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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION--BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY

J.W. POWELL DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF MORTUARY CUSTOMS AMONG THE NORTH AMERICAN

INDIANS

BY DR. H. C. YARROW ACT ASST SU G USA

WASHINGTON GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1880

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY

\_Washington D. C. July 8, 1880\_

This little volume is the third of a series designed to promote

anthropologic researches among the North American Indians. The first

was prepared by myself and entitled "Introduction to the Study of

Indian Languages," the second by Col. Garrick Mallery entitled

Introduction to the Study of Sign Language among the North American

Indians.

The following are in course of preparation and will soon appear.

Introduction to the Study of Medicine Practices among the North

American Indians

Introduction to the Study of Mythology among the North American

Indians

Introduction to the Study of Sociology among the North American

Indians

The mortuary customs of savage or barbaric people have a deep

significance from the fact that in them are revealed much of the

philosophy of the people by whom they are practiced. Early beliefs

concerning the nature of human existence in life and after death and

the relations of the living to the dead are recorded in these customs.

The mystery concerning the future love for the departed who were loved

while here, reverence for the wise and good who may after death be

wiser and better, hatred and fear of those who were enemies here and

may have added powers of enmity in the hereafter--all these and like

considerations have led in every tribe to a body of customs of

exceeding interest as revealing the opinions, the philosophy of the

people themselves.

In these customs, also are recorded evidences of the social condition

of the people, the affection in which friends and kindred are held,

the very beginnings of altruism in primitive life.

In like manner these customs constitute a record of the moral

condition of the people, as in many ways they exhibit the ethic

standards by which conduct in human life is judged. For such reasons

the study of mortuary customs is of profound interest to the

anthropologist.

It is hoped that by this method of research the observations of many

men may be brought together and placed on permanent record, and that

the body of material may be sufficient, by a careful comparative

study, to warrant some general discussion concerning the philosophy of

this department of human conduct.

General conclusions can be reached with safety only after materials

from many sources have been obtained. It will not be safe for the

collector to speculate much upon that which he observes. His own

theory or explanation of customs will be of little worth, but the

theory and explanation given by the Indians will be of the greatest

value. What do the Indians do, and say, and believe? When these are

before us it matters little whether our generalizations be true or

false. Wiser men may come and use the facts to a truer purpose. It is

proposed to make a purely objective study of the Indians, and, as far

as possible, to leave the record unmarred by vain subjective

speculations.

The student who is pursuing his researches in this field should

carefully note all of the customs, superstitions, and opinions of the

Indians relating to--

1. The care of the lifeless body prior to burial, much of which he

will find elaborated into sacred ceremonies.

2. The method of burial, including the site of burial, the attitude in

which the body is placed, and the manner in which it is investured.

Here, also, he will find interesting and curious ceremonial

observances. The superstitions and opinions of the people relating to

these subjects are of importance.

3. The gifts offered to the dead; not only those placed with the body

at the time of burial, but those offered at a subsequent time for the

benefaction of the departed on his way to the other world, and for his

use on arrival. Here, too, it is as important for us to know the

ceremonies with which the gifts are made as to know the character of

the gifts themselves.

4. An interesting branch of this research relates to the customs of

mourning, embracing the time of mourning, the habiliments, the self-

mutilations, and other penances, and the ceremonies with which these

are accompanied. In all of these cases the reason assigned by the

Indians for their doings, their superstitions, and explanations are of

prime importance.

5. It is desirable to obtain from the Indians their explanation of

human life, their theory of spirits and of the life to come.

A complete account of these customs in any tribe will necessitate the

witnessing of many funeral rites, as the custom will differ at the

death of different persons, depending upon age, sex, and social

standing. To obtain their explanations and superstitions, it will be

necessary to interrogate the Indians themselves. This is not an easy

task, for the Indians do not talk with freedom about their dead. The

awe with which they are inspired, their reverence and love for the

departed, and their fear that knowledge which may be communicated may

be used to the injury of those whom they have loved, or of themselves,

lead them to excessive reticence on these subjects. Their feelings

should not be rudely wounded. The better and more thoughtful members

of the tribe will at last converse freely on these subjects with those

in whom they have learned to place confidence. The stories of ignorant

white men and camp attaches should be wholly discarded, and all

accounts should be composed of things actually observed, and of

relations made by Indians of probity.

This preliminary volume by Dr. H. C Yarrow has been the subject of

careful research and of much observation, and will serve in many ways

as a hint to the student. The literature of the subject is vast, but

to a large extent worthless, from the fact that writers have been

hasty travelers or subjective speculators on the matter. It is strange

how much of accepted history must be rejected when the statements are

carefully criticised and compared with known facts. It has frequently

been stated of this or that tribe that mutilations, as the cutting off

of fingers and toes, of ears and nose, the pulling out of teeth, &c.,

are extensively practiced as a mode of mourning find wild scenes of

maiming and bloodshed are depicted as following upon the death of a

beloved chief or great man yet among these tribes maimed persons are

rarely found It is probable that there is some basis of fact for the

statement that mutilations are in rare instances practiced among some

tribes. But even this qualified statement needs absolute proof.

I am pleased to assure those who will take part in this work by

earnest and faithful research that Dr Yarrow will treat them

generously by giving them full credit for their work in his final

publication.

I must not fail to present my thanks to the Surgeon General of the

United States Army and his corps of officers for the interest and

assistance they have rendered.

J W POWELL

WASHINGTON, D C, \_April\_ 5, 1880

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to offer for your consideration the

following paper upon the Mortuary Customs of the North American

Indians, and trust it may meet with your approval as an introduction

to the study of a subject which, while it has been alluded to by most

authors, has received little or no systematic treatment. For this and

other reasons I was induced some three years since to commence an

examination and collection of data relative to the matter, and the

present paper is the outcome of that effort. From the vast amount of

material in the Bureau of Ethnology, even at the present time, a large

volume might be prepared, but it was thought wiser to endeavor to

obtain a still greater array of facts, especially from living

observers. If the desired end is attained I shall not count as lost

the labor which has been bestowed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H C. YARROW.

Maj. J. W. POWELL,

\_In charge of Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution\_

\_The wisest of beings tells us that it is better to go to the House

of Mourning than to that of laughter. And those who have well consider

d the grounds he bad for thus his judgment will not by the title of

this book (as melancholy as it appears) be affrighted from the

perusing it.

What we read to have been and still to be the custom of some nations

to make sepulchres the repositories of their greatest riches is (I am

sure) universally true in a moral sense however it may be thought in

the literal there being never a grave but what conceals a treasure

though all have not the art to discover it I do not here invite the

covetous miser to disturb the dead who can frame no idea of treasure

distinct from gold and silver but him who knows that wisdom and virtue

are the true and sole riches of man. Is not truth a treasure think

you? Which yet Democritus assures us is buried in a deep pit or grave

and he bad reason for whereas we meet elsewhere with nothing but pain

and deceit we no sooner look down into a grave but truth faceth us and

tells us our own.\_--MURET

INQUIRIES AND SUGGESTIONS

upon the

MORTUARY CUSTOMS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS.

