell of their exploits and they shall give them to their sons and young relatives to use against those who tortured you. Next year you will find these same people camping here and you shall kill a hundred of them. You shall capture this old Gros Ventre woman and your wife. Save their lives, but do not make the woman your wife again. You shall marry the daughters of your chief. Teach your warriors to use in the battle shields made of buffalo hide hardened by burning with hot stones."<sup>120</sup>

The Owl man told him that in the morning he would see Wolf-of-the-sunset dancing with his warriors. He must watch their dress and learn their songs and make this dance a part of his mystery. In the morning the Wolf-of-the-sunset came with his warriors, who were a pack of wolves. They freed him and took him into their company by the name of Hungry Wolf. The scouts came in the rear. The raven as he flies over the country seeing all that is going on is like the scout. It was the raven who had told the owl how the man was being tortured and had reported it to Wolf-of-the-sunset. That is why the two men who lead in the Wolf dance and personate Wolf-of-the-sunset and Hungry-wolf wear raven feathers. Just as the Wolves do for the fasters in the dance, so the wolves came that day, removed the rawhides that bound him and gave him the breast fat of the buffalo to eat. They said, "This will drive away the pain of the torture. When your people kill a buffalo, after skinning the breast-bone they must take a mouthful of the fat and whatever their sickness, this will cure it. They took fat and anointed his wounds in his arms

<sup>120</sup> This was the origin of the use of the shield in war. It is made out of the fore part of a buffalo hide because that is the part which has been toughened by fighting. The hide is cut shield-shape and fastened into a hoop of ash, then filled with hot stones, first on one side, then on the other, in order to contract and tighten it. When sufficiently hardened, sticks are fastened crosswise to the hoop to keep the shape.

and feet and on the forehead. They daubed him with white clay all over and then, as a sign of healing, they made scratches with their fingernails in the clay on his calves, his forearms, and on his forehead, thus leaving the clay in streaks. This white clay is used at the Wolf ceremony. The heap in the center of the clearing is the symbol of his torture. When they dance about, they must go over to the right side [and dance from the right to the left] in order to insure long life and prosperity; if they start from the left it is a sign of misery. So when Indians smoke, the pipe is handed to the extreme right of the circle and then handed around.

The wolves told him to follow them. When he got over the divide he found a buffalo butchered and blood, kidney, liver, guts, laid aside for him to eat raw. The wolf placed on his head a piece of hide from the buffalo's head, sang a song, and his torn scalp was healed and the hair turned the color of his own hair. Thus he reached home. Then he climbed up on his old lodge, faced to the west, and said "Hee-hay!" (which signifies "Listen!") He spoke to the wolves of the west and said, "This winter I shall have bedding (buffalo hides) scraped for you and shall bring the wolves into the lodge (meaning the warriors) in order to conquer my enemies." Taking hunters and dogs, he returned to his old camp and brought back his bundles. He placed food in those lodges where the societies met and in return they gave arrows and other things for the ceremony. He sent one of his sisters to the chief's house and asked the hand of the chief's two daughters in marriage.

During the winter he instructed the wolves in the scout songs he had learned from the wolves. In the summer he sent for the white clay and had the dance performed. After this he called for the young men through the announcer and for the old men who had endurance and speed and provided them with moccasins and provisions for the war path. On the outskirts of the village the warriors assembled. When they reached the butte he was told that this was the place to mine the bright red ochre which is to be found there in pockets. Since he had too many scouts, he selected from the forty-five the fourteen who were the fastest runners. They had to run one by one between two goals while the

rest in the center tried to catch them. This is called "running by." If anyone was caught before he reached the opposite goal he was put out. They went on and sent the scouts ahead. They reported a hundred and fifty tents. There were 2500 persons in the village. They got close to camp, whooped, and attacked at daybreak. After a hundred warriors had been killed he gave the signal to stop by waving his robe in the air. No women or children were killed, or any old people. The old Gros Ventre woman and the young man's wife were taken. The old woman was allowed to go back to the tribe, the wife was brought back to the village. No one would marry her and it was she who introduced harlotry.

In the village they danced the greatest victory dance ever known. Hungry Wolf lived to old age and had children and grandchildren. The mystery he conferred upon his son, and so it was handed down from generation to generation.



### 31. BRINGING WOLF INTO THE LODGE <sup>121</sup>

Given by Bear's Arm, June 22, 1931.

The purpose of the Wolf ceremony is to ensure to a man who is about to start out on the war path a successful expedition. Success implies killing an enemy or securing horses from him without losing either man or horse on his own side. The young warrior who wishes to give such a ceremony secures the services of one to whom the Wolf mystery already belongs and of one to act as master of ceremonies within the lodge, whose word is their law during the ceremony. This man is generally an older relative. After the ceremony the young warrior is himself entitled to act as head in such a ceremony. Usually the rite is thus passed on from father to son. A man may dream of the ceremony and in this way he knows that the spirits are asking him to perform it.

The ceremony lasts four days. About a year beforehand a sacred lodge is prepared and men who have been on a war party, especially those who have been scouts, are invited to take part. These are all men who are able to relate experiences in war. They wear their robe belted at the waist and leggings tied with strips of tanned skin as for running, and carry a long stick to be used to beat time with to the singing. A rawhide with the hair taken off is rolled and carried by a woman especially selected for this honor. She is the only woman who takes part in the ceremony.

The man who gives the ceremony in order to obtain the Wolf mystery, picks out another young man of his own clan to bear him company. The men wear coyote skins over their heads fashioned to look like the ears of a coyote, tied under the chin with strings. The coyote tail dangles behind. A bunch of raven feathers is worn in the middle of the back of the head. They carry each a stick of choke cherry wood peeled off in four strips to represent the four nights the ceremony is to last and ornamented at the top

<sup>121</sup> Compare the Omaha Grass dance, in which each warrior in turn recites his deeds of war and acts out in dance his warlike adventures (JAFL 5: 135-144).

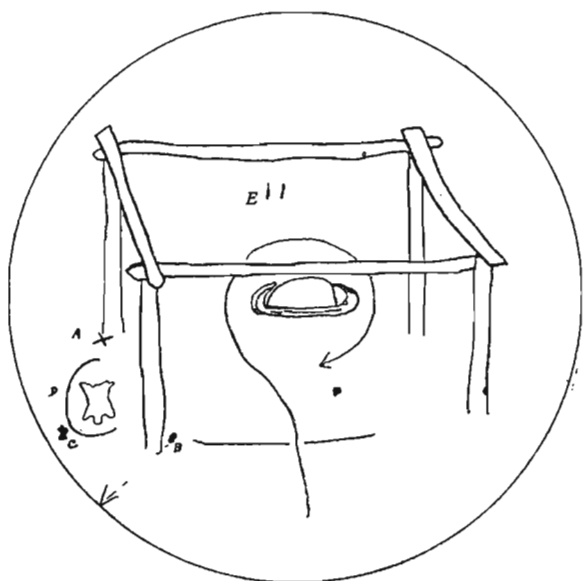
with a wolf's tail. Each carries about the neck a whistle made of the wing bone of a bird with a hole bored beyond the mouth-piece, into which a piece of gum is inserted. Their bodies are daubed with white clay and a few scratches are made on the arms, under the legs, and on the face. This clay is always brought from just below Red Grass butte near Knife river. No other clay is ever used for the ceremony.

On the first day the men all line up, the one who owns the mystery carrying a great Wolf hide, the woman carrying the rawhide roll on her back. They march, make four stops and sing, the woman singing with the men. The songs they sing are well-known scout songs. Toward evening they enter the sacred lodge. Young men who wish to undergo the ordeal of fasting go in also. Only those who have endurance are able to complete the four days of fasting; some may fast for only a part of that period.

Within the lodge the fireplace is in the center. The woman spreads the rawhide to the left of the door. The singers sit in a semi-circle around it and use it to beat on with their sticks in time to the dance. The master of ceremonies sits by the left-hand post nearest the door. The one who gives the dance and his companion sit at the inner right-hand post diagonally opposite from him. The one who already owns the mystery sits at the inner left-hand post. At the beginning of the ceremony he takes a dish of box elder, pours water into it, dips into it with a whirling motion a kind of reddish grass brought from Red Grass butte near the Knife river, sings a mystery song and sprinkles two wolf hides which the one who gives the ceremony has provided, blesses them and gives them to two men selected for the purpose who use them during the four days of the dance. Afterwards they are returned to the mystery owner and he presents them to the new giver of the ceremony, who is thereafter entitled to act as head man at such a ceremony.

The warriors in turn come out into the circle and dance around the fireplace, going over first to the right and dancing around to the left. They use their canes and make a jumping motion. Every now and then they say "Whe-e-e" to indicate that as scouts they are running faster. The man at the head of the line dances first. He calls to the young man who is giving the dance, the novice,

"Son, bring me one," or "two," or "four." The novice gives him as many tokens as he has called for. In early times he gave him arrows, in later days, bullets. This means that he has one or two or four experiences in war to relate. Those who have had little



Lodge for the Wolf Ceremony

a. Leader. b. Utility man. c. Wolf woman. d, d. Singers. e. Giver of the ceremony and his helper. These should probably be not at the back of the lodge in the sacred place, but beside the farther right-hand post.

experience call for "one." All have to tell as many stories as they have called for arrows or bullets. There must be enough stories to last through the four days. The master of ceremonies stops the singing by saying, "It has been given to him (that is, to the scout who is to relate a story) and then the singing and beating instantly cease, and the scout begins the story for which he has been paid. When the dancing begins the novice and his helper must dance and blow their whistles. All those who are fasting also carry a whistle and blow. The two run outside the lodge and the fasters follow about four steps back but not in formation, then the old scouts follow more slowly. The master of ceremonies and



the woman remain in the lodge. The audience do not go out either for they could not keep up with the running. While they are outside the embers are all raked together in the fire-box and a hide put over them to prevent the dancers on their return from burning their feet on the scattered embers. Four times the scouts come to a stop, the old scouts line up on either side of the fasters and all continue to dance and sing the same song. Then the old scout tells his story and gives his blessing to the young man who is to gain the mystery. One can hear the thumping of the ground almost a mile away and the penetrating sound of the whistles. On their return they must dance around the firebox in time to the singing. The scouts line up and sing a song without any end. The fasters go around dancing and blowing their whistles until they are dizzy. Some cry out to the spirits for help as they dance. When they fall down, that is the time when the spirits converse with them.

The dancing takes place in the daytime and after it is over the men sit around and smoke. On the third day the master of ceremonies announces to the Old Women's society that they are to dress and decorate themselves and where they are to meet for this purpose. On the last day he goes over to the place and bids them "clean up the village." They go off to an empty space in the village and clear off the grass in a circle, leaving a bare spot about the size of a lodge. The grass is piled into a mound in the center. On this day they assemble on the east side of this spot, facing the west. Sometime before noon the one who is giving the dance and his helper, followed by the fasters, go out to the circle and stand on the south side. The old scouts group themselves on the west side facing the east. They sing and an old scout tells his exploits. Then those who are fasting begin to run around the mound inside the circle. The running is continuous. All the time, the Old Women's society sing the song and make a sweeping motion with their robes in the air. The fasters fall down, women trill, many are crying. The relatives and friends of the fasters throw presents upon them as they fall and the Old Women's society has a right to pick up one of these gifts from each faster. They also have a right to all the arrows left over, which they give to their men relatives. The dancing continues a long time. Afterwards

the women go back to their lodge, where food is brought to them and the presents distributed. The canes are gathered into a bundle and given to one woman who has been appointed keeper of the canes. They are first incensed with burning sweet grass and then hung on the wall. Each member however takes care of her own dress.

The man who gives the ceremony in order to secure for himself the mystery picks out his helper from his own clan—it may be his brother. He gets the two wolf hides, clay from the sacred butte, and other paraphernalia. The arrows, or bullets, distributed during the ceremony are furnished by the relatives, by blood or by clan relationship, of the one giving the dance. These relatives are called by a collective term *ä-pish-a-te*. About ten buffalo robes are given away to the mystery man, one to the master of ceremonies, and one to the woman. Others are given to the parents of those who are fasting. Any scouts who have the Wolf mystery contribute. The scouts in relating their experiences confer a blessing upon the giver of the ceremony.

The ceremony represents the events recorded in the stories of the founding of the Old Woman's society, of Wolf Woman, and of Hungry Wolf. The owner of the mystery, called Wolf Man, who blesses the wolf hides, represents the chief scout. The woman who carries the hide represents Wolf Woman, who was a wolf incarnated into the tribe and who remembered her life as a wolf through avoiding the use of the skin swaddling-cloth, as in the story, and hence was able to bring help to the tribe. The buffalo hide is a sacred mystery. It is used as a prayer to bring buffalo to the edge of the village. The carrying of this hide was an honor always assigned to a special daughter and descending from mother to daughter, or to some woman willing to pay for the honor. The same hide might be used or another, tanned by the women, substituted. It must always be the hide of a cow buffalo. The two men who are decorated with white clay represent the scouts impersonated as coyotes through the skins which they wear. Each time that they come back to the lodge to make a report after running out into the open, they imitate the howling of a coyote. The daubing with white clay represents the healing of their wounds. The one who receives the wolf mystery represents Hungry Wolf.

He wears the raven feathers because it was raven who sent Owl to his aid. His helper represents Wolf-of-the-sunset. All who take part in a war party are called "wolves."

Bear's Arm attended this ceremony when he was sixteen years old. He saw the people going into the tent and joined them. A man of his own clan named Son-of-a-star, as the Ree called Good-bird's father, gave the ceremony in order to secure the mystery. There were about fifty-six young men fasting. In old days there were more. They had no bedding, only blankets about them, and no pillow. The woman who carried the skin was named Yellow Head. She was the last woman to sing with the men. Her son, called Old White Man, is now eighty-four years old. The Wolf Man who blessed the wolf skins and the people was Bull Man, known as "Kidney." Old Crow's Heart was the man sent to the butte near Knife river after the white clay. The tradition is that it came down from the skies to this place. It is used for medicinal purposes, to cure dysentery and colic. The keeper of the canes in the Old Women's society was the grandmother of Fast Dog, who died recently. The canes may be still at Shell Creek or they may have been thrown away. This is the blessing that was sung over the water used to sprinkle the hides and the people to whom they were given. It is a prayer for long life. Everyone had to keep perfect silence while it was sung.

This grass is holy . . .

This water is holy . . .

This white clay is holy . . .

This earth is holy . . .