BY H. C. YARROW.

INTRODUCTORY.

The primitive manners and customs of the North American Indians are

rapidly passing away under influences of civilization and other

disturbing elements. In view of this fact, it becomes the duty of all

interested in preserving a record of these customs to labor

assiduously, while there is still time, to collect such data as may be

obtainable. This seems the more important now, as within the last ten

years an almost universal interest has been awakened in ethnologic

research, and the desire for more knowledge in this regard is

constantly increasing. A wise and liberal government, recognizing the

need, has ably seconded the efforts of those engaged in such studies

by liberal grants from the public funds; nor is encouragement wanted

from the hundreds of scientific societies throughout the civilized

globe. The public press, too--the mouth-piece of the people--is ever

on the alert to scatter broadcast such items of ethnologic information

as its corps of well-trained reporters can secure. To induce further

laudable inquiry, and assist all those who may be willing to engage in

the good work, is the object of this preliminary work on the mortuary

customs of North American Indians, and it is hoped that many more

laborers may through it be added to the extensive and honorable list

of those who have already contributed.

It would appear that the subject chosen should awaken great interest,

since the peculiar methods followed by different nations and the great

importance attached to burial ceremonies have formed an almost

invariable part of all works relating to the different peoples of our

globe; in fact no particular portion of ethnologic research has

claimed more attention. In view of these facts, it might seem almost a

work of supererogation to continue a further examination of the

subject, for nearly every author in writing of our Indian tribes makes

some mention of burial observances; but these notices are scattered

far and wide on the sea of this special literature, and many of the

accounts, unless supported by corroborative evidence, may be

considered as entirely unreliable. To bring together and harmonize

conflicting statements, and arrange collectively what is known of the

subject has been the writer's task, and an enormous mass of

information has been acquired, the method of securing which has been

as follows:

In the first instance a circular was prepared, which is here given;

this at the time was thought to embrace all items relating to the

disposal of the dead and attendant ceremonies, although since its

distribution other important questions have arisen which will be

alluded to subsequently.

"WASHINGTON, D. C, \_June\_ 15, 1877.

"To--

"SIR: Being engaged in preparing a memoir upon the 'Burial Customs of

the Indians of North America, both ancient and modern, and the

disposal of their dead,' I beg leave to request your kind co-operation

to enable me to present as exhaustive an exposition of the subject as

possible, and to this end earnestly invite your attention to the

following points in regard to which information is desired:

"1st. Name of the tribe

"2d. Locality.

"3d. Manner of burial, ancient and modern.

"4th. Funeral ceremonies.

"5th. Mourning observances, if any.

"With reference to the first of these inquiries, 'Name of the tribe,'

the Indian name is desired as well as the name by which the tribe is

known to the whites.

"As to 'Locality,' the response should give the range of the tribe,

and be full and geographically accurate.

"As to the 'Manner of burial,' &c, it is important to have every

particular bearing on this branch of the subject, and much minuteness

is desirable.

"For instance:

"(\_a\_) Was the body buried in the ground; if so, in what

position, and how was the grave prepared and finished?

"(\_b\_) If cremated, describe the process, and what disposal was

made of the ashes.

"(\_c\_) Were any utensils, implements, ornaments, &c., or food

placed in the grave? In short, every \_fact\_ is sought that may

possibly add to a general knowledge of the subject.

"Answers to the fourth and fifth queries should give as full and

succinct a description as possible of funereal and other mortuary

ceremonies at the time of death and subsequently, the period of

mourning, manner of its observance, &c.

"In obtaining materials for the purpose in question it is particularly

desirable that well-authenticated sources of information only be drawn

upon, and, therefore, any points gathered from current rumor or mere

hearsay, and upon which there is doubt, should be submitted to

searching scrutiny before being embraced in answers to the several

interrogatories, and nothing should be recorded as a \_fact\_ until

fully established as such.

"In seeking information from Indians, it is well to remember the great

tendency to exaggeration they show, and since absolute facts will

alone serve our purpose, great caution is suggested in this

particular.

"It is earnestly desired to make the work in question as complete as

possible, and therefore it is especially hoped that your response will

cover the ground as pointed out by the several questions as thoroughly

as you may be able and willing to make it.

"In addition to notes, a reference to published papers either by

yourself or others is desirable, as well as the names of those persons

who may be able to furnish the needed information.

"Permit me to assure you that, while it is not offered in the way of

inducement to secure the service asked, since it is barely possible

that you can be otherwise than deeply interested in the extension of

the bounds of knowledge, full credit will be given you in the work for

whatever information you may be pleased to furnish.

"This material will be published under the auspices of Prof. J.W.

Powell, in charge of the U. S Geographical and Geological Survey of

the Rocky Mountain Region.

"Communications may be addressed to me either at the address given

above or at the Army Medical Museum, Washington, D. C.

"Respectfully, yours,

"H. C. YARROW."

This was forwarded to every Indian agent, physicians at agencies, to a

great number of Army officers who had served or were serving at

frontier posts, and to individuals known to be interested in

ethnologic matters. A large number of interesting and valuable

responses were received, many of them showing how customs have changed

either under influences of civilization or altered circumstances of

environment.

Following this, a comprehensive list of books relating to North

American Indians was procured, and each volume subjected to careful

scrutiny, extracts being made from those that appeared in the writer's

judgment reliable. Out of a large number examined up to the present

time, several hundred have been laid under contribution, and the labor

of further collation still continues.

It is proper to add that all the material obtained will eventually be

embodied in a quarto volume, forming one of the series of

contributions to North American Ethnology prepared under the direction

of Maj. J. W. Powell, Director of the Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian

Institution, from whom, since the inception of the work, most constant

encouragement and advice has been received, and to whom all American

ethnologists owe a debt of gratitude which can never be repaid.

Having thus called attention to the work and the methods pursued in

collecting data, the classification of the subject may be given and

examples furnished of the burial ceremonies among different tribes,

calling especial attention to similar or almost analogous customs

among the peoples of the Old World.

For our present purpose the following provisional arrangement of

burials may be adopted:

1st. By INHUMATION in pits, graves, holes in the ground, mounds;

cists, and caves.

2d. By CREMATION, generally on the surface of the earth, occasionally

beneath, the resulting bones or ashes being placed in pits, in the

ground, in boxes placed on scaffolds or trees, in urns, sometimes

scattered.

3d. By EMBALMENT or a process of mummifying, the remains being

afterwards placed in the earth, caves, mounds, or charnel-houses.

4th. By AERIAL SEPULTURE, the bodies being deposited on scaffolds or

trees, in boxes or canoes, the two latter receptacles supported on

scaffolds or posts, or on the ground. Occasionally baskets have been

used to contain the remains of children, these being hung to trees.