## 32. STORY OF THE BEAR CEREMONY <sup>122</sup>

There was once an alert young man in the tribe who was always successful in all that he undertook and people gave him the name of Brave-while-young. He married and went with his wife west to hunt. He trapped with timber fiber drawn and rolled and twisted into rope out of which he made snares. They made camp in a coulee grown with cedar, ash, and other varieties of trees. From there he trapped eagles, and hunted young buffalo cows whose hide was soft for robe-making, and Rocky mountain sheep which made a fine target on the bare side of a hill. He hunted also antelope, white-tailed and black-tailed deer for the robe-making. All these skins the Indians prize as valuable.

As it grew late in the fall the young wife repeatedly urged that it was time to go home. They staked out the hides on the hills and dried the meat. At last he said that the next day he would go out early again before sunrise for the last time while she prepared breakfast, and when he returned they should break camp. He started out early, brought home a hide, found breakfast prepared but his wife gone. The dogs were still in camp. He ate his breakfast and waited, thinking that she might be hiding from some danger. Then he went through the coulee calling her name. At the spring he found drops of water on the ground and in the tent he found the pouch filled with water and drank of it. Then he searched for her trail, circling wider and wider. Four days he lingered and then he bobbed his hair in token of bereavement and put up on the scaffold all the meat he could not carry, covered it with hides away from the wolves, harnessed his dogs and packed home what he and the dogs could carry. When he had crossed the Little Missouri and come near home, his relatives saw that his hair was cut short and they all began to mourn.

<sup>122</sup> Compare this origin story with the Blackfoot beaver myth (Wissler & Duval, 74-79). See also the story of Hungry Wolf in this collection. The incident of the lost wife occurs in a variety of adventure stories told among this group. One informant used it to introduce the beaver killing incident (page 59) and the snake and thunder-bird of the Packs-Antelope story, number 7 in this collection.

A year later he came back to his old camp alone.<sup>123</sup> There he wept for his wife. He attended to his own cooking and trapped eagles. One day as he went through a grove of cedar trees near his camp he saw to his astonishment a white tent. Two children came out of it, a boy and a girl. He thought some one must have camped there for the night. The girl addressed him, saying, "So you have come, my brother, I invite you to come in." She spoke to her mother and said, "Mother, my brother looks lonely and I have asked him to come in." The boy said, "How comes it that you have the authority to invite a person in? That is our father's right." The mother said, "Since your sister has invited you, you had better come in." The lodge faced the north. As he entered he saw an old woman on the left side of the fireplace, on the west, with the girl and boy who had spoken to him. On the right side, to the east, sat his own wife. At the back of the tent were bags of berries and pemmican, and a pot of water with peppermint in it. The girl said, "Mother, I wish to give my brother a drink of the water which belongs to my father." The boy said, "It seems to me that you take too much upon yourself. That is my father's place to offer the water." He was angry. The mother said, "Since your sister wishes to give him water, let her do so." He took a drink. The girl said to her brother, "Why are you so angry? You know that our brother has been abstaining from water (or fasting) the whole year. That is why I offer the water." His taking the water was therefore a sign that his fasting was ended.<sup>124</sup>

The children as they ran in and out of the tent announced that their father was coming. They heard him dropping on the ground, before entering the tent, the deer that he carried on his shoulder. When he came in he wore on his head a decoy cap called *Looks-like-a-stone* which fitted close to the head and had something like bear's ears attached at the side. Suspended to the cap by a string and hanging down on his back was a plume colored red. The boy at once told his father how his sister had in-

<sup>123</sup> It is the custom for a person who has once made camp in a place to claim that place from year to year. If a man dies the claim descends to his relatives.

<sup>124</sup> The eating of the Bear's food is a symbol of the man's gaining the strength of the Bear. The peppermint is a symbol of strength because it has a revivifying effect on man.

troduced the stranger. The man said, "They should have waited until I arrived, but they did only what I should have done. Did they give him pemmican and berries to eat?" "No," the boy answered. The man said to the stranger, "My son, when you were here a year ago, you burned incense and called for my help when you wanted a favorable wind, but you did not even offer an eagle plume in payment. You called Ik-ta-ke! The other spirits watched and they mocked at me. So I took my daughter-in-law as payment. Now that you have come back, I speak to you as to a son and I charge you to make a bear dance and bring the bear to the dwelling, and keep me always in your lodge. Since I have ten claws on the hind feet and ten on the front paws, you must prepare twenty buffalo robes. Then eat all the kinds of berries—even the bull-berries—and drink water with peppermint in it. Then take your wife home to your camp and live as before. I took her because the spirits mocked me." All this time neither he nor his wife spoke.

The young man went home, hunted, trapped eagles and was lucky. Late in the fall he had plenty of game. As the bear had commanded before sending him away, he cried out to all the spirits announcing that he wished to make a bear dance and inviting all the spirits connected with the bear to the dance, and he provided through the winter for the dance to be given the following summer. The young man had asked the bear, "When I bring you to the lodge, sing the most sacred song and invite Two Men also to the ceremony and ask them to teach me the bow and arrow ceremony and their song before they start out on their adventures." So Bear had promised this. Bear was to invite Two Men because his own power was limited to his own reach; Two Men could attack from a distance with bow and arrow.

The young man went home with his wife. That evening when the sun was low the young man called "He-e-hay," that is "Attention!" and announced the Bear ceremony as he had been instructed. The relatives rejoiced to see their daughter. During the winter the two laid aside food and articles to be used in the ceremony. When summer came, he went over to Bear's camp and invited him to the ceremony. Bear came with Two Men. Bear is represented in the ceremony by the bear skin, the Two Men by a



bow and arrow merely. The right to make the bow and arrow is handed down from father to son. Besides these there must be represented Coyote, Elk, male or female, Otter, male or female, an owl and a dog.

The owner of the arrow mystery sings the song for the bow and arrow, and they present the person giving the ceremony with a bow and arrow and a plume to wear when he fights against his enemies. For the prayer there is an arrow called "Old grandfather arrow" because of its age.

The dog is man's personal protector. He will watch during the night and his eyesight is such that he sees objects which men can not see. He will see and drive away evil spirits who attempt to enter the lodge. To the dog therefore is given the leavings of the feast during the ceremony, as protector.

Coyote is appointed as the utility man. He is dressed with a band about the top of his calf, moccasins and belt as if going out into the open country. Bear says, "I am the one, but I ask Coyote to do this." This is the same Coyote who appears in the story of the First Creator and in that of the Twins. He acts as fire tender in the arrow, basket, and bear ceremonies. He must be given a complete suit of clothes as payment for this service. Before the song begins Coyote must bring a hot coal and the gourd rattle to be incensed by the performer of the ceremony, who wears his robe about him with the fur outside and carries an open snare at his shoulder ready for trapping. This snare is to protect him from evil spirits that may harm him; when they see the snare they will fall away. [It is also a prayer for plenty, like the horn of plenty in European thought, says Mandan. When they sing they hold up the snare as if the birds were already trapped.<sup>125</sup> The snare is sprinkled with black medicine. This black medicine is a symbol also of the presence of the Two Men at the ceremony.] All this time the fire is to be kept up in a flame.

The owl is impersonated in the gourd rattle. Bear's Arm has one inherited from his father. It is covered with an owl skin to which were tied bunches of raven's feathers, but the feathers are now worn away. There are pebbles inside and a stick for a

<sup>125</sup> Compare Wilson, 156, on eagle trapping, and for the snare song, 198-199.

handle. The owl is the weather man . A song is sung to force the wind to blow and one for rain.

"But first of all," Bear said, "in all these ceremonies an old buffalo skull shall be chosen and given the name 'Beginner,' because the buffalo was the first food and clothing for man. Hence he must be honored as the first chosen."<sup>126</sup>

Only such mysteries are represented in this ceremony as belong to the ceremony. Not all mysteries would be appropriate.

The elk is represented because he is a graceful animal whose flesh is the food of man and he shows a warlike spirit in mating. The strongest picks out all the best does to mate with and acquires his right to them by fighting. Hence his songs denote the characters of success in fighting, courting, and food getting.<sup>127</sup>

The otter is nearly always used by the young man's wife as a symbol of easy delivery. The skin is so smooth that the animal glides easily through the grass. Hence when a woman is to give birth to her child the owner of the otter mystery is called to the patient. She sprinkles water and places the otter skin over the woman's body, takes the woman under the armpits and raises her and the child is born. That is the purpose of the otter skin. Other women, or even men, if they want to gain the ceremony of the otter will kill an otter, take its skin, go to the wife, and pay her a big price so that they too may practise on women patients who need help. She teaches them the songs and rubs their otter skin with her own otter skin to convey the soundness of the other skin. But this is not the whole ceremony, it is only a branch of the Bear ceremony. It is not necessary to have the whole Bear ceremony in order to use this branch.

The otter and elk do not appear in pairs; the impersonator is either male or female. But there are songs for both male and female otter and elk. The male elk song is for a blessing in

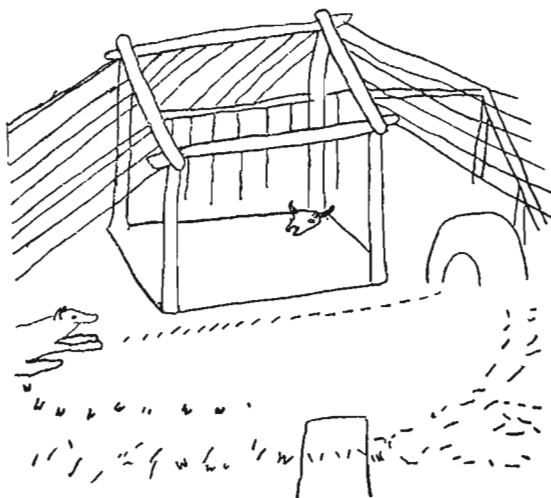
<sup>126</sup> Among the Cheyenne, the buffalo head placed in front of the sweat lodge represents the buffalo cap, which is the mystery given by Black medicine root to the people. It is kept in a bag shaped like the new moon and showing it drives away sickness and disease. See JAFLL 20: 192-193; 21: 270, where the sweat (or medicine) lodge was established by Standing-on-the-ground.

A specimen of Hidatsa "Black Medicine" collected for me by Mrs. Bear's Arm is identified by Dr. Gilmore as the red baneberry, *Actaea rubra*, which is used for medicinal purposes (RBAE 44: 286-299, 303, 358).

<sup>127</sup> The Sioux associate the elk with the flute because of the animal's flute-like voice (JAFLL 18: 261-268).

fighting or in courting. The male otter song is used for a person who is wounded or sick in any way. The wound is sprinkled and the bad blood comes out. The female elk song is used for hunting, for example in the winter when the ice is like glass the female elk song is used to drive the elk on to the river where it will slip on the ice. It is the elk's teeth which the hunter prizes as ornament for the dress.

The young man provided a bear's skin with the head and claws left on as a symbol of Bear. He made a sacred bundle. He had to preserve all the songs of the Bear and the other songs connected with the dance. He prepared a sweat lodge and left it open where the heated stones are put in. He prepared twenty moccasins and placed them in a row from in front of the bear skin in the lodge to the sweat lodge. The man who gives the ceremony



Lodge for the Bear Ceremony

is supposed to light a pipe during the ceremony, make an offering to the bear skin, then walk over the moccasins to the lodge. There within the lodge other songs must be sung. All the spirits of the dead come in at the door of the lodge and are purified by sprinkling. The songs sung must be learned perfectly and sung in a particular rotation. Children who have not received a name may



be brought to the master of ceremonies and he may name the child after any of the mysteries involved in the dance, for example, after a part of the Bears' body (like Bear's Arm) or after some characteristic, like Running Elk, Little Owl, Good Claw, Good Otter, or Two Men, which is the name given to John Erwin. By thus naming the child, the blessing of these spirits is conferred on the child and it will grow up strong and healthy. Persons who know the songs impersonate the figures in the dance. They line up on the edge of the village. One in the center has the bear's skin; one at the end carries choke cherry as a symbol of fertility; at the other end one wears a buffalo robe and carries a gourd rattle. He is the main singer. On the way they sing. After stopping three times as they approach, they make a fourth stop at the lodge door. They enter and place the bear's skin at a fixed place at the left of the lodge, the bull's skull at the center back, opposite the entrance, with a big cornball in front of it. Buffalo hides, robes, and other articles are suspended by a rawhide at the right. They sing a song to the skull called Moving-the-head-of-the-skull, during which a man takes hold of the skull by the horns and rocks it back and forth as if the buffalo were moving forward, hence symbolizing a man moving toward a village. He also moves the bull's head from side to side as if before an attack, as a symbol of protection. Next follows the Bear songs. For each song he sings, the man in the buffalo robe, who is the chief singer, gets a buffalo robe. Then each spirit down the line sings his song and is paid with a buffalo hide. Anything left over goes to the chief singer. The person taking the part of Coyote meanwhile burns incense to cense the bear skin, and keeps up the fire, and the men clothe him from head to foot and give him small articles besides.

The mystery begins when the chief singer takes the bear skin in his hands and sings a song, upon which the young man's wife, who has removed her clothes, goes over to him. Four times he makes a gesture as if to give the skin to her and the fourth time he gives it. She receives it and touches her naked body with the skin to show that she receives this medicine for her husband and is now the Bear's daughter-in-law. From that time on the men do not dare to flirt with her or to approach her, for they believe

that the Bear watches over her and will bring them ill luck if they approach her.<sup>128</sup>

The next step in the ceremony is the visit to the sweat lodge.<sup>129</sup> The skin is laid down; the twenty moccasins lead to the lodge door. The wife carries the buffalo skull to near the entrance to the sweat lodge, leaves it there and gets the bear skin. The chief singer takes his stand before this, takes the sacred pipe, smokes it, passes it first to the buffalo skull then to the bear skin, then to all the impersonators in turn, and the woman picks up the moccasins and gives them to these impersonators and brings the bear skin to the lodge. The chief singer, who represents a bear, sprinkles water upon it as the impersonators pass to the lodge. After sprinkling it, he makes it into the shape of a bowl and fills it with crushed corn prepared ready to eat. The chief singer takes a pinch and sacrifices it to the buffalo skull and the bear's skin, then it is distributed to all inside the big lodge.

The young man places the buffalo skull on the right side, at the second post away from the door, opposite the place where the bearskin is placed near the entrance at the left of the doorway. The two face each other as if looking at each other. The chief singer says, "This is the last thing in the ceremony. I want some dwellers for this sweat lodge." Those connected with the ceremony go into the sweat lodge, the doorway is lowered and the mystery song begins. The song goes on down the row. When the chief singer sings a song he blesses the young man. When Two Men sing they give him a bow and fine arrows and the Two Men's war song is sung for the young man. The sacred plume is given to him. At the end of each song the impersonator is paid for the song. That completes the sweat ceremony.