5th. By AQUATIC BURIAL, beneath the water, or in canoes, which were

turned adrift.

These heads might, perhaps, be further subdivided, but the above seem

sufficient for all practical needs.

The use of the term \_burial\_ throughout this paper is to be

understood in its literal significance, the word being derived from

the Anglo-Saxon "\_birgan,\_" to conceal or hide away.

In giving descriptions of different burials and attendant ceremonies,

it has been deemed expedient to introduce entire accounts as

furnished, in order to preserve continuity of narrative.

INHUMATION.

The commonest mode of burial among North American Indians has been

that of interment in the ground, and this has taken place in a number

of different ways; the following will, however, serve as good examples

of the process.

"The Mohawks of New York made a large round hole in which the body was

placed upright or upon its haunches, after which it was covered with

timber, to support the earth which they lay over, and thereby kept the

body from being pressed. They then raised the earth in a round hill

over it. They always dressed the corpse in all its finery, and put

wampum and other things into the grave with it; and the relations

suffered not grass nor any weed to grow upon the grave, and frequently

visited it and made lamentation." [Footnote: Hist. Indian Tribes of

the United States, 1853, part 3, p 183.]

This account may be found in Schoolcraft.

In Jones [Footnote: Antiq. of Southern Indians, 1873, pp 108-110] is

the following interesting account from Lawson, of the burial customs

of the Indians formerly inhabiting the Carolinas:

"Among the Carolina tribes, the burial of the dead was accompanied

with special ceremonies, the expense and formality attendant upon the

funeral according with the rank of the deceased. The corpse was first

placed in a cane bundle and deposited in an outhouse made for the

purpose, where it was suffered to remain for a day and a night guarded

and mourned over by the nearest relatives with disheveled hair. Those

who are to officiate at the funeral go into the town, and from the

backs of the first young men they meet strip such blankets and

matchcoats as they deem suitable for their purpose. In these the dead

body is wrapped and then covered with two or three mats made of rushes

or cane. The coffin is made of woven reeds or hollow canes tied fast

at both ends. When everything is prepared for the interment, the

corpse is carried from the house in which it has been lying into the

orchard of peach-trees and is there deposited in another bundle.

Seated upon mats are there congregated the family and tribe of the

deceased and invited guests. The medicine man, or conjurer, having

enjoined silence, then pronounces a funeral oration, during which he

recounts the exploits of the deceased, his valor, skill, love of

country, property, and influence, alludes to the void caused by his

death, and counsels those who remain to supply his place by following

in his footsteps; pictures the happiness he will enjoy in the land of

spirits to which he has gone, and concludes his address by an allusion

to the prominent traditions of his tribe."

Let us here pause to remind the reader that this custom has prevailed

throughout the civilized world up to the present day--a custom, in the

opinion of many, "more honored in the breach than the observance."

"At last [says Mr. Lawson], the corpse is brought away from that

hurdle to the grave by four young men, attended by the relations, the

king, old men, and all the nation. When they come to the sepulchre,

which is about six feet deep and eight feet long, having at each end

(that is, at the head and foot) a light-wood or pitch-pine fork driven

close down the sides of the grave firmly into the ground (these two

forks are to contain a ridgepole, as you shall understand presently),

before they lay the corpse into the grave, they cover the bottom two

or three time over with the bark of trees; then they let down the

corpse (with two belts that the Indians carry their burdens withal)

very leisurely upon the said barks; then they lay over a pole of the

same wood in the two forks, and having a great many pieces of pitch-

pine logs about two foot and a half long, they stick them in the sides

of the grave down each end and near the top, through of where (sic) the

other ends lie in the ridge-pole, so that they are declining like the

roof of a house. These being very thick placed, they cover them many

times double with bark; then they throw the earth thereon that came

out of the grave and beat it down very firm. By this means the dead

body lies in a vault, nothing touching him. After a time the body is

taken up, the bones cleaned, and deposited in an ossuary called the

Quiogozon."

Dr Fordyce Grinnell, physician to the Wichita Agency, Indian

Territory, furnishes the following description of the burial

ceremonies of the Wichita Indians, who call themselves. "\_Kitty-la-

tats\_" or those of the tattooed eyelids.

"When a Wichita dies the town-crier goes up and down through the

village and announces the fact. Preparations are immediately made for

the burial, and the body is taken without delay to the grave prepared

for it reception. If the grave is some distance from the village the

body is carried thither on the back of a pony, being first wrapped in

blankets and then laid prone across the saddle, one walking on either

side to support it. The grave is dug from 3 to 4 feet deep and of

sufficient length for the extended body. First blankets and buffalo

robes are laid in the bottom of the grave, then the body, being taken

from the horse and unwrapped, is dressed in its best apparel and with

ornaments is placed upon a couch of blankets and robes, with the head

towards the west and the feet to the east; the valuables belonging to

the deceased are placed with the body in the grave. With the man are

deposited his bows and arrows or gun, and with the woman her cooking

utensils and other implements of her toil. Over the body sticks are

placed six or eight inches deep and grass over these, so that when the

earth is filled in it need not come in contact with the body or its

trappings. After the grave is filled with earth a pen of poles is

built around it, or, as is frequently the case, stakes are driven so

that they cross each other from either side about midway over the

grave, thus forming a complete protection from the invasion of wild

animals. After all this is done, the grass or other \_debris\_ is

carefully scraped from about the grave for several feet, so that the

ground is left smooth and clean. It is seldom the case that the

relatives accompany the remains to the grave, but they more often

employ others to bury the body for them, usually women. Mourning is

similar in this tribe as in others, and consists in cutting off the

hair, fasting, &c. Horses are also killed at the grave."

The Caddoes, \_Ascena\_, or Timber Indians, as they call

themselves, follow nearly the same mode of burial as the Wichitas, but

one custom prevailing is worthy of mention.

"If a Caddo is killed in battle, the body is never buried, but is left

to be devoured by beasts or birds of prey and the condition of such

individuals in the other world is considered to be far better than

that of persons dying a natural death."

In a work by Bruhier [Footnote: L'incertitude des Signes de la Mort,

1740, tom 1, p. 430] the following remarks, freely translated by the

writer, may be found, which note a custom having great similarity to

the exposure of bodies to wild beasts mentioned above.

"The ancient Persians threw out the bodies of their dead on the roads,

and if they were promptly devoured by wild beasts it was esteemed a

great honor, a misfortune if not. Sometimes they interred, always

wrapping the dead in a wax cloth to prevent odor."