They say that after the young man had performed the ceremony he became powerful among his tribe. The Indians of the old days had plenty when these ceremonies were performed. Men say today that religion of any kind should not be barred. Today we are suffering for want of crops.

The one who gives a Bear ceremony must kill a bear—any

<sup>128</sup> From this time on, if her husband dies she will not dare to remarry, says Bear's Arm, because she has become the daughter-in-law of the Bear.

<sup>129</sup> The sweat bath ceremony is described by Maximilian, 2: 379-380.

kind of a bear. My father killed a brown bear. I have the gourd used in the ceremony from the fourth generation back. I learned some of the songs, but some I have forgotten. Hence I have the right to name a child after the characters in this ceremony. I gave Arthur Mandan's child the name Has-two-cubs because it is a characteristic of the bear to have generally two offspring. There are four generations on my father's side who have had this Bear ceremony. The first was a man named Crow-bull. His son's name was Breathes-heavily. Lone-Pine-tree was his son, and I [Bear's Arm] am a son of Lone-Pine-tree.

[When Bear's Arm's father, Pine-tree, performed the ceremony, he appointed a man named Bear-necklace to represent Coyote as utility man. He was a lively fellow, tall, with a Roman nose. He died early in 1900. When Pine-tree died he had his ceremonial bear skin and bow and arrows buried with him, for a person so equipped knows that his soul will go unmolested by evil spirits.]



## 1. Cherry-necklace.

People at one time did not know the true God and they thought that even hills, trees, the winds, were spirits. The people fasted to obtain help from these spirits. The spirits are known. In a dream one may appear and command that a special dance be performed to that spirit. This fasting is for the sake of gaining honor, for a man's own welfare and for that of his fellows in the tribe, for the doctoring of the sick and of those wounded in battle. The spirits confer knowledge upon those who fast.

Here is an example. My mother when she was young saw a famous medicine-man named Cherry-necklace. Bird-woman, who guided the famous Lewis and Clark expedition, was his sister. A young Gros Ventres named Four Bears was wounded in the side and had little chance to live. Cherry-necklace took the young warrior into his tent and doctored him. The tent was pitched along the bluff beside the river. He allowed not even dogs inside. His mystery was a male otter. He used to place a skin of a male otter about the young man's head and take him down to the river. People were allowed to watch from the bluff and many came to see. He let the boy walk ahead to the river and into the stream until the water came almost up to the wound. The people watched him closely. He took the skin and sang a mystery song, sprinkled it and prayed, saying, "They are depending upon you not upon me. It is not I who am holy but you, and I pray you to doctor this young warrior." He ducked the skin under water and it disappeared. He stepped back and the otter came out alive from the water, swam about the man, then turned downstream and came up to the warrior swiftly, put its head up to the man's wound, touched it and swam back. Streams of blood ran out and colored the water red. Three times the otter did this. The fourth time, as it humped its back, the medicine man took it

<sup>130</sup> Compare for such medicine Maximilian, 2: 337-343, 375; 3: 32-34; Mayer 178-180; Caddo, 20-23; Kiowa, 17-18.

up in his two hands, put it again under water, and when he took it out it was nothing but a skin. Everyone in the camp turned out to see and all were amazed. He led the warrior back up the bank to the camp. The healed man became a mighty warrior and chief of the Gros Ventres. He represented them at Fort Laramie in 1851 and it is through him that the government is today paying the Indians for their lands. This happened in 1837, right after the small pox epidemic that destroyed the Gros Ventres nation. The place where it happened was near old Cold Harbor.

The spirits conferred upon Cherry-necklace the power to doctor, but not to take part in battle. There are other miracle stories told about this old man. He used to take dried willow leaves, put them under his robe, rub his hands over them and take out wild tobacco leaves of the kind that grows in high places. Then he would take a piece of bark shaped like a plug of tobacco, rub this and pull out tobacco. Out of these two he would make the mixture which he was specially fond of smoking. Bear's Arm himself has seen this medicine man. He must have died when Bear's Arm was nine years old.

Another incident. Cherry-necklace was once out in the breaks in a place where there was timber below. He heard voices and sneaking up to the point where they could be heard he listened. They said, "If he smokes with seven (persons including himself) all will go well, if with two or three he must place sticks about (to represent the balance of the seven). If one comes in through the door too quickly, the smoke from his pipe will go down the person's throat in the form of a worm, but the medicine man will have the power to take out the worm, which must be thrown into the fire." He peeped over the bank and saw seven black-tailed deer, who all ran away. During the night he dreamed how to handle the smoking. Hence no one ever goes into the lodge of Cherry-necklace hastily while he is smoking. Should some careless person do this, he will feel a little worm going down his throat. The medicine-man can take out the worm by dipping his fingers in ashes and making a rubbing motion of the skin, but without cutting the skin, then he shows the worm and throws it into the fire. A man named Good Bear told of coming

in where the old man was smoking and having two worms removed from his throat.

This medicine-man was adopted into a rattlesnake's den and was hence able to poison anybody indirectly. He had power both for good and for bad. When he used the rattlesnake medicine a fellow had to look out.

## 2. **Never-eats-marrow.**

Never-eats-marrow was a Gros Ventre, but he was such a kind man that the Mandan made him custodian of their sacred lodge at old Fish-hook village. He was one of the chief scouts of the Gros Ventres. He was left-handed, short but not stout, with very keen sight and keen scent, and a good long distance runner. His medicine was the wolf. He belonged to Mrs. Bear's Arm's clan and was a brother of Son-of-the-star and grandfather on the mother's side of Arthur Mandan. Son-of-the-star was Mandan's mother's uncle.

## 3. **Crow Bull.**

My father was Pine-tree, his father was Breathes-heavily, and my great grandfather was Crow Bull. Old Crow Bull owned the mystery of the gourd rattle to bring rain. He took it once on a war party and sang the songs of the Owl in order to get rain. He fasted seven nights near Kildeer and saw a big rain-storm coming and in front of the rain-cloud he saw the head and shoulders of a bear and this bear sang a song which Bear's Arm still possesses.

Crow Bull gained some understanding of doctoring from this bear. He would ask the sick person if he wished any kind of fruit. If, for example, the person asked for plums he would uproot a plum tree, dig a hole in front of the sick person, reset the tree, then ask some one to hold the tree while he sang. Then the man holding the tree would shake it and some plums would drop off, which he would give to the sick person to eat.

He had a wife named Ma-puk-sha Woman. He would have her massage a sick man's stomach, the man would recover appetite and get well.



This is a kind of Indian family religion, handed down only from son to son.

#### 4. A Creek Sweat Mystery.<sup>131</sup>

The Missouri river is a sacred mystery for my mother, so she made a ceremony for it. She made it of things connected with the river. She used a buffalo skull which was found in the river. Water animals also come into the ceremony. One winter when it thundered and rained, two men named Crow-that-turns and Fought-alone went out to look for buffalo and on the way home they saw where a turtle had fallen from the sky, walked on the surface of the snow, and died. They brought it home and my mother used this in the mystery and also a mink skin. Such mysteries are transferred with payment. She used the mystery as medicine in a sweat bath called *A-siwi-u-ha*.

#### 5. A Wolf Dance.

Black Owl, who was the son of Chief Four Bears, married a Ree woman. Once he was so ill that the noise made by the Rees among whom he was living disturbed him and he took his wife and went home to his mother to be doctored. At night he heard the ground thumping as if the Wolf ceremony was being performed. The fourth time it sounded right outside the wall of the house. He asked his mother who was giving the dance and she said no one and that, as it was his father's mystery, perhaps the spirits wished him to give a dance. He promised to give one. The boys said he must be crazy—there were no buffalo any more. Shortly afterwards he became completely well. He went out west to the Yellowstone, joined the army, and brought home as many buffalo robes as were needed for the dance. He went out on a war party and brought in two scalps.

<sup>131</sup> In Arapaho (Lowie, 136-140) a woman marries the Platte river and becomes a medicine woman. For the River Women see Lowie, PAMNH 11: 340-345.

For these stories are like the branches of a tree. All go back to the main trunk. The old Indians who know the stories, if we relate a branch, can tell where it belongs in the tree and what comes before and what after.

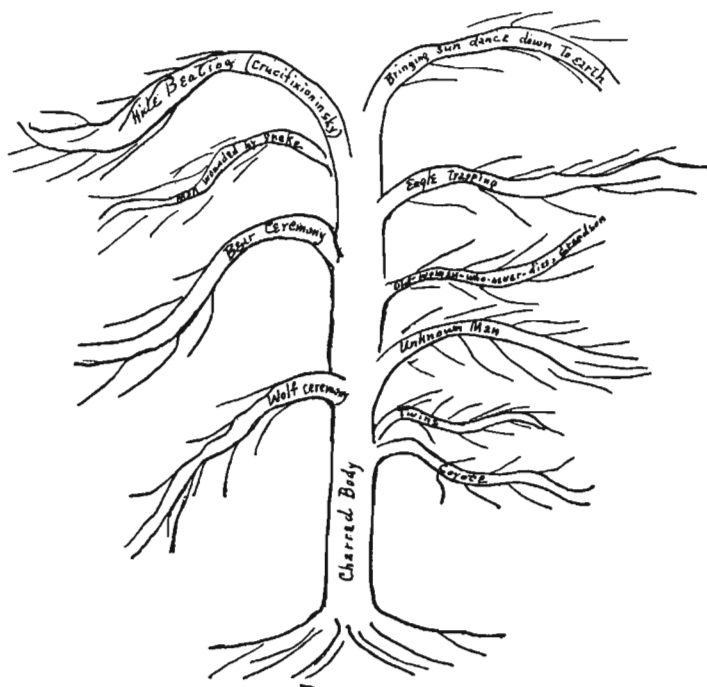
—Hidatsa, Bears Arm.

The parts of this weed all branch from the stem. They go different ways, but all come from the same root. So it is with the versions of a myth.

—Blackfoot, Wissler and Duval, 5.

One ritual is an arm or branch of the lodge, and the myth accounting for its origin forks off from the main branch.

—Menomini, Skinner, 102.





Indian dance hall at Nishu.



Bear's Arm pointing out to George Grinnell sites at the old Fish-hook village at Nishu.



### 34. COYOTE AND SUN

Told by Ben Benson, June 17, 1931.

Coyote, when he was on top of the earth here, had a habit of wandering from place to place. One day he looked up and saw the sun and he said, "I have been everywhere else but not yet to the sun." So he started east where the sun comes up. One night he got to the edge where the heavens and the earth meet. There he found pillars of clouds on which the heavens rested with a rocking motion. He waited for morning and when the sun came out early in the morning it was in the form of a person. The first thing that appeared was the head with feathers upon it which showed bright rays of light. The head cast a round halo which caused the sun's light. When Sun came into full view Coyote could see how he was dressed. His body was painted red from face to foot. He wore a wolf hide as a robe and a male rabbit's skin daubed with red ochre as a head-dress. He was stout of body, carried a great pipe on his arm, and from his nostrils grew fine sage. He was fearful to look at. He pointed his pipe to the heavens, sang a song, and pointed downwards, and this brought the clouds down to earth. Then he stepped into the heavens and walked upward.

Coyote saw how Sun was dressed and thought that he could imitate him. During the night by means of his power he got all the things together that Sun wore. In the early morning before the sun was up he sang the same song that he had heard Sun sing, lifted his pipe and dropped it again, and walked along the path of the Sun. At noonday he stopped at Sun's resting place where Sun was in the habit of sitting to smoke and the ashes from his pipe had made a big mound. There he waited for Sun. Up came Sun as usual. When he struck the path he saw Coyote's footprints and he thought, "All this time I have been here by myself and no one has walked here before me. How can this be?" He went on and saw Coyote. He was angry and shouted to him, "What are you doing here?" Coyote said, "I am just like you.

I come from the innermost part of the earth and give light there. They told me that I had a friend up on top of the earth who gave light to the heavens, so I thought I would come and have a smoke and a talk with you here." Sun said, "I have always been alone without a friend up here before!" and he would not listen but gave Coyote a beating and threw him out of the heavens head first.

Coyote struck the earth and lay there unconscious. It was after sundown when he came to himself. His body was bruised and swollen and he could not see out of his eyes. He spoke to the earth and said, "What kind of a country am I in now?" "In a country that slopes down to a coulee leading to a flat where there are springs and pools of water." Coyote was glad. He rose and went limping along with the pain or crawling when the pain was too intense. Then he heard a noise and stopped to listen. It was the noise of singing and dancing. He knew that it was the dwelling-place of the Wolverines because he had already joined in the ceremony. He followed the sounds and came to the door of the bower. His red robe was torn and his body covered with bruises. The people were surprised to see him in this condition and wearing the dress of Sun. They questioned him and he told them how it had happened and they doctored his wounds with tallow until they were well.

Coyote took a pipe, filled it with tobacco, and placed it in front of the chief man. "What do you want?" "I want you to help me to be avenged." The head man passed on the pipe and the next man passed it on also. At last it came to a man named Black Snare who was brave and successful. He took the pipe, lighted it, and said, "His wish shall be granted; he shall be avenged." He told Coyote to go down to the Missouri and pull up a young cottonwood tree by the roots, get ash for a club, and a fiber called "timber rope" for a snare. All this Coyote did. Black Snare took the fiber to a spider and said, "My holy one, make me a snare." The spider wove the fiber into a snare so fine that it was almost invisible. Black Snare took the cottonwood tree into his hands, sang a mystery song, and changed it into a stem of sand grass. Then he said, "Let me see your club." The others said, "This ash is too heavy; he might club the sun to

death." Black Snare tried Coyote's club and said it was too light and he would give him another. He threw it away and gave him instead a tree root which would break easily. Then the two set out to snare Sun. Their instructions were to tie him up and give him a good beating and then bring him on their backs to the lodge.

They got ahead of Sun and followed the same path that Coyote had taken. There they placed the grass blade where Sun was accustomed to sit and tied the snare to it. Then Coyote took his club and lay waiting for Sun. Soon he saw Sun coming along grumbling and angry because the same footprints were there. When Sun came to his customary resting place he looked at the grass blade and said, "What can they be trying to do here!" The snare caught him and the blade of grass turned into a cottonwood tree and suspended him in air. Coyote sprang out and beat him on the head with his club, but it broke in pieces. Then he bound him head and foot and put him on his back. He said to Sun, "You refused to be my friend and beat me instead; now I shall bring you down to my holy ones." At the door he sang a song. As he stood within the door they all cried, "Bring him in!" They made Sun sit near the door, untied the ropes, and reproved Sun. They said, "You two should be friends instead of hating one another. You should have shown hospitality." So Sun and Coyote became friends again. They started a song to which everyone danced and sang, and Sun was pleased and remained with them.