M. Pierre Muret, [Footnote: Rites of Funeral, Ancient and Modern,

1683, p 45] from whose book Bruhier probably obtained his information,

gives at considerable length an account of this peculiar method of

treating the dead among the Persians, as follows:

"It is a matter of astonishment, considering the \_Persians\_ have

ever had the renown of being one of the most civilized Nations in the

world, that notwithstanding they should have used such barbarous

customs about the Dead as are set down in the Writings of some

Historians, and the rather because at this day there are still to be

seen among them those remains of Antiquity, which do fully satisfie

us, that their Tombs have been very magnificent. And yet nevertheless,

if we will give credit to \_Procopius\_ and \_Agathias\_, the

\_Persians\_ were never wont to bury their Dead Bodies, so far were

they from bestowing any Funeral Honours upon them. But, as these

Authors tell us, they exposed them stark naked in the open fields,

which is the greatest shame our Laws do allot to the most infamous

Criminals, by laying them open to the view of all upon the highways:

Yea, in their opinion it was a great unhappiness, if either Birds or

Beasts did not devour their Carcases; and they commonly made an

estimate of the Felicity of these poor Bodies, according as they were

sooner or later made a prey of. Concerning these, they resolved that

they must needs have been very bad indeed, since even the beasts

themselves would not touch them; which caused an extream sorrow to

their Relations, they taking it for an ill boding to their Family, and

an infallible presage of some great misfortune hanging over their

heads, for they persuaded themselves, that the Souls which inhabited

those Bodies being dragg'd into Hell, would not fail to come and

trouble them, and that being always accompanied with the Devils, their

Tormentors, they would certainly give them a great deal of disturbance.

"And on the contrary, when these Corpses were presently devoured,

their joy was very great, they enlarged themselves in praises of the

Deceased; every one esteeming them undoubtedly happy, and came to

congratulate their relations on that account: For as they believed

assuredly, that they were entered into the \_Elysian\_ Fields, so

they were persuaded, that they would procure the same bliss for all

those of their family.

"They also took a great delight to see Skeletons and Bones scatered up

and down in the fields, whereas we can scarcely endure to see those of

Horses and Dogs used so. And these remains of Humane Bodies, (the

sight whereof gives us so much, horror, that we presently bury them

out of our sight, whenever we find them elsewhere than in Charnel-

houses or Church yards) were the occasion of their greatest joy

because they concluded from thence the happiness of those that had

been devoured wishing after then Death to meet with the like good

luck."

The same author states and Bruhier corroborates the assertion that the

Parthians, Medes, Iberians, Caspians, and a few others had such a

horror and aversion of the corruption and decomposition of the dead

and of their being eaten by worms that they threw out the bodies into

the open fields to be devoured by wild beasts, a part of their belief

being that persons so devoured would not be entirely extinct, but

enjoy at least a partial sort of life in their living sepulchres. It

is quite probable that for these and other reasons the Bactrians and

Hircanians trained dogs for this special purpose called \_Canes

sepulchrales\_ which received the greatest care and attention, for

it was deemed proper that the souls of the deceased should have strong

and lusty frames to dwell in.

George Gibbs [Footnote: Schoolcraft's Hist. Indian Tribes of the

United States Pt. 3, 1853, p. 140] gives the following account of

burial among the Klamath and Trinity Indians of the Northwest coast.

The graves which are in the immediate vicinity of their houses exhibit

very considerable taste and a laudable care. The dead are inclosed in

rude coffins formed by placing four boards around the body and covered

with earth to some depth; a heavy plank often supported by upright

head and foot stones is laid upon the top or stones are built up into

a wall about a foot above the ground and the top flagged with others.

The graves of the chiefs are surrounded by neat wooden palings, each

pale ornamented with a feather from the tail of the bald eagle.

Baskets are usually staked down by the side according to the wealth or

popularity of the individual and sometimes other articles for ornament

or use are suspended over them. The funeral ceremonies occupy three

days during which the soul of the deceased is in danger from \_O-mah-

u\_ or the devil. To preserve it from this peril a fire is kept up

at the grave and the friends of the deceased howl around it to scare

away the demon. Should they not be successful in this the soul is

carried down the river, subject, however, to redemption by \_Peh-ho

wan\_ on payment of a big knife. After the expiration of three days

it is all well with them.

The question may well be asked, is the big knife a "sop to Cerberus"?

Capt. F. E. Grossman, [Footnote: Rep. Smithson. Inst., 1871, p. 414]

USA, furnishes the following account of burial among the Pimas of

Arizona:

"The Pimas tie the bodies of their dead with ropes, passing the latter

around the neck and under the knees and then drawing them tight until

the body is doubled up and forced into a sitting position. They dig

the grave from four to five feet deep and perfectly round (about two

feet in diameter), then hollow out to one side of the bottom of this

grave a sort of vault large enough to contain the body. Here the body

is deposited, the grave is filled up level with the ground, and poles,

trees, or pieces of timber placed upon the grave to protect the

remains from the coyotes (a species of wolf). Burials usually take

place at night, without much ceremony. The mourners chant during the

burial, but signs of grief are rare. The bodies of their dead are

buried, if possible, immediately after death has taken place, and the

graves are generally prepared before the patients die. Sometimes sick

persons (for whom the graves had already been dug) recovered; in such

cases the graves are left open until the persons for whom they were

intended die. Open graves of this kind can be seen in several of their

burial-grounds. Places of burial are selected some distance from the

village, and, if possible, in a grove of mesquite bushes. Immediately

after the remains have been buried, the house and personal effects of

the deceased are burned, and his horses and cattle killed, the meat

being cooked as a repast for the mourners. The nearest relatives of

the deceased, as a sign of their sorrow, remain in the village for

weeks and sometimes months; the men cut off about six inches of their

long hair, while the women cut their hair quite short"

The Coyotero Apaches, according to Dr. W. J. Hoffman, [Footnote: U.S.

Geol. Surv. of Terr. for 1876, p. 473] in disposing of their dead,

seem to be actuated by the desire to spare themselves any needless

trouble, and prepare the defunct and the grave in this manner.

"The Coyoteros, upon the death of a member of the tribe, partially

wrap up the corpse and deposit it into the cavity left by the removal

of a small rock or the stump of a tree. After the body has been

crammed into the smallest possible space the rock or stump is again

rolled into its former position, when a number of stones are placed

around the base to keep out the coyotes. The nearest of kin usually

mourn for the period of one month, during that time giving utterance

at intervals to the most dismal lamentations, which are apparently

sincere. During the day this obligation is frequently neglected or

forgotten, but when the mourner is reminded of his duty he renews his

howling with evident interest. This custom of mourning for the period

of thirty days corresponds to that formerly observed by the Natchez."

Somewhat similar to this rude mode of sepulture is that described in

the life of Moses Van Campen, which relates to the Indians formerly

inhabiting Pennsylvania:

"Directly after the Indians proceeded to bury those who had fallen in

battle, which they did by rolling an old log from its place and laying

the body in the hollow thus made, and then heaping upon it a little

earth"

As a somewhat curious, if not exceptional, interment, the following

account, relating to the Indians of New York is furnished, by Mr.