Sun's brother Moon looked everywhere to find his brother. Finally he came near this lodge and, peeping in, he saw his brother sitting among the people near the door. They saw him and said, "Hurry to cook a roast rib!" It was roasted, cut up, and divided. Then they asked Moon his mission. He said, "I am looking for my brother Sun and here I find him." The head man told how Sun happened to be there. Moon said, "Brother, you should have shown hospitality and made friends," and to the head man he said, "Since this brother of mine is proud, let him have the place of honor where you have placed me and let me sit by the doorway. We will leave symbols to take the place of our bodies and will be with you in spirit." Today, the bowers for



trapping eagles have the symbols which Sun and Moon left to represent their bodies. The sun symbol is a snare on the wall of the lodge opposite the door and the moon symbol is a snare over the top of the door. Sometimes because of this incident Sun and Moon are impersonated in the camps where they trap eagles.

Sun and Moon liked the place so well that they found substitutes to light the earth and stayed until the end of the trapping season. Then they told Coyote that next season when the leaves began to turn yellow they would return, and all the animals who had taken part in the eagle trapping went back to their places and Sun and Moon went to light the heavens. Coyote roamed about as usual until one day he happened to be lying thinking of the fine feasting at the time of the eagle trapping when he saw a vine leaf that looked as if it were already yellowing, but really that was the natural color of the leaf. Up he got and went off to the camp and when he reached it he sang a song. At the camp all was empty. One of the medicines spoke and said, "It is not time yet." Then he was disappointed and went away.

### 35. COYOTE AND CIRCLE <sup>132</sup>

Told by Ben Benson, June, 1929.

In Mandan stories First Creator is always hungry and that starts the story. He was going along one day hungry when he happened to come across a place where there was a great earth lodge. It was the only lodge he could see anywhere about. He went in, looked around, and saw all kinds of jerked meat hanging about, buffalo tongue, and all things tempting to a hungry man. A woman was there. She said, "Brother, sit down over there." "I heard that my sister was here and thought I would come over to her and get a meal." "You are welcome." The woman reached for the tongue and jerked meat and set it before him. He offered to stay and bring in firewood and keep the lodge clean. The woman urged him to stay and promised that he should never go hungry as long as he remained there.

In the course of time the provisions began to run out. Circle said, "Brother, we are nearly out of provisions; we have to do something to get more." "Of course! Food is necessary to us; if we have food all will go well with us." First Creator had noticed bows and quivers of arrows hanging about but no man inside the lodge. Circle painted herself up splendidly. On a pole hung a buffalo bladder tied at the neck. This she took down and, untying the string, threw it down. Ten young men sprang up. She said, "Brothers, do not delay; get your bows and arrows ready." They got down their bows and straightened their arrows. In the meantime Circle climbed the divide and with face turned to the north called, "Short Horn, here is the thing you want waiting here for you!" then she ran back to the lodge as fast as she could. Her call attracted the buffalo and they chased her. When she got back to the lodge she ran her hands over it and it turned into a smooth rock so slippery that none could climb it. She herself turned into a ring and lay on its top. The young men shot down the buffalo as they crowded about the rock

trying to catch the ring on their horns. When the buffalo saw that they could do nothing they turned back and the young men and First Creator butchered the meat. They took it inside to slice into jerked meat and had a big meal of all they wanted. When all had eaten she put the men into the bladder again and hung them up. The two pounded the meat, made tallow, and had provisions for a long time to come.

In the course of time the supply was getting low. He said, "We have eaten so much dried meat, sister, I am getting tired of it. Let us have fresh meat." She would have taken down the bladder but he said, "We do not need those youngsters. I am an old buffalo killer!" He took down his bow and cut fresh arrows. Circle dressed herself and went up to the divide and called to the north as before and ran back to the lodge and touched it with her hand until it was a solid mass of stone again. She lay on top in the shape of a small circle. The buffalo came running. First Creator was alone and as soon as he had shot an arrow in one direction he had to run around to another so that he did not kill a single animal. The buffalo piled on top of one another and one got its horn over the ring and ran away to the north. There sat First Creator like a fool.

He said to himself, "I will trail her and see what has become of her." In the morning he made preparations and came to where the buffalo were. They were transformed into human beings. There was a village, and a game was going on in which the circle was used to roll on the ground. The men had sticks marked with notches to show the count and used the game for gambling. They had kept Circle rolling until by the time he came up she was exhausted. He withdrew to a distance, transformed himself into a very very old dog, lean and toothless, and came along at a slow trot as if he could move no faster. When he came up they said, "Here is a dog that belongs to the men of the Plains (that is, to the Indians)!" and they took pity upon it and one threw it a round ball of tallow. He pushed it along toward the center of the game, licking at it, and when Circle was rolled toward him she cried, "Brother, I cannot last much longer, I am nearly exhausted!" "I am here to help you!" he answered. The next time Circle was rolled, the ring rolled right on to the neck



of the dog. He rolled and cried as if he were trying to get it off. The men laughed and waited to see what the dog would do. He ran round and round and at last ran for the lodge, got inside, and Circle got down the bladder and took out the ten men. She cried, "Brothers, do your best!" She lay on the stone and the ten men and First Creator also were up there. All shot, and when the buffalo found they could do nothing they retreated again. Then the buffalo which the brothers had shot were butchered and all was merry again. After all had eaten a hearty meal Circle put her brothers back in the bladder and hung them up.

First Creator thought, "Even a woman can keep a home with the help of that bladder!" and he wanted to have the bladder himself. So one night when his sister went to sleep on one side of the lodge and he on the other, he took down the bladder and ran away with it. He ran on and on until he came to a kind of Bad Lands, then he lay down to rest. When he awoke he found himself next to the doorstep of the lodge he had left with the bladder tied to his belt. Circle opened the door and said, "What are you doing out here with my brothers tied to your belt?" "I must have had the nightmare!" The next night he started earlier with the bladder and ran on toward the same spot, where there was an opening like a doorway. When he thought himself too far away to be brought back he lay down to sleep. The next morning when Circle got up to start the fire she found him lying over the doorstep fast asleep. "Brother, what are you doing sleeping here with the bladder in your belt?" "I must have had a bad nightmare!" The third night he stole the bag again and ran away with it tied to his belt and this time he made even better ground. So he lay down and went to sleep and the next morning when Circle got up, there he was lying between the outer and inner doorway. "What are you doing here?" "I don't know; I must have had the nightmare." On the fourth night he went to bed early and then got up, took the bladder, and ran away again. This time he succeeded in getting beyond the pass and when he awoke the next morning he was on the same spot where he had lain down the night before. Circle had lost all her brothers and never knew where they had gone.

First Creator felt safe now. He went on to the village and

gave a yell as a challenge for a wrestling match,—“U-hu-u! U-hu-u!” Out came the young men of the village in answer to his call. As he ran he untied the string and let his brothers out and they had a regular Indian wrestling match knocking each other down and kicking each other about. Then the husky fellows said, “Brother, we are cold. Put us inside the bladder again!” He had let the bladder get torn up in the fight, so all he could do was to dig a hole and put them into the ground and they all changed into the big black ants we see nowadays.

132 A composite story common in the Plains area. The trickster attempts to imitate a feat which he is unable to perform, in this case calling the buffalo to secure game. The woman who calls the game is stolen and recovered through his artifice. He steals a magical object which returns him to the place from which he started.

See Arapaho, Dorsey & Kroeber, 376; Arikara, 91; Biloxi, 59; Blackfoot, Wissler & Duval, 31; Caddo, 51; Crow, Lowie, 20; Simms, 307; Iowa, Skinner, JAF 38: 448, 461; Kutenai, Boas, BBAE 59: 139; Omaha, Dorsey, J. O., 82; Pawnee, Dorsey, 228; Skidi-Pawnee, Dorsey, 254.

The story of the woman who calls the buffalo by turning into a ring is a humanized form of the familiar ring and arrow game used in the Plains area to attract game. Compare the Pawnee story of the origin of the buffalo ceremony in Dorsey, 362. The incident of the rock transformation of the lodge is not found in other versions but occurs in the Mandan-Hidatsa story of Black Wolf. In the Biloxi version a mortar is turned down over the woman to protect her. In the Pawnee and Caddoan she is put into a swing of ropes hanging from the sky and swung away to the west. In the Omaha, where the story is connected with the Splinter-foot Girl, she is protected on a scaffold. So in the second Iowa. The Arikara and the first Iowa have only the first and the last incidents; there is no lost woman. In the Arapaho there is no food-producing motive, only a bladder that contains warriors. In the Kutenai, Coyote steals Sun's drying frame and is returned the next morning to the place from which he started. Only in Lowie's Crow version are all three incidents present as in this story.

### 36. COYOTE TURNS BUFFALO <sup>133</sup>

A Mandan story told by Ben Benson, June 26, 1929.

When First Creator was chief, it was his habit to roam about the country and eat what grows on trees and such plants as the wild turnips which grow in poor land. That is how he got his food. He had no home and no provisions, but he was tricky and would fool other creatures and thus provide himself with food.

One day he was going along hungry when he struck a buffalo trail and as he followed the trail he came across a lame buffalo calf. He said, "Brother, what are you doing here?" "You can see that I am lame and my mother and father have left me behind." "Brother, I will carry you upon my back." He took up the calf and carried it along, thinking to fatten and kill it to eat. When he was tired he laid the calf down and brought it buffalo grass to eat of the kind that the buffalos do not touch unless they are starving. The calf chewed and swallowed it. No sooner had he done so than he passed it as pemmican. They went on and the calf asked for more food. This time First Creator brought it eagerly, a great armful, and both were well fed. In this way the calf recovered his accustomed strength.

First Creator asked, "Brother, how did you become lame?" "I stepped on a piece of stick that went into my split hoof." First Creator examined the hoof, pulled out the stick, squeezed out the pus and doctored the sore with tallow until the calf could walk by himself. They were on the Missouri River at the beginning of the journey and they went northward. Calf was now fat and became playful. He would come toward First Creator as if to butt him down, then run away with his tail in the air. First Creator grew nervous and ordered the calf not to run toward him when he played but to run away from him. At a divide they looked over and saw buffalo roaming about. Calf proposed that they go over and flirt with the young women, but first he must make himself fit. He rolled on the ground and when he got up



he had the shape of a two year old bison. "You look well enough now," said First Creator. "No, I must try again." He rolled and when he got up again he was a good-sized bull with long sharp horns and a big hump. "Now you are too big and your hump is too high!" Calf rolled again until the dust was thrown all over him. He became an old bison with horns in shreds and hair hanging all over his head and dwindled hind quarters. The fourth time he rolled he had red ochre on his right horn extending to his eye, a bald eagle feather attached to his horn, and on the left side a long branch of ground cedar dangling from his horn. He said, "I am in the right trim now to accomplish anything!" "Brother, can't you do something for me so that we can go together?" "True enough! You go sit in the buffalo wallow. When I roll and run toward you do not be afraid." The old bull made a great charge which so scared First Creator that he dodged just as the bull approached and the bull missed him. Three times First Creator dodged when the bull charged him, but the fourth time he held his ground and Buffalo gave him a little tip with his horn and he became a buffalo calf. As soon as he was on his feet he began to run about and look at his shadow and have a jolly time. The bull told him to roll on the ground. He did so and got up like a two year old bull. The next time he rolled he had long sharp horns, a long body, but not much of a hump. Now for all the old bull's coaxing he would not roll again. He smeared white clay on one side of his head and yellow clay on the other and placed a garter snake about the butt end of his horn, dangling down with a spiral motion. "Brother, this is the only way to dress!" said he.

Calf now pointed to the herd. "Brother, that is Big Head over there with his wives. He is strong. Whatever you do, don't bother with his wives. The herd over there, that is One Rib's. He is another fierce fellow. His bones are all one solid mass. Don't bother with his wives. There is another herd; that is Wallow-in-red-ochre's. Don't approach any of his wives either. The one over there with the big herd is High Hump and he too is fierce. Don't fool with any of his wives. But you may approach the wives of any of these smaller fellows and we will take them away together. As you approach them, grunt Ugh-h-h!

whenever you put your right foot forward." As they went forward, First Creator grunted Ugh-h-h! every time he put a foot forward and the buffalos said to each other, "He must be someone extraordinary!" They began to spread apart. The old bull saw a big buffalo bull asleep on a hill with his chief wife beside him. So he sneaked up to the cow, pushed her with his horn, and the cow got up and all the other wives also followed him in a cloud of dust. First Creator thought he could do the same. Wallows-in-red-ochre stood fast asleep on a divide, his chief wife resting in the shade. The young bull went toward her and all the buffalos watched, thinking, "He must be a strong one! He is going to take Wallows-in-red-ochre's wife!" He gave the wife a little push with his horn and she got up, so did all the other wives and they followed him running and the dust was flying.

The old bull went ahead. When he got to a stream he let the buffalo wives drink first and wallow about all they wanted to, then, when they came out, he went in and drank in the muddy stream. When he came to the meeting place on the top of the ridge he stood up in order to cast a shadow, and let his favorite wife rest beside him in the shade. First Creator, when he got to a stream, went in ahead and drank and then all the wives could drink. He began to breed at once, not distinguishing night from day, and all the wives wondered what kind of a creature he was. When he came to a ridge he made his favorite wife stand while he rested himself in her shadow. Finally he came to the place where the two friends were to meet. The old bull told him that each was to guard his own herd, but he complained and said, "Brother, think how I carried you on my back! We must have our wives together. Brothers should help each other in life's journey." So in spite of the old bull's protest he bunched the two herds together and the two looked after the whole herd.

Now came the bull whose wives the old bull had taken away. He was tearing up the earth and scattering the dust in the air. The two came together as if their heads would break. First Creator sprang in to help and began tearing at the bull with his horns. The old bull said, "Get away from here! We are testing our strength and the one who wins will be king." "Do you think I shall stand here and watch my brother being killed?" When

the bull had been killed they supposed that they could rest, but of a sudden they saw on the horizon a great pillar of red ochre rising to the skies. "These cows must be the wives of Wallows-in-red-ochre and now he is coming!" said the old bull. First Creator went out and rolled on the ground and a pillar of white clay rose in a whirlwind to the sky. Then he rolled again and the yellow ochre rose. The approaching bull rolled and the red dust ascended to the sky. The old bull told the young one to let himself be pushed but not to push back. Their heads came together with a crash and First Creator did just the opposite, he pushed Wallow-in-red-ochre until at last the old bull planted his feet and pushed him so fast that he could not stand against him. "Brother are you going to stand by and see me killed?" "Jump one side and I will take your place." He jumped and the two bulls came together with a crash. Then the young bull came at the attacking bull from the side with sharp horns and tore at his side until he was killed.

Now they were content. When the pasture became thin they took their wives to a new pasture. This was during the breeding season of the buffalo in the latter part of July when cherries are ripe. Now it grew toward fall; the leaves became yellow and the grass dry. The old bull said, "Brother, I am getting thin with breeding. I am going back where you first found me where the grass is green and the water clear and get my strength back for spring. So when you too get tired of those women you come and join me." So he went down the river where the grass was fresh. First Creator kept all the wives until frost was on the ground. Then he found himself getting weak; he had lost endurance and was growing scabby. Ambition was gone. He could no longer look after the herd and he went away into coulees where there was timber to protect himself from the cold. He grew thin and weak and the cows discovered his state and dispersed and left him.

As he stood in the coulee two coyotes came along and began to scheme how to kill him. He knew what they were up to and said, "Look at those buffalo cows over there. If I turn you into buffalo, we three can have them as wives together. Instead of having a hard time to get food you will be able to get all you want as I do. Sit in that wallow and do not be afraid. I will



give you just a little touch with my horn and you will become like me." One of the coyotes sat in the wallow and First Creator rushed toward him and gave him a touch with his horn, and there, instead of a buffalo, were two coyotes rolling on the ground and the buffalo hide and horns lay in a heap. "You fellows have come around here and spoiled my luck!" said First Creator, and he was angry.

Before this time the bulls were always fighting, but now they fight only in the breeding season. In the Fall they get together and try to regain their strength. Even domesticated bulls among cattle on a ranch bunch together in the Fall.

138 A composite version of the familiar trickster story of Coyote turned buffalo. The embellishments are such as occur in other Mandan-Hidatsa stories in this collection: the story of "Wedge Calf" has the incident of the lame buffalo left behind the herd, that of "Corn Wife and Buffalo Wife" the courting episode.

The Assiniboine, Lowie, 130, tell the same story without the pemmican incident or the re-transformation. The Crow, Lowie, 30, tell the story of Coyote's carrying the lame calf on his back to account for the joking relationship. For the courting scene see Omaha, J. O. Dorsey, 161; Pawnee, Dorsey, 68; and the story of the Boy reared by Seven Bulls, Crow, Lowie, 162; Gros Ventre, 95. For the animal transformation see Arikara, 138; Caddo, 101; Cheyenne, JAFL 13:170; Dakota, JAFL 20:125, 43:437; Omaha, Dorsey, J. O., 105; Osage, 10; Pawnee, Dorsey, 449; Wichita, 278; and, without the re-transformation, Arikara, 100.

In Bloomfield's *Life and Stories of Parcuanatha*, Baltimore, 1919, page 127, a pair of monkeys fall into holy water and are transformed by this means into human beings. Hoping to become immortal, the male monkey tries it again and becomes a monkey once more.

### 37. COYOTE HAS A RACE WITH BUFFALO <sup>134</sup>

A Mandan story told by Ben Benson.

As First Creator was going along hungry as usual he came upon a buffalo lying down. He circled around the bull and came closer and closer. All this time the bull saw him but pretended to be sleeping. As he crept up behind, the bull passed manure. It smelled so good that First Creator took up a tip of it with his finger and began to chew it. The bull looked around and said, "So you are going to eat my dung are you?" First Creator said, "What do you take me for! Do you suppose a man like me would do such a thing? I am a brave man. I can do anything. In that direction [pointing] was a war-party going to war and on the side of the enemy was a very brave man. When all the rest were afraid I fought him single-handed and struck him first. A fellow with big hoofs like you has no right to say I have eaten his dung!" The buffalo said, "With these hoofs I run the whole length of a valley. How about you? Your legs are so slender that anyone could break them by striking them with a grass blade." "Even though my legs may be slender I too can run the length of a valley. Let us have a try-out." The buffalo agreed. First Creator said, "Before we have the race I am going to examine the layout of the country." The land looked as flat as a table but upon examining it he came to a big canyon on the other side of which the land was level. Rocks strewed the bottom of the canyon. So he set up two mounds for the two to run through and said, "We shall run slowly until we come to those two mounds, then close our eyes tight and run as fast as we can. When one calls out to stop, we shall open our eyes and see who has gone the farthest." The two started to run. Opposite the mounds both began to sprint. Buffalo ran with all his might with both eyes closed tight. Coyote kept one eye open. When he came to the edge of the canyon he called, "Open your eyes!" The bull meanwhile went right over the canyon top and rolled to the bot-

tom. Coyote slid down the side and lay there moaning as if he too were hurt and said, "Lone Bull, if you are not too badly hurt will you not help me?" He called again and, getting no response, he rose to look and found that the bull was already dead.

Said Coyote, "Now I am going to have a feast!" He looked about for flint rock, broke it up, and used the sharp edge to skin the buffalo. He thought, "Now I shall have a great feast with enough left to supply me for some time to come! I will drag it close to the timber by the river. I will boil some of the meat and pound up some with tallow to make pemmican. Oh! what a glorious time I shall have!" He got brush and laid the meat out on flat stones. By this time he was tired and went to rest on a block of sandstone. Then came the magpies one by one and lit about him. He said, "You don't want to bother me here. After I have the meat all drawn away you can have all the blood and soup you want." But when he tried to get up he found himself stuck fast to the sandstone. The magpies took courage one by one and began to nibble small pieces. He called them off, but when they saw that he made no effort to get up, coyotes, ravens, skunks, all came and fought over the carcass. He said, "Go ahead and finish it up! I have killed this bull for you fellows." So they carried everything away except a few small pieces of fat lying about in the grass.

He thought, "How foolish I was! I should have eaten while I was butchering." He made an effort and found himself no longer held. "Even the stones are always playing a trick on me!" he grumbled. He raked up the pieces of fat, took his robe and made them into a bundle and placed it on his left arm to carry it to the timber where he could set up a shanty. He set up sticks and built a fire, but all at once it blazed up and a spark fell on his leg. He threw out his arms and the fat fell in the fire and, before he had time to rescue it, all was burned up. He had not even a taste left.

134 A composite story containing two episodes. The trickster challenges a swift animal to a race blindfolded and leads him over a precipice. The feast he has expected to enjoy is stolen by others. The first is Thompson's *Enticed over a precipice*, note 91; the second is his *Sleeping trickster's feast stolen*, note 84, an incident which regularly follows the *Hoodwinked dancers*.

In a Tsimshian story discussed by Boas, RBAE 31: 88-90 and note, the trickster



catches Deer's head in a wedge and Stump eats the meat. South of Bella Bella the trickster gets up a quarrel and pushes deer over the precipice. In the incident of the sleeping trickster generally occurs the *Buttocks Watchman* of Thompson's note 83. Instead of being caught by a rock, as in Benson's story, the trickster is more often caught in a crotch of a tree. Considerable shift of interest occurs among the characters.

See Arapaho, 61; Blackfoot, Wissler & Duval, 27, 38; JAFL 3: 297; Crow, Lowie, 19; Dakota, JAFL 36: 95; Omaha, Dorsey, J. O., 565; Pawnee, Dorsey, 453; Skidi-Pawnee, 265; Shoshone, JAFL 37: 30. The Crow and Arapaho forms are closest to the Mandan-Hidatsa. Dakota, DeLoria, 33, has the same pattern but a different trick to destroy "deer boy."

## COYOTE TRAVELING

A Hidatsa story told by Mrs. Good Bear,  
interpreted by Rollo Jones, July 12, 1929.

### 37a. A Race With Lone Buffalo.

The First Creator was pretty hungry one day. He had had nothing to eat for two or three days. On the Missouri bottom he saw one buffalo all by himself and he said, "How in the world can I fool this buffalo!" He went down and cut brush and set the sticks up apart and said, "I want a big feast and you must help me out!" Then he went toward the buffalo and said, "Those people over there are having an argument about you. They say you are the slowest animal ever created." Buffalo said, "I am not so slow! Every step I make covers a mile." "Then let us have a race, you and I, for they are going to fight about it." Now the wind was blowing and the bush was waving about in the wind. Beyond was a bank with a pile of rocks beneath it. First Creator said, "We will close our eyes and run with all our might to that bank." They ran at a slow pace, then he said, "All right! close your eyes and let's go!" First Creator is a kind of coyote, so he ran with one eye open; Buffalo fell over the bank and broke his neck.

At first, First Creator pretended to be hurt, but when he found that Buffalo was stone dead since he had no knife he got a thin stone such as they used to make arrowheads out of, and just then Little Fox came along. He said, "Come on, brother! I have a buffalo and I can't use it all." They made a place like a shanty to put the butchered buffalo into, gathered firewood and bark and made a pile, then they hauled the meat and made a pile of it also. They made a fire and roasted the meat, then First Creator said to Fox, "You go get some water!" and gave him a buffalo paunch to fill at the spring. Little Fox was so hungry that he ate the paunch and came home crying and said, "I met a wolf down

there and he took away my water bag and ate it up!" First Creator sent him down with another paunch. He did the same thing,—ate the paunch, threw away the sticks, and came back crying. Right over the heart of the animal is a thin thing like a bag. First Creator took this and said, "I'll go with you and I'll fix that wolf this time!" so they went down to the river together. "Why did you eat Little Fox's water bag?" "No!" said the Water Wolf, "he ate the bag himself and threw the sticks at us." They got the water bag full of water and returned to camp. First Creator said, "We were going to have a feast, but you lied to me. You ate the bag and blamed the Water Wolf!" So he took the firestick and hit Little Fox over the nose and that is why he has a black spot over the nose today.

Little Fox went away crying. Every beast he met that eats meat he told about the meat, so they all got together and waited for daybreak. First Creator had a good feast and then lay on his back singing with a big pile of meat beside him. He felt sleepy and said, "I am going to sleep; if anyone comes, my tail, you must shake! my hands, you must move! my feet, you must kick!" The animals sent the little white-bellied Mouse. "You go and see if he sleeps." First Creator's tail was moving. White-bellied Mouse came back and said, "He is not asleep yet; his tail is moving." They sent Pointed-needle-nosed Mouse. "You go and see if he sleeps." First Creator's hands were moving. Pointed-needle-nosed Mouse ran back and said, "He is not asleep yet; his hands move!" They sent the third mouse, Yellow-belly, and he ran over his body and he was sound asleep and snoring. So he ran back and said he was sleeping. Then the whole gang broke in and ate up all the meat; they even ate the buffalo hide he slept on right up to where he was lying! When First Creator awoke all had disappeared. He made a fire, gathered up the fragments in his shirt and was about to eat what was left when a spark fell on his leg, he kicked out and scattered it all into the fire. "I know who has made all this trouble for me," he said, "It is the little one I hit on the nose!"



**38. Coyote and Two Blind Men.**<sup>135</sup>

He left his shanty and went on traveling again. He came to a big village. He did not enter it but sneaked about to find out what was going on. He saw a path with a little string beside it. He followed the path and beside the river saw a little shanty standing. He sneaked over the bank. There sat a very old man on the bank fishing. Turning back he peeped into the cabin. Another old man lay there fast asleep. This old man he noticed was blind. He went back to the other old man, who had just caught a fish and jerked it upon the bank, and saw that this old man was blind also. The man laid the fish on the bank and went back to his fishing again, using grasshoppers for bait which he threw into the water. First Creator sneaked up behind the old man and stole the fish he had caught and went up on the bank and peeped into the house again. The old man in the house had put a kettle on the fire ready to boil the fish. The man who was fishing meanwhile caught another fish and feeling around for the first could not find it. The other came and both felt around for it. "Maybe it rolled down the bank into the water. We have one fish and we can eat half and half," they said. In those days they used hot stones to boil the water. While the fish was boiling, First Creator stole in and took the fish and put the bones back into the kettle. When the old men went at it there was nothing but bones. They poured it all out into a wooden dish, but there was nothing but bones and soup. So one said to the other, "You ate all the meat and put the bones back!" The other said, "I did not touch it. You must have eaten it up!" Then First Creator hit first one and then the other each with a stick which he had thrust into the fire, and the two fell to fighting. One said, "We have been together a long time, and I feel as if there was some one else here. It was one stick that burned us both!" So they left the camp, caught hold of the string that was laid by the river and followed it back home. First Creator also went back to the village.

**39. Coyote Marries His Own Daughter.**<sup>136</sup>

There at the village First Creator took a wife. It is the custom for the young women to go after water. They carry the

water in a clay jar on the back. The young men ask for a drink; the man says, "Let me have some water." That is how First Creator met his wife. After the marriage they had first a girl and second a boy. First Creator was a pretty good worker. He piled up firewood and helped his wife well. He was a good hunter and brought in game. In those days they had to pack the meat on their backs. So finally the children grew big. The girl was a grown woman old enough to marry and the boy well grown also. Now First Creator was a man who never makes a home in one place, and it was his own daughter whom he wanted next for a wife. So one day when he came back from gathering wood he said, "My wife, I have bad news. A meadow-lark met me and said, 'My son, when the thing that you peddle on your back turns red you are going to die!' I thought that I should live to see both my son and my daughter married, but now I am going to die. You must follow my directions and you will then live to a good old age." So the next morning he told his son, "If when I am dead a man comes from the west with a belt made of braided sage and ghost heads hanging from his belt, let your sister marry that man, for he is holy." He went out after wood. In those days they used a buffalo horn to split wood and peddled the wood on their backs. So he cut box elder, which turns red after it is cut, and peddled it home on his back. His daughter said, "Heh! my father's wood is red!" He fell right over and feigned to be dead; he held in his breath pretending to be dead. Girl, boy, mother, all were crying because he was dead. Now before this he had told his wife, "Don't bundle me up (when I am dead) but wrap me in a robe and leave me on the scaffold and leave a bunch of cornballs beside me and some water. I can't eat them but you know how I like cornballs!" In those days they never buried a body, they laid it on a scaffold set up on four sticks. So they wrapped him in a buffalo robe, for they did not know anything about calico in those days, and set the food beside him and his wife went about crying.

As soon as the sun went down, the man ran about to find a dead body to put in his place and he put a dead dog there and ran away to another village. He told the people there, "This other village invites us to come over for a dance." Those who

went to the dance he said were to be the same age and the same height. Then he braided a belt of sweet-grass, gathered up ghosts' heads and hung them in his belt, and took a big stick as a tomahawk and came last to the village. His son stood on top of the lodge with a friend. The son said, "The man my father told about, there he is!" He went down and his sister was doing porcupine work. He told his mother, "The man my father told of is outside here dancing!" So they made a great feast of cornballs and smoked sweet corn. After the dance the son went up to the dancer and said, "I invite you for supper." They spread a robe on the ground and First Creator sat upon it. He untied his belt at the door and hung it up and said it was holy and could not enter the lodge. He wore a foxhide cap and hung his head down so as not to show his face. The scar on his forehead he had plastered with mud. The mother told the girl to take him the food; cornballs, smoked sweet corn, dried meat, all was piled before him. The young man told his sister to sit beside the man and he said to his own father, "I give you my sister, she is yours." At first the man did not eat but seemed bashful and hung his head down. In these earth lodges the rain sometimes leaks through, so they put up four posts, cover them with buffalo hide and leave a small place to crawl into for a bed. The brother said, "These were my father's orders before he died. This is my sister's bed, it is your bed now." So he hung up his clothes and made himself at home and when night came they all went to bed. Next morning the girl looked at his face, the mud had come off and left the scar. She got up quietly and went over and told her mother, "Mother, it is my father!" The mother would not believe her. At last she took a stick and went over and peered into the bed and there lay her own husband. She hit him over the back with the stick and he ran out of the lodge.