Franklin B. Hough, who has extracted it from an unpublished journal of

the agents of a French company kept in 1794:

"Saw Indian graves on the plateau of Independence Rock. The Indians

plant a stake on the right side of the head of the deceased and bury

them in a bark canoe. Their children come every year to bring

provisions to the place where their fathers are buried. One of the

graves had fallen in and we observed in the soil some sticks for

stretching skins, the remains of a canoe, &c., and the two straps for

carrying it, and near the place where the head lay were the traces of

a fire which they had kindled for the soul of the deceased to come and

warm itself by and to partake of the food deposited near it.

"These were probably the Massasauga Indians, then inhabiting the north

shore of Lake Ontario, but who were rather intruders here, the country

being claimed by the Oneidas."

It is not to be denied that the use of canoes for coffins has

occasionally been remarked, for the writer in 1875 removed from the

graves at Santa Barbara an entire skeleton which was discovered in a

redwood canoe, but it is thought that the individual may have been a

noted fisherman, particularly as the implements of his vocation--nets,

fish-spears, &c.--were near him, and this burial was only an

exemplification of the well-rooted belief common to all Indians, that

the spirit in the next world makes use of the same articles as were

employed in this one. It should be added that of the many hundreds of

skeletons uncovered at Santa Barbara the one mentioned presented the

only example of the kind.

Among the Indians of the Mosquito coast, in Central America, canoe

burial in the ground, according to Bancroft [Footnote: Native Races of

Pacific States, 1874, vol. 1, p 744.], was common, and is thus

described:

"The corpse is wrapped in cloth and placed in one-half of a pitpan

which has been cut in two. Friends assemble for the funeral and drown

their grief in \_mushla\_, the women giving vent to their sorrow by

dashing themselves on the ground until covered with blood, and

inflicting other tortures, occasionally even committing suicide. As it

is supposed that the evil spirit seeks to obtain possession of the

body, musicians are called in to lull it to sleep while preparations

are made for its removal. All at once four naked men, who have

disguised themselves with paint so as not to be recognized and

punished by \_Wulasha\_, rush out from a neighboring hut, and,

seizing a rope attached to the canoe, drag it into the woods, followed

by the music and the crowd. Here the pitpan is lowered into the grave

with bow, arrow, spear, paddle, and other implements to serve the

departed in the land beyond, then the other half of the boat is placed

over the body. A rude hut is constructed over the grave, serving as a

receptacle for the choice food, drink, and other articles placed there

from time to time by relatives."

BURIAL IN CABINS, WIGWAMS, OR HOUSES.

While there is a certain degree of similitude between the above-noted

methods and the one to be mentioned subsequently--\_lodge\_ burial--

they differ, inasmuch as the latter are examples of surface or aerial

burial, and must consequently fall under another caption. The

narratives which are now to be given afford a clear idea of the former

kind of burial.

Bartram [Footnote: Bartram's Travels, 1791, pp. 515.] relates the

following regarding the Muscogulges of the Carolinas:

"The Muscogulges bury their deceased in the earth; they dig a four-

foot, square, deep pit under the cabin, or couch which the deceased

laid on in his house, lining the grave with cypress bark, when they

place the corpse in a sitting posture, as if it were alive, depositing

with him his gun, tomahawk, pipe, and such other matters as he had the

greatest value for in his lifetime. His eldest wife, or the queen

dowager, has the second choice of his possessions, and the remaining

effects are divided among his other wives and children."

According to Bernard Roman, the "funeral customs of the Chickasaws did

not differ materially from those of the Muscogulges. They interred the

dead as soon as the breath left the body, and beneath the couch in

which the deceased expired."

The Navajos of New Mexico and Arizona, a tribe living a considerable

distance from the Chickasaws, follow somewhat similar customs, as

related by Dr. John Menard, formerly a physician to their agency.

"The Navajo custom is to leave the body where it dies, closing up the

house or hogan or covering the body with stones or brush. In case the

body is removed, it is taken to a cleft in the rocks and thrown in,

and stones piled over. The person touching or carrying the body, first

takes off all his clothes and afterwards washes his body with water

before putting them on or mingling with the living. When a body is

removed from a house or hogan, the hogan is burned down, and the place

in every case abandoned, as the belief is that the devil comes to the

place of death and remains where a dead body is. Wild animals

frequently (indeed, generally) get the bodies, and it is a very easy

matter to pick up skulls and bones around old camping grounds, or

where the dead are laid. In case it is not desirable to abandon a

place, the sick person is left out in some lone spot protected by

brush, where they are either abandoned to their fate or food brought

to them until they die. This is done only when all hope is gone. I

have found bodies thus left so well inclosed with brush that wild

animals were unable to get at them; and one so left to die was revived

by a cup of coffee from our house and is still living and well."

Mr. J. L. Burchard, agent to the Round Valley Indians of California,

furnishes an account of burial somewhat resembling that of the

Navajos:

"When I first came here the Indians would dig a round hole in the

ground, draw up the knees of the deceased Indian, and wrap the body

into as small a bulk as possible in blankets, tie them firmly with

cords, place them in the grave, throw in beads, baskets, clothing,

everything owned by the deceased, and often donating much extra; all

gathered around the grave wailing most pitifully, tearing their faces

with their nails till the blood would run down their cheeks, pull out

their hair, and such other heathenish conduct. These burials were

generally made under their thatch houses or very near thereto. The

house where one died was always torn down, removed, rebuilt, or

abandoned. The wailing, talks, &c., were in their own jargon; none

else could understand, and they seemingly knew but little of its

meaning (if there was any meaning in it); it simply seemed to be the

promptings of grief, without sufficient intelligence to direct any

ceremony; each seemed to act out his own impulse"

STONE GRAVES OR CISTS.

These are of considerable interest, not only from their somewhat rare

occurrence, except in certain localities, but from the manifest care

taken by the survivors to provide for the dead what they considered a

suitable resting-place. A number of cists have been found in

Tennessee, and are thus described by Moses Fiske: [Footnote: Trans.

Amer. Antiq. Soc., 1820 vol. 1, p. 302]

"There are many burying grounds in West Tennessee with regular graves.

They dug them 12 or 18 inches deep, placed slabs at the bottom ends

and sides, forming a kind of stone coffin, and, after laying in the

body, covered it over with earth."

It may be added that, in 1873, the writer assisted at the opening of a

number of graves of men of the reindeer period, near Solutre, in

France, and they were almost identical in construction with those

described by Mr. Fiske, with the exception that the latter were

deeper; this, however, may be accounted for if it is considered how

great a deposition of earth may have taken place during the many

centuries which have elapsed since the burial. Many of the graves

explored by the writer in 1875, at Santa Barbara, resembled somewhat

cist graves, the bottom and sides of the pit being lined with large

flat stones, but there were none directly over the skeletons.