First Creator ran as far as the village from which he had come to dance. Some boys were playing and he asked them, "What is the news?" The boys said, "The news is that First Creator married his own daughter." "Ha! that is bad news to hear!" He ran on farther to the next village and there were a group of children playing in the mud and he asked, "What is the latest news?" They said, "We have heard that First Creator married



his own daughter!" "That is bad news indeed!" He ran on farther. He thought, "Who has carried the news so far?" He came to a third village. There were a group of boys playing with sticks. He asked, "What is the latest news?" "We heard that First Creator married his own daughter." "That is bad news! He must be a bad fellow." First Creator thought to himself, "Wherever I go I shall hear the same thing. I may as well go back to the big timber!" He said to the boys, "I am going back to the big timber. Watch the birds and if the backbone has meat I will return. Watch the antelope and when its ankles have meat I will return. Watch the Missouri river and when the river flows back west I will return. He climbed a hill, made a jump and disappeared, and we do not know where he went to.

135 See Thompson's *Deceived blind men*, note 89. Add Dakota, DeLoria, 174. In a Skidi-Pawnee story, Dorsey, 52, about the origin of the Morning Star bundle, the blind men are two stars. Coyote gets caught in a moving stone door and himself eventually comes to grief.

136 See Thompson's references to *Lecherous father*, note 109(p). Add Dakota, DeLoria, 17, and the Wintu variants discussed by Demetrakopoulou and DuBois, JAF 45: 429-448. The theme is fully discussed by Schmerler, JAF 44: 196-207.

## COYOTE TRAVELING AGAIN

A Hidatsa story told by Mrs. Good Bear,  
interpreted by Rollo Jones, July, 1929.

### 40. Coyote and Whirlwind Woman <sup>187</sup>

The first Creator was traveling and he was hungry. He came to a tipi. A pack of dogs were there and the carrying sticks were piled up outside. He went inside and saw a young girl sitting there. She said, "How did you come here?" "I was told you were camping here so I came over." At the fire was a kettle of meat boiling. She told him, "I am cooking tongue. It must be about done." She gave him some soup and one tongue and said, "The end of the tongue I always throw behind the tent, so throw what you have left over there." The food was quickly gone he was so hungry, then he went around and found the meat that had been thrown away and ate it. He asked the girl if she had a husband and she said, "No, the boys do not like me because I move camp so often." First Creator said, "What is the matter with these men! It is pleasant to camp at evening where the flowers smell sweet and the grass is green." Said the girl, "I only wish I could marry you!" So First Creator said that he loved to camp among the flowers and that it was healthier always to camp in a new place and, yes, he would marry her. After the courting she made a great supper again with all kinds of food. She had plenty to eat. They went to bed and in the morning she made a big breakfast. She said, "We are going to move camp." They took the tent down and put everything upon the carrying sticks. She turned her face to the south, the west, the north, the east and called to the dogs "Come on! we are going to move!" and all the dogs came around. She said, "You are the man, you take the lead." He said, "No, we will walk along together." All the dogs came behind with the pack; it was a wonderful moving. When he looked aside she turned into a great whirlwind and the first he knew he was up in the air. Sometimes he fell on his back

upon the sharp cactus, sometimes the wind whipped him over a log. All his clothes were torn and his hair tumbled about. The whirlwind took him up in the air and dragged him through mud and water until he was nearly dead. Just as he was completely used up the woman camped. She put up the tipi and undid the pack, while he lay on his face nearly dead. "What are you doing?" she said, "You told me you loved to camp! Better get up and get some water." He got up, took the small bucket and drew water. Supper was by that time ready and he said, "Yes, indeed! this is what I like! I love to camp!" All this time he was wondering how to get out of the place. She served him a great supper but he thought, "Another day of this and I shall surely die."

After supper he told his wife he would go out for a little, so he filled his pipe and his spirit ran all over the world looking for help. At every place he came to they said, "If it is Whirlwind we can do nothing with her." Finally the Ground Hog said, "Spread the smoke over this way and I will see what I can do for you." Ground Hog told him, "If you go back into the tent she will not let you come out again; this is your only chance. I will go into the ground from here, you follow me." So Ground Hog dug a hole and First Creator followed him right down into the ground. They passed through three worlds and came to the fourth world. Whirlwind came out to look for him and searched everything on this earth even up to heaven and between heaven and earth but found no trace of him. Ground Hog told him, "You must stay here four years; after that she will give you up but before that she will surely find you."

#### 41. **Coyote is Caught by the Nose.**

After four years he came out of the earth and went traveling from place to place, and came to a place where they used to grind corn to make cornballs. From this place he saw cornballs coming in and out, in and out. He said to himself, "This is strange! I must have some." He crept up very softly and jumped for the cornball, but the cornball went back in and the grinder caught him by the nose. There he lay helpless. He saw birds called



Nighthawks in the air and he called to them, "Brothers, this cornball grinder said bad things about you and I was going to strike him but he caught me by the nose!" Nighthawk asked, "What did he say?" "Those Nighthawks are lazy creatures! they make their nests on the stones. They have queer-looking heads and too small noses." The birds were angry. They flew up in the air and came down with all their might and split the grinder in two and First Creator got free. A man who is full of tricks can do many things!

#### 42. Coyote and the Rolling Stone.<sup>138</sup>

First Creator went on traveling. He sat down and a jack rabbit ran away from where he was sitting, then another. He took his blanket, spread it around himself, got a stone ready and sat there. A rabbit came bumping on to the blanket and he killed it with a stone, then another, until he had four. Then he thought, "I have rabbits enough." He opened his blanket and there were no rabbits, only cow manure that dirtied his blanket.

He threw the blanket over a stone and said, "I give you this blanket!" and went on. A hard shower came up. He ran into a cave and stayed. It rained a couple of days. He said, "My blanket must be well washed. I will go and see." He came back to the stone. The blanket was well washed and smelled quite clean. He said to the stone, "You are not fit for this blanket!" took the blanket and went on. As he went farther on he heard a great noise. The stone was rolling after him. When he ran down hill the stone almost got him, so he looked for a steep hill, for the stone rolled up hill very slowly and he had time to rest. When the stone got half way up he started down the other side. At the bottom he passed a muddy place. There it might get mired. He ran on and, just as he thought, as the stone came rolling along at the muddy place it got mired and the mud saved him.

#### 43. Coyote Feeds the Women on Their Own Babies.<sup>139</sup>

He went on traveling until fall came and he was going through the brush. He saw two wild plums and he picked them and held

them in his jaws but did not eat them. He came to a tent where was a woman outside scraping hide. He stood and watched her. He took the plums from his mouth and rolled them over the hill where she was working. She jumped up and called to her sister, "Here is our brother who has brought us some plums!" He pointed to the big timber and said, "There are plenty over in the timber. I just brought two along." The women said, "You take care of the children and we will go gather some." They got their sacks and their poles. As soon as they got over the hill he killed the children, cut them up and put them in the pot, and their heads he stuck back into the swaddling clothes. When the women came back they said, "We did not find any plums." "You must have gone to the wrong place. Even the ground is covered!" "No, the coyotes can't have got away with them so quickly." Then the women said, "What are you cooking that smells so good?" "While you were away I killed two young beavers by the brook." When the dinner was cooked he dished out the meat. One recognized a child's hand. He said, "What did you say? A beaver's hand is like a baby's." He said he would go himself after plums and when he had reached a big hill he shouted back, "Here are two women whom I have fed on their own babies!" They went and looked and found the heads of their children. They said, "Today you shall die wherever you are!"

They came after him. He crept into a hole and the two women began to dig with their canes to dig him out. He ran out at another place, gouged out his own eyes and came back to where the women were digging. "What is going on here?" "First Creator killed our children and made us eat them!" "Give me the canes, I'll kill that fellow!" He went in and bruised his own nose and came out smeared with blood. "I had it out with him! now you go in and track him out." He put a pile of grass over the hole and hit two stones together to start a fire. "We don't see him in here. What is that noise?" "A bunch of antelopes hitting their hoofs together." He struck a spark, stuffed the grass inside the hole and scorched the women to death. After a while they were quiet. He went in, took the bodies, and made them his wives. He placed an arm of one about his neck on one side and an arm of the other about his neck on the other side and said,

"Don't get jealous! I treat you both alike." After a while he left them and went on his way again.

137 See Arapaho, Dorsey & Kroeber, 97, 98; Crow, Lowie, 32; Kiowa, Parsons, 43.

138 Thompson's *Offended rolling stone*, note 96. Compare Skidi-Pawnee, 260-262, where the nighthawks, as in the preceding story by Mrs. Good Bear, play a part in the rescue of the trickster.

139 Thompson's *Trickster kills the children*, note 97. There is some resemblance to the Kutenai story recorded by Boas, BBAE 59: 175, in which Coyote tricks two women into thinking the other has eaten her food at night, then transforms himself into a baby and steals away their salmon and sets fire to the house while they are off picking berries.



COYOTE TEACHES THE PRAIRIE DOGS TO DANCE <sup>140</sup>

A Mandan story told by Crow's Heart (seventy-two years of age, Mandan mother and Gros Ventre father) as told to him by his older brother, Bear's Feet. Interpreted by Allison Grinell, July 1, 1929.

Chief Coyote was on his way and he was very hungry. He did not know where he could get food. Coming to a ridge he saw a village of prairie dogs and he thought to himself, "How can I get this food?" He ran down to the creek and called to some skunks. Now skunks were black at this time. He told the skunks they were to have a dance and he would decorate them. So he took bulrushes and cut off the red part and put it over the little skunks' tails and painted their backs and front with white clay as they are today. When he looked at them they were beautiful! He said, "We must first practise the dance; the mother must go first and all the others after." As they danced in a zigzag fashion he sang,

My face is painted  
My back is painted also  
My tail rattles!

When they came to the Prairie-dog village he called, "Hey! we are going to have a great time here. These people will dance for you and the mothers must all come with their babies on their backs!" The dogs said, "Chief is always trying to fool people!" and they held back. He called the skunks and they all came dancing down the hill and he sang,

My face is painted  
My back is painted also  
My tail rattles!

and when he sang "My back is painted," the little skunks danced and their tails rattled. The prairie dogs gathered about and followed them. Chief Coyote led them on until they had gone far from the village and could not find their homes, then he took out a sharp stick that he had hidden away and began to kill them all. When he had killed a great many he told the skunks to bring them one by one, then he would lift each by the tail and if it was

fat and heavy he would put it on one side and if it was light on the other. All the fat ones he kept and gave the thin ones to the skunks.

The skunks ate theirs raw, not knowing how to prepare them, but Chief Coyote made his into a pack and carried them over to a ravine and said, "My aunt, I want a kettle to cook these dogs in, a pan and a spoon to eat them with!" His aunts (they were fairy women) brought him an earthen pot, a wooden pan, and a goat-horn for a spoon. He made a great fire and put the dogs into the pot. It was boiling over and he congratulated himself, "Now I shall have a great feast! It takes a fellow like me to prepare a feast!" But before the meat was ready he grew sleepy and prepared to take a nap and he said, "My eyes, stay open and watch; my tail, wag if anyone comes." Then all the wolves, coyotes, foxes and other animals of the forest said, "We will go and make a big feast on old Chief Coyote's cooking." So they sent the fox ahead because he was the wisest, smartest, slyest, and quickest, to see if he was really asleep. Fox saw that the eyes were wide open. He took a stick and brought it closer and closer but the eyes did not wink. He tried squeezing his nose but he did not stir. So he ran back and gave the word and they all came and ate up the potful of prairie-dogs and put the bones back. Chief Coyote awoke and said, "A fellow like me must not eat alone. I must call my friends." He went up on the hill and summoned his friends. When he dipped the spoon into the kettle there was nothing but bones. He sang

All the meat is so well cooked that  
The meat is fallen from the bones,  
And the meat is white!

But when he reached down he could find nothing. So he knew that the animals had stolen his meat while he slept. He was broken-hearted. He tried to eat the soup but could not, so he called his aunts and told them that they could have it and they took it and were glad.

He wanted to punish the man who had played the trick. He went about the fire in a circle until he found tracks. They were Tiger's tracks and they were greasy as if he had dipped his paw into the soup and then licked it off. He followed the tracks until

he came to Tiger lying fast asleep. He thought, "If I hit his head it will be bloody, if I break his leg the marrow will always be bloody also." So he pulled out his intestines and stuffed in red grass in their place. That is why the tiger cannot run fast today. The Indian takes his skin to wrap the children in. That was his punishment.

140 Thompson's *Hoodwinked dancers*, note 82. Add Dakota, Walker, 113; Beckwith, JAF 43: 432; DeLoria, 19-25; Kiowa, Parsons, 27. Thompson finds no variants on the north-west coast. In Tlingit, BBAE 39: 116, Raven offers to turn the killer whales white if they shut their eyes, and kills all but the last who peeps.



## 45. COYOTE AND THE STRIPED GOPHER

Told by Bear's Arm.

Coyote was going along and he came to a stream of water. On the edge were pebbles. He saw a little agile animal with long ears. The little creature asked him what was his name and Coyote told him "First Creator." "But," said the little creature, "a chief always has more than one name! what is your other name." Coyote was vexed. He said, "What kind of a little animal are you, anyway? I don't remember creating you!" "Then it's up to you to find out!" So he teased Coyote. Then Coyote was provoked and approached him, but the animal ran into his hole.

Coyote was bound to catch him and bring him to terms. He twisted bark together to make a snare and placed it over the hole. The little animal saw the snare, bit it in two, and thrust his head out and laughed at him. Coyote made a pair of snares. The first he covered with dirt, the other he placed on top of the ground. Every other hole he filled up with a pebble and when the little animal came out of his hole and bit one snare, he got caught in the second. Coyote snapped him up in the air and brought him down while the little animal begged, "Brother, you are almost killing me. You can see that I can not even find a hole to go in at. If you will not harm me I will hurt no one from now on." "What do you mean by showing your stripes?" "Why, I am nothing but a bullsnake!" Then Coyote said that the reason why he had not known him was because he was something he never created, "but turning into a different animal got me provoked." So he cut off his ears and told him, "You keep the stripes of a bullsnake, but I will castrate you and put little worms in the place of the testicle." Today, if you castrate a striped gopher you will find a couple of worms.

## 46. COYOTE CORRECTS HIS WORLD

Told by Bear's Arm, June, 1931.

### a. The dogs that spoke.

Coyote was traveling. He came to a big village. As he went through the streets he heard women crying. He asked the people what this meant. They said the women were crying because they had been beaten by their husbands. He asked how it came about that the men beat their wives. They said, "On account of the dogs that spoke." They explained, "When the women go after firewood their dogs follow them. If their former sweethearts meet and kiss and embrace them while they are alone, the dogs tell their husbands when they get home. Then the husbands beat the women." Coyote said, "When we made the dogs, they were not supposed to speak. I must put a stop to this." The dog's mouth was at that time about the size of a human mouth. He cut it wider so as to open up the jaw. Thus he put a stop to the dogs' tatling. He told the dogs, "From now on, when you see a person approaching you shall let your master know by barking 'Come!' (that is, in the Indian, *Ma-hu*!) If you do not want the person to come in, growl and snap your teeth."

### b. The bird that turned the meat bitter.

Looking about the lodges in the village he [Coyote] saw strings of jerked meat, but the people were lean. He asked why this was. The people said, "When we go hunting, only the fastest butcherers can get their meat home in good condition. There is a raven which flies over calling 'Get bitter! get bitter!' (*gi-ba* in the Indian) and the meat turns bitter." Coyote asked for a sample. He chewed but he could not swallow the meat it was so bitter. He said, "I must have this thing righted." He sent the young girls after firewood and had it piled ready to light, first laying down manure because it keeps the flame a long time. Then

he had the men get timber rope and make a snare. He filled up his pipe and asked help of his fellow creatures. The Big Spider came to his aid and he lighted the pipe for the Spider to smoke. Now the raven lived in a hollow tree out of which it flew when the men were butchering. Big Spider said, "It is easy to snare that bird. Be ready to snare him when he comes out, before he can cry 'bitter!' Then throw him into the fire and let him burn. Some of his feathers will fly into the air and turn into birds. When you see a white raven fly out and cry 'At the end of the world there shall be seen a white raven as a sign that the world is coming to an end' that will be the last of it."

They sent out young men into the hills scouting. These reported buffalo. They made ready for the hunt. The fastest runners went ahead to encircle the herd. Buffalo always run toward the wind, but the runners drove them toward the other hunters. These formed a corral where they slaughtered almost the whole herd. The men with large families packed meat home, others followed behind. Meanwhile some watched by the hollow tree. When the bird came out, before it could cry, Coyote caught it by the neck and pulled it to the ground. It had the head of a man and the body of a bird. The face was human but it had no hair. The body had wings and a long neck. It was a frightful thing to see. Coyote clubbed the bird and threw it into the flames. Feathers flew up and turned into birds and flew away. The unburned bones Coyote crushed with his club. Finally out flew a white raven and said, "When the world is about to end I will come to you again!" So Coyote told the people that was to be a sign to them.

### **c. Buffalo deprived of sharp eyesight.**

Coyote saw that the buffalo was wild and that it would be hard for the hunter to come close if the buffalo continued to keep his sharp eyesight. So he threw dust in the buffalo's eyes and kicked the head so that it hung down to the ground. Now the buffalo can see only about as far as from here to that log cabin over there. This he did for the good of the hunter.



**d. Elk no longer eat men.<sup>141</sup>**

He also altered the nature of the elk. The elk have certain teeth highly valued by the hunter, but originally the elks used to kill the hunters with their horns and eat them. This was reported to Coyote. He said to the elk, "I set in your mouth teeth highly valued by the Indian, but now you are eating men." He tried to knock the elk's eyes out with the end of his bow, but the animal jumped and the blow fell on the edge of the eyes and made a hole each side of the bulge of the nose. Then the elk promised not to eat man any longer. It is because of these holes that when the elk is chased by the hunter he lifts his head so high. When an Indian kills an elk he cuts out and throws away the small piece of fat near the neck, for he says that it is the fat of an Indian which the elk ate long ago.

<sup>141</sup> The story closely resembles Kutenai, Boas, 187-191. In the Cheyenne story of how the buffalo formerly ate men recorded by Kroeber, JAF 13: 161-2, people are said not to eat the meat in front of the chest under the throat today because "it is human flesh." Compare Arapaho, note page 41 and 329. My informant states that "women do not eat the part of the buffalo over the liver until they are over age for child-birth as it is considered harmful before that period."

## 47. GEOGRAPHY OF A WAR PARTY <sup>142</sup>

Told by Crow's Heart, June 22, 1931.

When I was a young man, a fellow went on a war party to the Black Hills, then westward to the buttes called Two-Pine-Trees-facing-each-other, way up on the head waters of Powder river, and back along the Little Missouri. One party started out north toward Devil's Lake and the chief told me what buttes and hills were on our route. Another time I went on a war party up toward Mouse river. Another war party went west and when I returned another man started out and I went with him. On all these expeditions I was scout of the war parties. I was a good runner, hardy and enduring, and that is how I came to know the names of those hills and other landmarks in the country. I know that I am right because I have seen these places. A person who tells the stories without seeing the places, should anyone see the account will be laughed at. Some have been farther than I and know more. I can also tell the names of the chiefs of the parties and the ponies stampeded.

From Old Fort Berthold we went to Beaver Creek, named because long ago it was full of beaver. We came to a rocky hill, then to a hill open on top with a lake below called Lake-of-the-double-peaked-hill. Right across was a high hill called Willow butte with a spring on the side of its foothill where willow grew. We came then to a mine of white clay. The ridge we call Lizard. Just this side of Knife river is a knoll called Looks-like-a-fox's-ears. Right at the south of the town of Halliday is a high hill overlooking the country and there are flint mines where knives and arrowheads are made. That is why the river is named Knife river. On the lower bank of the river is a place called Red Bank because of the reddish earth.

Along the northern Pacific is the divide where the rivers flow north and south. Just this side of the divide, north of Dickinson, is a butte called Bull-snake-den because there are many bull

snakes there. On top of the divide is Butte-on-top-of-the-divide. Southwest of Dickinson is a nice-looking butte called Children's-home where spirit children live; from thence come the children born into the tribe. From there on is another butte called Where-they-find-blue-clay because here one finds blue clay with pockets of red and yellow ochre. The next hill is Buffalo Den. People say that when a heavy fog lies on this hill, when it lifts there are always buffalo to be seen. The next butte is called Home-of-the-rain. When the Indians go on hunting parties it seems as if it was always raining there. There is another hill on the edge of the Little Missouri called Dense-pine-butte because of a thick clump of pines growing there. Right across is a butte called Looks-like-a-chicken-tail. Another is called Big-rough-butte because it is rocky and timbered. Another is flat and has a chimney like an earth lodge. It is called Butte-with-a-chimney-on-top. Another is called Wild-cat's-sitting-place because it is the haunt of the wild cat. Another hill whose sides are covered with pine is called Where-the-buffalo-climb because the buffalos' trail goes across it. Farther south lies a range of hills with white tops which we call White buttes. Next come the Black Hills, called Bad-looking-mountain because not considered desirable. The tops are not open but rough and wooded. From this range westward lie the Two-cedar-buttess-facing-each-other. These hills face each other and look as if water had washed out between them.

As you come down the Little Missouri there is a high butte on the edge of the river called Snake-people butte because when the Gros Ventre chased a group of Shoshone (called Snake people) they took refuge there. Another butte, flat on top with four corners, is called Garden butte. Another range is named from its appearance at a distance Looks-like-a-beaver's-paw. Killdeer mountain was named by the Sioux. The Gros Ventre and Mandan call it Singing-mountain. This side of Killdeer is Buffalo-dung butte. The Indians used to take buffalo dung there and make mounds out of it. A creek of the same name runs below.<sup>143</sup> Coming this way down the Little Missouri, on this side of the creek which the white people call James (Jims) and the Indians Red-ochre-mine-creek, is a butte called Chases-them-away butte.



The young men used to fast here and often a spirit would come out with a bladder on his head and blood sprinkled on it as if he had been scalped and threaten them with a club. Then the young men would run away and those who were enduring torture would pull out the stakes and run away. But it was really nothing on his head but the oesophagus of a buffalo blown up and painted red. Right across from this place are the Two buttes. The next peak is called Peak-not-successful because a man set up an eagle trap here but never succeeded in catching eagles. Porcupine-tail butte was named for some scandal. White-tent butte was a landmark for miles and miles away. Near here is a lake where the story of the thunder-birds is placed which tells the origin of the Low-helmet clan. Around this lake garter snakes and frogs abound, hence also skunks which feed on such food. Above is Thunder-bird-nest butte, west of Sanish. Along the river this side they call Long hill. It is the hill right along the river which the white people call Blue butte. West of these buttes is a range of hills with knolls on top called Buttes-(that-)-look-as-if-knotted-together. Close to these is Bull-berry creek, whether named from the berries I do not know. At the head waters is an old bear's den and the whites call it Bear's-den creek.

Down along the Missouri river, right on top of the breaks at the highest point, is a stone with hieroglyphics on it from which the butte is named. A little south-east are two buttes called Looks-like-a-fox's-ears. The highest point of land west of Independence is called Elk hill. In the big, timbered coulees that run up from the river, elk once abounded. They used to make for the top of this butte. The Indian name for Saddle butte is Two-pointed hill. Just west is a high point of land that looks like a heart and that is called Singing-heart butte, but I do not know the origin of the name. Here is a place called Seven-mounds. On one of these stones is picture writing. The story is that a Gros Ventre called Young-man-of-the-village went on a war party. He gave an offering to the Grandmother-who-never-dies for the success of his expedition. She told him to come and camp where there are springs and oak trees south of Elbowood and on the fourth day he would meet seven men and his warriors should kill all seven. When he came back, people went out to see the

seven bodies and found instead seven mounds of stone.<sup>144</sup> Just on the divide are two stone mounds, but their origin I do not know. North-east of this Willow butte there is a small butte where you can see the site of the dwelling of Old-woman-that-never-dies. They call this Grandmother's-lodge butte. This was her original home. Below that is the Short river; on the south side is Red butte where the snakes were killed in the story.

Start from Old Berthold at Looks-like-a-fish-hook village where Arthur Mandan was reared. In the foothills north of the village is a range of trees called Timber coulee. West is a place called Spring-with-many-frogs where green frogs abound. Beyond that spring a little to the north the highest point of land is called His-lodge's-buffalo-trap butte because a man of that name had a buffalo trap there. Next to the frog spring is another marshy place where buffalo get mired, called Swampy spring. Northeast of Black water is Round butte. North lies Big spring where a big volume of water flows out. North of this spring is a high hill called Carrying-ice-on-their-back, but the whites call it Blue hill. It is so named because in the winter ice may be carried from the Big spring. There is a hill that looks like two noses pointing toward each other. East of that is Dog den. All the sacred beings like the animals, as also the dog, live there. To the north are two stoney hills called Throwing-stones-at-each-other buttes. The lake called Long-body-of-water (Long lake) lies close to Drake about five miles from Dog den. Fish abound there. Beyond this is a butte on the prairie called Looks-like-an-ear-of-corn. This side of Devil's Lake is a butte called Holy-water-heart butte. The Gros Ventre came from that part of the country and named the butte because it looked like a heart.

Where the Mouse river makes an elbow and flows north is a high hill they call Mouse-river-corner butte. Following up the Mouse river you come to a high yellow sandstone bank which they call High-hill-with-picture-writing. In early days war parties going north when they came to this side of the cliff would draw pictures of events that had happened. If they killed an enemy they drew a picture of a man lying down, if they took horses they would draw horses' hoofs. In the direction from Mouse river there is a prominent butte rising from the flat prairie

which they call In-the-center-of-the-prairie. West is White-clay butte. On its side is a creek called White-earth creek. A big range of hills rises beyond and at an elbow in the range is a big spring. The story is that once an enemy was killed close to the spring. When they went through a second time they killed a beaver and on one of its claws was a ring, so they think the enemy turned into a beaver. Hence they call this country Turns-himself-into-a-beaver. Westward you come to a flat country with a knoll on top of which is picture writing made by the spirits. That country is known as the Stone-with-picture-writing. Nobody knows who makes the pictures, so they think it is the gods. Westward still this side of Williston is the Place-where-the-turtle-lies. It is a high hill, rising on a high bluff, on which they made out of stones an outline of a turtle about fifteen feet long, facing west.

That is all the places I know.

142 Crow's Heart is a fine old Indian warrior of the Mandan-Hidatsa group, whose portrait in war bonnet and dress of the old days appears in many collections of Indian types. He is intelligent and well-informed and his information is regarded as especially reliable. He is no story-teller. This account he dictated at Bear's Arm's house, with Mandan as interpreter.

143 This creek was the natural watering place of the buffalo, hence the heaps of manure to be found there. The reason for setting up mounds on the hill was not given. Such mounds are used by scouts when they return from a scouting party, or are set up by those who go out to the hills to fast in order to obtain a spirit.

144 Bear's Arm told the following story of this "Young Man of the Village," and we later visited the spot where the stones are set up.

He was the son of a war chief. He had a white buffalo robe as offering to the Grandmother-who-never-dies. He came to her with his band of forty warriors. He said, "Grandmother, I come to you for your help. I am on the war path and want to return as victor over my enemies." Then he spread the buffalo robe in front of her, also a pipe of tobacco. Old-woman put the pipe in her mouth and made as if she lighted it, inhaled, but did not light the pipe. She said, "Go out west to the oak belt and stay. Have your scouts on the watch. You do not need to go far. In course of time seven men will come from the west. Have the warriors attack. The enemy will not harm them and all shall be killed. Then return in a running circle by my place, as you would come to your own village, with the scalp-locks dangling, black your bodies, then go back to your own village." He did as directed. Seven men came from the west. The warriors attacked and killed them. Afterwards when men came to the scene of battle the bodies had all turned to stone so big that one man could not lift them. They were blackish stones. All seven stones were moved into one pile together called ever since the "seven mounds." They are to be seen today near Mr. Robert Lincoln's house.



# 48. A MANDAN WINTER COUNT <sup>145</sup>

Given by Foolish Woman at Independence, July 11, 1929,  
to explain the pictured events recorded in his notebook.