The next account is by Maj. J. W. Powell, the result of his

observation in Tennessee. "These ancient cemeteries are exceedingly

abundant throughout the State, often hundreds of graves may be found

on a single hillside. In some places the graves are scattered and in

others collected in mounds, each mound being composed of a large

number of cist graves. It is evident that the mounds were not

constructed at one time, but the whole collection of graves therein

was made during long periods by the addition of a new grave from time

to time. In the first burials found at the bottom and near the center

of a mound a tendency to a concentric system, with the feet inward, is

observed, and additions are made around and above these first

concentric graves, as the mound increases in size the burials become

more and more irregular:

"Some other peculiarities are of interest. A larger number of

interments exhibit the fact that the bodies were placed there before

the decay of the flesh, while in other cases collections of bones are

buried. Sometimes these bones were placed in some order about the

crania, and sometimes in irregular piles, as if the collection of

bones had been emptied from a sack. With men, pipes, stone hammers,

knives, arrowheads, &c., were usually found; with women, pottery, rude

beads, shells, &c.; with children, toys of pottery, beads, curious

pebbles, &c.

"Sometimes, in the subsequent burials, the side slab of a previous

burial was used as a portion of the second cist. All of the cists were

covered with slabs."

Dr. Jones has given an exceedingly interesting account of the stone

graves of Tennessee, in his volume published by the Smithsonian

Institution, to which valuable work [Footnote: Antiquities of

Tennessee, Cont. to Knowledge, Smith. Inst., 1876, No. 259, 4 deg., pp. 1,

8, 37, 52, 55, 82.] the reader is referred for a more detailed account

of this mode of burial.

BURIAL IN MOUNDS.

In view of the fact that the subject of mound-burial is so extensive,

and that in all probability a volume by a member of the Bureau of

Ethnology may shortly be published, it is not deemed advisable to

devote any considerable space to it in this paper, but a few

interesting examples may be noted to serve as indications to future

observers.

The first to which attention is directed is interesting as resembling

cist-burial combined with deposition in mounds. The communication is

from Prof. F. W. Putnam, curator of the Peabody Museum of Archaology,

Cambridge, made to the Boston Society of Natural History, and is

published in volume XX of its proceedings, October 15, 1878:

"...He then stated that it would be of interest to the members, in

connection with the discovery of dolmens in Japan, as described by

Professor Morse, to know that within twenty-four hours there had been

received at the Peabody Museum a small collection of articles taken

from rude dolmens (or chambered barrows, as they would be called in

England), recently opened by Mr. E. Curtiss, who is now engaged, under

his direction, in exploration for the Peabody Museum.

"These chambered mounds are situated in the eastern part of Clay

County, Missouri, and form a large group on both sides of the Missouri

River. The chambers are, in the three opened by Mr. Curtiss, about 8

feet square, and from 4-1/2 to 5 feet high, each chamber having a

passage-way several feet in length and 2 in width leading from the

southern side and opening on the edge of the mound formed by covering

the chamber and passage-way with earth. The walls of the chambered

passages were about 2 feet thick, vertical, and well made of stones,

which were evenly laid without clay or mortar of any kind. The top of

one of the chambers had a covering of large, flat rocks, but the

others seem to have been closed over with wood. The chambers were

filled with clay which had been burnt, and appeared as if it had

fallen in from above. The inside walls of the chambers also showed

signs of fire. Under the burnt clay, in each chamber, were found the

remains of several human skeletons, all of which had been burnt to

such an extent as to leave but small fragments of the bones, which

were mixed with the ashes and charcoal. Mr. Curtiss thought that in

one chamber he found the remains of 5 skeletons and in another 13.

With these skeletons there were a few flint implements and minute

fragments of vessels of clay.

"A large mound near the chambered mounds was also opened, but in this

no chambers were found. Neither had the bodies been burnt. This mound

proved remarkably rich in large flint implements, and also contained

well-made pottery and a peculiar "gorget" of red stone. The connection

of the people who placed the ashes of their dead in the stone chambers

with those who buried their dead in the earth mounds is, of course,

yet to be determined."

It is quite possible, indeed probable, that these chambers were used

for secondary burials, the bodies having first been cremated.

In the volume of the proceedings already quoted the same investigator

gives an account of other chambered mounds which are, like the

preceding, very interesting, the more so as adults only were inhumed

therein, children having been buried beneath the dwelling-floors:

"Mr. F. W. Putnam occupied the rest of the evening with an account of

his explorations of the ancient mounds and burial places in the

Cumberland Valley, Tennessee.

"The excavations had been carried on by himself, assisted by Mr. Edwin

Curtiss, for over two years, for the benefit of the Peabody Museum at

Cambridge. During this time many mounds of various kinds had been

thoroughly explored, and several thousand of the singular stone graves

of the mound builders of Tennessee had been carefully opened.... Mr.

Putnam's remarks were illustrated by drawings of several hundred

objects obtained from the graves and mounds, particularly to show the

great variety of articles of pottery and several large and many unique

forms of implements of chipped flint. He also exhibited and explained

in detail a map of a walled town of this old nation. This town was

situated on the Lindsley estate, in a bend of Spring Creek. The earth

embankment, with its accompanying ditch, encircled an area of about 12

acres. Within this inclosure there was one large mound with a flat

top, 15 feet high, 130 feet long, and 90 feet wide, which was found

not to be a burial mound. Another mound near the large one, about 50

feet in diameter, and only a few feet high, contained 60 human

skeletons, each in a carefully-made stone grave, the graves being

arranged in two rows, forming the four sides of a square, and in three

layers.... The most important discovery lie made within the inclosure

was that of finding the remains of the houses of the people who lived

in this old town. Of them about 70 were traced out and located on the

map by Professor Buchanan, of Lebanon, who made the survey for Mr.

Putnam. Under the floors of hard clay, which was in places much burnt,

Mr. Putnam found the graves of children. As only the bodies of adults

had been placed in the one mound devoted to burial, and as nearly

every site of a house he explored had from one to four graves of

children under the clay floor, he was convinced that it was a regular

custom to bury the children in that way. He also found that the

children had been undoubtedly treated with affection, as in their

small graves were found many of the best pieces of pottery he

obtained, and also quantities of shell-beads, several large pearls,

and many other objects which were probably the playthings of the

little ones while living." [Footnote: A detailed account of this

exploration, with many illustrations, will be found in the Eleventh

Annual Report of the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, 1878.]

This cist mode of burial is by no means uncommon in Tennessee, as they

are frequently mentioned by writers on North American archaeology.

The examples which follow are specially characteristic, some of them

serving to add strength to the theory that mounds were for the most

part used for secondary burial, although intrusions were doubtless

common.

Of the burial mounds of Ohio, Caleb Atwater [Footnote: Trans. Amer.

Antiq. Soc., 1820, i, p. 174 et seq.] gives this description.

"Near the center of the round fort ... was a tumulus of earth about 10

feet in height and several rods in diameter at its base. On its

eastern side, and extending six rods from it, was a semicircular

pavement composed of pebbles such as are now found in the bed of the

Scioto River, from whence they appear to have been brought. The summit

of this tumulus was nearly 30 feet in diameter, and there was a raised

way to it, leading from the east, like a modern turnpike. The summit

was level. The outline of the semicircular pavement and the walk is

still discernible. The earth composing this mound was entirely removed

several years since. The writer was present at its removal and

carefully examined the contents. It contained--

"1st. Two human skeletons lying on what had been the original surface

of the earth.

"2d. A great quantity of arrow-heads, some of which were so large as

to induce a belief that they were used as spear-heads.

"3d. The handle either of a small sword or a large knife, made of an

elk's horn. Around the end where the blade had been inserted was a

ferule of silver, which, though black, was not much injured by time.

Though the handle showed the hole where the blade had been inserted,

yet no iron was found, but an oxyde remained of similar shape and

size.

"4th. Charcoal and wood ashes on which these articles lay, which were

surrounded by several bricks very well burnt. The skeleton appeared to

have been burned in a large and very hot fire, which had almost

consumed the bones of the deceased. This skeleton was deposited a

little to the south of the center of the tumulus; and about 20 feet to

the north of it was another, with which were--

"5th. A large mirrour about 3 feet in breadth and 1-1/2 inches in

thickness This mirrour was of isinglass (\_mica membranacea\_), and

on it--

"6th. A plate of iron which had become an oxyde, but before it was

disturbed by the spade resembled a plate of cast iron. The mirrour

answered the purpose very well for which it was intended. This

skeleton had also been burned like the former, and lay on charcoal and

a considerable quantity of wood ashes. A part of the mirrour is in my

possession, as well as a piece of brick taken from the spot at the

time. The knife or sword handle was sent to Mr. Peal's Museum at

Philadelphia.

"To the southwest of this tumulus, about 40 rods from it, is another,

more than 90 feet in height, which is shown on the plate representing

these works. It stands on a large hill, which appears to be

artificial. This must have been the common cemetery, as it contains an

immense number of human skeletons of all sizes and ages. The skeletons

are laid horizontally, with their heads generally towards the center

and the feet towards the outside of the tumulus. A considerable part

of this work still stands uninjured, except by time. In it have been

found, besides these skeletons, stone axes and knives and several

ornaments, with holes through them, by means of which, with a cord

passing through these perforations they could be worn by their owners.

On the south side of this tumulus, and not far from it, was a

semicircular fosse, which, when I first saw it, was 6 feet deep. On

opening it was discovered at the bottom a great quantity of human

bones, which I am inclined to believe were the remains of those who

had been slain in some great and destructive battle first, because

they belonged to persons who had attained their full size, whereas in

the mound adjoining were found the skeletons of persons of all ages,

and, secondly, they were here in the utmost confusion, as if buried in

a hurry. May we not conjecture that they belonged to the people who

resided in the town, and who were victorious in the engagement?

Otherwise they would not have been thus honorably buried in the common

cemetery."

CHILLICOTHE MOUND.

"Its perpendicular height was about 15 feet, and the diameter of its

base about 60 feet. It was composed of sand and contained human bones

belonging to skeletons which were buried in different parts of it. It

was not until this pile of earth was removed and the original surface

exposed to view that a probable conjecture of its original design

could be formed. About 20 feet square of the surface had been leveled

and covered with bark. On the center of this lay a human skeleton,

over which had been spread a mat manufactured either from weeds or

bark. On the breast lay what had been a piece of copper, in the form

of a cross, which had now become verdigrise. On the breast also lay a

stone ornament with two perforations, one near each end, through which

passed a string, by means of which it was suspended around the

wearer's neck. On this string, which was made of sinews, and very much

injured by time, were placed a great many heads made of ivory or bone,

for I cannot certainly say which...."

MOUNDS OF STONE.

"Two such mounds have been described already in the county of Perry.

Others have been found in various parts of the country. There is one

at least in the vicinity of Licking River, not many miles from Newark.

There is another on a branch of Hargus's Creek, a few miles to the

northeast of Circleville. There were several not very far from the

town of Chillicothe. If these mounds were sometimes used as cemeteries

of distinguished persons, they were also used as monuments with a view

of perpetuating the recollection of some great transaction or event.

In the former not more generally than one or two skeletons are found;

in the latter none. These mounds are like those of earth, in form of a

cone, composed of small stones on which no marks of tools were

visible. In them some of the most interesting articles are found, such

as urns, ornaments of copper, heads of spears, &c., of the same metal,

as well as medals of copper and pickaxes of horneblende; ... works of

this class, compared with those of earth, are few, and they are none

of them as large as the mounds at Grave Creek, in the town of

Circleville, which belong to the first class. I saw one of these stone

tumuli which had been piled on the surface of the earth on the spot

where three skeletons had been buried in stone coffins, beneath the

surface. It was situated on the western edge of the hill on which the

"walled town" stood, on Paint Creek. The graves appear to have been

dug to about the depth of ours in the present times. After the bottom

and sides were lined with thin flat stones, the corpses were placed in

these graves in an eastern and western direction, and large flat

stones were laid over the graves; then the earth which had been dug

out of the graves was thrown over them. A huge pile of stones was

placed over the whole. It is quite probable, however, that this was a

work of our present race of Indians. Such graves are more common in

Kentucky than Ohio. No article, except the skeletons, was found in

these graves; and the skeletons resembled very much the present race

of Indians."

The mounds of Sterling County, Illinois, are described by W. C.

Holbrook, [Footnote: Amer. Natural, 1877, xi, No. 11, p. 688] as

follows:

"I recently made an, examination of a few of the many Indian mounds

found on Rock River, about two miles above Sterling, Ill. The first

one opened was an oval mound about 20 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 7

feet high. In the interior of this I found a \_dolmen\_ or

quadrilateral wall about 10 feet long, 4 feet high, and 4-1/2 feet

wide. It had been built of lime-rock from a quarry near by, and was

covered with large flat stones No mortar or cement had been used. The

whole structure rested on the surface of the natural soil, the

interior of which had been scooped out to enlarge the chamber. Inside

of the \_dolmen\_ I found the partly decayed remains of eight human

skeletons, two very large teeth of an unknown animal, two fossils, one

of which is not found in this place, and a plummet. One of the long

bones had been splintered; the fragments had united, but there

remained large morbid growths of bone (exostosis) in several places.

One of the skulls presented a circular opening about the size of a

silver dime. This perforation had been made during life, for the edges

had commenced to cicatrize. I later examined three circular mounds,

but in them I found no dolmens. The first mound contained three adult

human skeletons, a few fragments of the skeleton of a child, the lower

maxillary of which indicated it to be about six years old. I also

found claws of some carnivorous animal. The surface of the soil had

been scooped out and the bodies laid in the excavation and covered

with about a foot of earth, fires had then been made upon the grave

and the mound afterwards completed. The bones had not been charred. No

charcoal was found among the bones, but occurred in abundance in a

stratum about one foot above them. Two other mounds, examined at the

same time, contained no remains.