1835

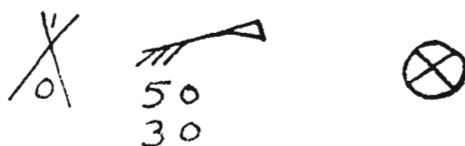
Shooting stars fell during the summer. Lance Owner and his party of Sioux were killed. Four women born.



1836

The next winter 50 tipi of the Sioux destroyed and the gun indicates a fight. The Sioux were coming through the Mandan and Gros Ventre territory. They were warned off. They said that the Gros Ventre looked like calves but they were bulls, so the Mandan destroyed fifty of their tipi.

In the summer, 30 Mandan went on a war party, Red Cow's younger uncle among them (Red Cow was Arthur Mandan's grandfather), and never came back.



1837

At the time that the Mandans were killed there were three Sioux in the Mandan camp, two of them brothers. One brother went with the war party. His uncle among the Sioux recognized him and said, "Say, brother, if you want to save yourself come with us," but the Sioux refused to desert his friends. He had

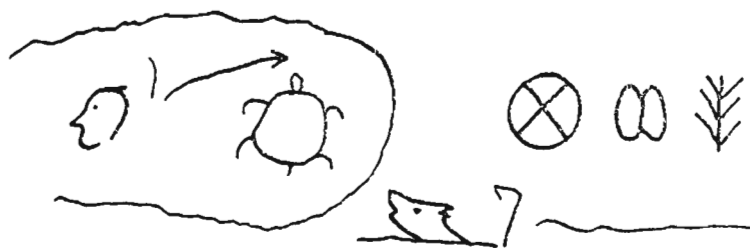
sweethearts among the Mandan who would have laughed at him if he had been a coward. So he was killed among them. In the fall of the year the Mandan wanted revenge. They used the two Sioux as decoy to coax the Sioux into the village, saying that the Mandan wanted to make a treaty of peace with them. A large party came, but the police officers succeeded in driving back to the Sioux all but seven, among them Four Hand. At the Mandan camp Red Cow loaded his gun with seven bullets and when he came to the Sioux he asked which was Four Hand. They pointed, and he shot him in the back. The bullet could be heard going through the air with a whistling sound. The Mandan and Gros Ventre killed the rest and cut off their hands.

Next summer there was small-pox. (That summer Foolish Woman's father was born, also an old woman named Turtle Woman who is still living. She is 92 years old this summer.)



1838

That winter the camp was down in old Cold Harbor where there is a creek known by Indians as Mussel Shell creek. A man by the name of Turtle did his first deed (of valor) by striking an enemy. A man by the name of Four Bears killed seven Sioux and brought one white horse back that same winter.



1839

In the spring they crossed to the south side of the river, the band split up, and part camped where they had crossed and the other half went up the Yellowstone and made camp about Rosebud creek, in the gumbo tree timber.



1840 ?

The following summer they returned to the original creek and wintered there again for the second time.

1841 ?

The next summer an old lady by the name of Brown-bird-woman — Ma-hi-di-wit — was born and is still alive. . . .



1842

Camped a second winter in the same camp. An Assiniboine chief by the name of Sitting Dog came to that village.



1843

The third winter camped in the same place. Black Shield, a Gros Ventre chief appointed this camp. He was also known as Many Buffalo. One evening he announced that every dog must be muzzled and he was going to beat his drum. He beat the drum



and sang his medicine song and a blizzard came and buffalo in great numbers sought protection in the timber.

During the summer, a woman by the name of Lead Woman was born who is alive today.



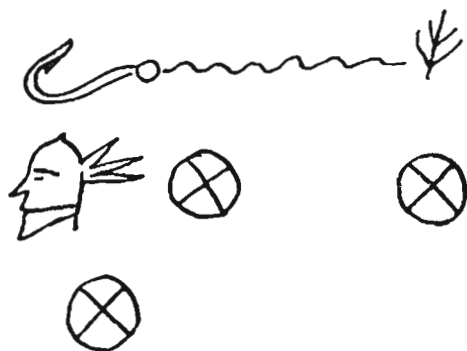
1844

A man by the name of Hand was chief of the village and appointed the camp.



1845 ?

The summer following, Fish-hook village was established by a group of officers called Black-mouths (Pretty fierce too!—more severe than any policeman.) Mrs. White-duck's father, Poor Wolf, was one of the Blackmouths at that time.



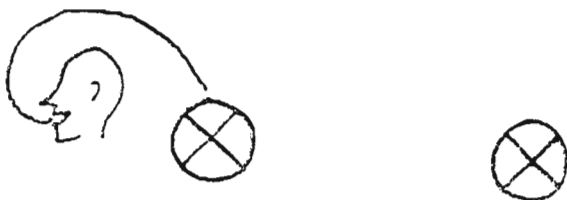
1846

A man named One Bull located the winter camp and he took the same site for the village. That winter there was chicken pox.



1847

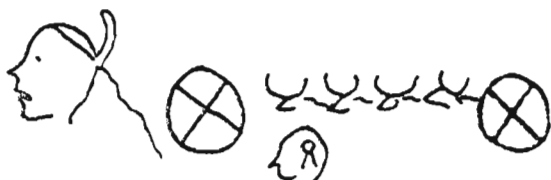
A man named A-wa-tis (This-river-here) named Fish-hook village again as the winter camp.



1848

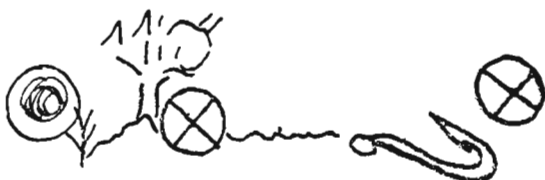
Next winter Man-with-long-hair established winter camp in the same place. He is said to have been quite an orator. You will find his oration in Washington yet. Many buffalo again,—they came right into the village.

That summer Foolish Woman's grandfather was shot in the head during a battle. The skull used to be lying right there on the battle-field.



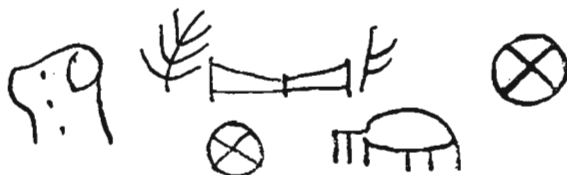
1849

A Gros Ventre named Black Shield established winter camp in a place opposite Elbowood called by the Mandan "Dark Trees," by the Gros Ventre "Shaggy Trees."



1850

The following winter a Gros Ventre named Crying Dog established winter quarters this side of Old-Fish-hook village where the timber narrows out in the center, hence called by the Gros Ventre *Wi-da-ci-ki-bis* or "Timber-narrows out." East of Elbowood rises a hill called "Looks-like-a-Lodge" which acts as a break-wind in a severe storm. Here the people attacked the Sioux, chased them to the river and slaughtered them, swimming after and butchering them in the river.



1851

During this winter a Sioux Indian named Packs Eagle came to Fish-hook village to make a treaty.

In the summer the president called a conference at Fort Laramie. Boundary lines of several tribes were established, including those of the Gros Ventre who acted also as spokesmen for the Mandan. Four Bears was the Gros Ventre who acted as spokesman, Flying Eagle was the Mandan representative. This treaty had for its purpose the establishing of peace among the Indians.

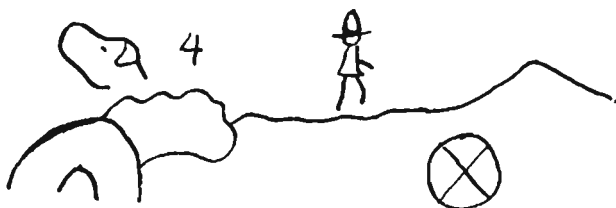


When the lines were fixed the United States government by executive order took away from the Indians approximately 11,000,000 acres of land without any compensation. The Mandan and Gros Ventre are suing the government today for these 11,000,000 acres.<sup>148</sup>



1852

When Four Bears came back, dwellings had been made in the timber west of Fish-hook Village and these were so old and mouldy that they stunk, hence the winter-camp was known as Village-that-stinks.



1853

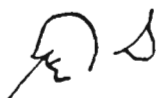
The following winter they were going to camp again in this timber but they found that when the river rose it had left a thick sediment in the lodges and the people had to rake it out with hoes before occupying their dwellings. So the place was known this second time as "Digging-the-mud-out camp."



1854

Again wintered in the same place. The man who appointed the camp was called Snod (nose-phlegm) or Edge-of-a-rock. He

told the people to look around for a buffalo horn to use in the ceremonial that he performed for the welfare of the village.



1855

The leader was a man named Raven Pouch. He established winter quarters at Sully's lake. He was a friend of Poor Wolf and chief with him over the Gros Ventre.



1856

Black Shield established another winter camp on Big Bend up here on the Missouri. They called it Wash-out-with-no-road, *A-wa-noksoki-a-ri-neshash* (ground-chop-open-road-no) because it was impossible to cut a road.



1857

Another winter village established at the Blue Buttes near the river. This village is known as Concave-back village because a Sioux horse thief who came one moonlight night to steal horses was killed and dragged to the outskirts of the village and laid on his back over a log where he froze so stiff that when in the morning they laid him on his stomach his feet and head stuck in the air. They had measles or chicken pox that winter.




1858

A man by the name of Wears-berries-around-his-neck established winter quarters. Five Sioux were killed that winter.

The next summer, right across from Fish-hook village, nine Santee Indians were killed.



man 5 



9 man 

1859

The following winter a man named Red Pail established winter quarters in the timber across from Independence.

In the summer, Arikaree Indians and some Mandan were attacked by the Sioux near where Dickinson is now. A fierce battle they say.

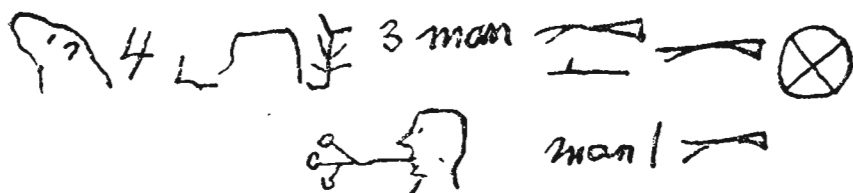


1860

The following winter Four Bears established winter quarters in the same spot. During that winter a Frenchman by the name of Pierre Garou, called "Rock" by the Indians, had three sons killed by the Sioux on a buffalo hunt. A Mandan by the name of Tobacco was also killed.



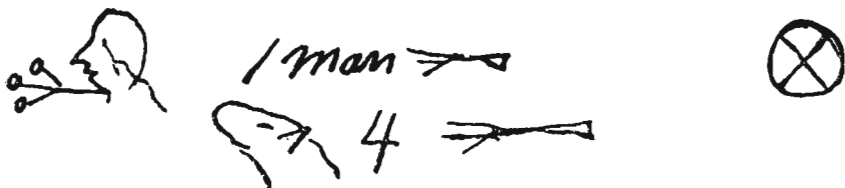
Following summer a Gros Ventre named Cherries-in-the-mouth went on the war-path and came back minus one warrior.



1861

Berries-around-neck made winter camp and killed a Sioux who was snow blind.

During the summer Four Bears was killed (the lad who brought in the table for our use was his grandson).



1862

Following winter Berries-around-neck established the winter camp. Three Sioux were killed.

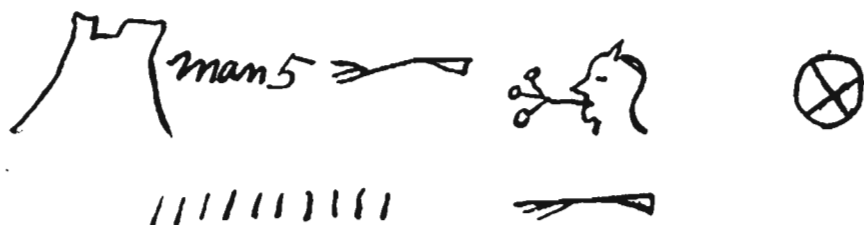
The following summer four Sioux were killed. One was a chief and wore buffalo teeth about his neck as a necklace, so they called him Buffalo Teeth.



1863

The winter camp was established by Cherries-in-the-mouth in the timber where the round dance hall stands today this way from Elbowood. Up in Saddle butte they killed five Sioux.

The next summer as the Santee Indians were coming to Fort Berthold they got into a fight with the three tribes and a good many of the Santee were killed.



1864

A winter camp known as Looks-like-lodge was established for three successive winters. The first winter a Gros Ventre by the name of Picket was killed. No real chiefs appointed, hence no change in the camp.

1865

The second winter a man named Bob-tailed-bull went on a war party and killed two Sioux women. Right after the first winter camp the battle took place at Kildeer with the white soldiers.

In the summer of this second year old Wolf Chief and another man killed a Sioux one of whose feet was half gone.

1866

During the third camp there was a period of great starvation known as *Ma-a-ri-ti-ma-tü* because food was scarce.

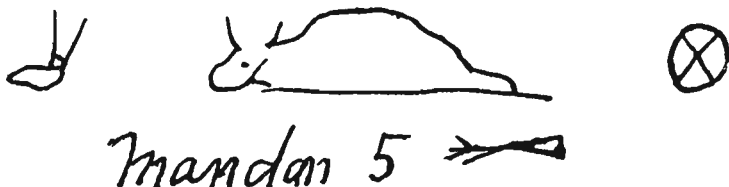
The following summer four white men came from Washington and held a council.



1867

The following winter a man named Slim Ankle, father of Wolf Chief, established winter quarters on a range of hills that looked like the hump of a buffalo.

That summer up in Mouse river country (Minot region) five Mandan were killed, one, Foolish Woman's uncle. (Eight years later Custer was killed.)



1868

The following winter antelope were plentiful.

That summer Foolish Woman was born in Fish-hook village.



1869

The following winter Wolf-sleeps-long was killed by a white man. This was my first winter. (That is, the year in which Foolish Woman was born).



1870

The second winter they camped at Sharp-pointed Cedar and a Mandan named His-horn-knocked-off was killed. That same



winter a band of Crow Indians, thirty of them, were going down to Sioux country. They climbed a butte, built a defense, and all thirty were killed.



145 The pictographs were copied from Foolish Woman's notebook, where they served him as a record of past events. The circle and cross is the symbol for the camp. After I had copied a few pages myself Foolish Woman made the rest of the copies for me. The tracings for reproduction were made by Louise Taylor, Vassar, '36. The description of each picture was taken down from oral information, as well as the date for each camp described. Occasionally the dates do not seem accurate.

See Months and Seasons of the Arikara Calendar, by Melvin R. Gilmore. Indian Notes vol. 6 (1929): 246-250.

146 Just before my last visit to Fort Berthold in 1932, the suit was decided in favor of the Indians and the government made a large payment in full compensation.