"Of two other mounds, opened later, the first was circular, about 4

feet high, and 15 feet in diameter at the base, and was situated on an

elevated point of land close to the bank of the river. From the top of

this mound one might view the country for many miles in almost any

direction. On its summit was an oval altar 6 feet long and 4-1/2 wide.

It was composed of flat pieces of limestone, which had been burned

red, some portions having been almost converted into lime. On and

about this altar I found abundance of charcoal. At the sides of the

altar were fragments of human bones, some of which had been charred.

It was covered by a natural growth of vegetable mold and sod, the

thickness of which was about 10 inches. Large trees had once grown in

this vegetable mold, but their stumps were so decayed I could not tell

with certainty to what species they belonged. Another large mound was

opened which contained nothing."

The next account relates to the grave-mounds near Pensacola, Fla., and

was originally published by Dr. George M. Sternberg, surgeon United

States Army. [Footnote: Proc. Am. Ass. Adv. of Science, 1875, p. 288]

"Before visiting the mound I was informed that the Indians were buried

in it in an upright position, each one with a clay pot on his head.

This idea was based upon some superficial explorations which had been

made from time to time by curiosity hunters. Their excavations had,

indeed, brought to light pots containing fragments of skulls, but not

buried in the position they imagined. Very extensive explorations made

at different times by myself have shown that only fragments of skulls

and of the long bones of the body are to be found in the mound, and

that these are commonly associated with earthen pots, sometimes whole,

but more frequently broken fragments only. In some instances portions

of the skull were placed in a pot, and the long bones were deposited

in its immediate vicinity. Again, the pots would contain only sand,

and fragments of bones would be found near them. The most successful

'find' I made was a whole nest of pots, to the number of half a dozen,

all in a good state of preservation, and buried with a fragment of

skull, which I take from its small size to have been that of a female.

Whether this female was thus distinguished above all others buried in

the mound by the number of pots deposited with her remains because of

her skill in the manufacture of such ware, or by reason of the unusual

wealth of her sorrowing husband, must remain a matter of conjecture. I

found altogether fragments of skulls and thigh-bones belonging to at

least fifty individuals, but in no instance did I find anything like a

complete skeleton. There were no vertebra, no ribs, no pelvic bones,

and none of the small bones of the hands and feet. Two or three skulls

nearly perfect were found, but they were so fragile that it was

impossible to preserve them. In the majority of instances only

fragments of the frontal and parietal bones were found, buried in pots

or in fragments of pots too small to have ever contained a complete

skull. The conclusion was irresistible that this was not a burial-

place for \_the bodies\_ of deceased Indians, but that the bones

had been gathered from some other locality for burial in this mound,

or that cremation was practiced before burial, and the fragments of

bone not consumed by fire were gathered and deposited in the mound.

That the latter supposition is the correct one I deem probable from

the fact that in digging in the mound evidences of fire are found in

numerous places, but without any regularity as to depth and position.

These evidences consist in strata of from one to four inches in

thickness, in which the sand is of a dark color and has mixed with it

numerous small fragments of charcoal.

"My theory is that the mound was built by gradual accretion in the

following manner. That when a death occurred a funeral pyre was

erected on the mound, upon which the body was placed. That after the

body was consumed, any fragments of bones remaining were gathered,

placed in a pot, and buried, and that the ashes and cinders were

covered by a layer of sand brought from the immediate vicinity for

that purpose. This view is further supported by the fact that only the

shafts of the long bones are found, the expanded extremities, which

would be most easily consumed, having disappeared; also, by the fact

that no bones of children were found. Their bones being smaller, and

containing a less proportion of earthy matter, would be entirely

consumed....

"At the Santa Rosa mound the method of burial was different. Here I

found the skeletons complete, and obtained nine well-preserved

skulls.... The bodies were not apparently deposited upon any regular

system, and I found no objects of interest associated with the

remains. It may be that this was due to the fact that the skeletons

found were those of warriors who had fallen in battle in which they

had sustained a defeat. This view is supported by the fact that they

were all males, and that two of the skulls bore marks of ante-mortem

injuries which must have been of a fatal character."

Writing of the Choctaws, Bartram, [Footnote: Bartram's Travels, 1791,

p. 513.] in alluding to the ossuary or bone-house, mentions that so

soon as this is filled a general inhumation takes place, in this

manner.

"Then the respective coffins are borne by the nearest relatives of the

deceased to the place of interment, where they are all piled one upon

another in the form of a pyramid, and the conical hill of earth heaped

above. The funeral ceremonies are concluded with the solemnization of

a festival called the feast of the dead."

Mr. Florian Gianque, of Cincinnati, Ohio, furnishes an account of a

somewhat curious mound burial which had taken place in the Miami

Valley of Ohio.

"A mound was opened in this locality, some years ago, containing a

central corpse in a sitting posture, and over thirty skeletons buried

around it in a circle, also in a sitting posture but leaning against

one another, tipped over towards the right facing inwards. I did not

see this opened, but have seen the mounds and many ornaments, awls,

&c., said to have been found near the central body. The parties

informing me are trustworthy."

As an example of interment, unique, so far as known, and interesting

as being \_sui generis\_, the following is presented, with the

statement that the author, Dr J. Mason Spainhour, of Lenoir, N.C.,

bears the reputation of an observer of undoubted integrity, whose

facts as given may not be doubted.

"\_Excavation of an Indian mound by J. Mason Spainhour, D.D.S., of

Lenoir, Caldwell County, North Carolina, March 11, 1871, on the farm

of R. V. Michaux, esq., near John's River, in Burke County, North

Carolina\_"

"In a conversation with Mr. Michaux on Indian curiosities, he informed

me that there was an Indian mound on his farm which was formerly of

considerable height, but had gradually been plowed down, that several

mounds in the neighborhood had been excavated and nothing of interest

found in them. I asked permission to examine this mound, which was

granted, and upon investigation the following facts were revealed.

"Upon reaching the place, I sharpened a stick 4 or 5 feet in length

and ran it down in the earth at several places, and finally struck a

rock about 18 inches below the surface, which, on digging down, was

found to be smooth on top, lying horizontally upon solid earth, about

18 inches above the bottom of the grave, 18 inches in length, and 16

inches in width, and from 2 to 3 inches in thickness, with the corners

rounded.

"Not finding anything under this rock, I then made an excavation in

the south of the grave, and soon struck another rock, which upon

examination proved to be in front of the remains of a human skeleton

in a sitting posture. The bones of the fingers of the right hand were

resting on this rock, and on the rock near the hand was a small stone

about 5 inches long, resembling a tomahawk or Indian hatchet. Upon a

further examination many of the bones were found, though in a very

decomposed condition, and upon exposure to the air soon crumbled to

pieces. The heads of the bones, a considerable portion of the skull,

maxillary bones, teeth, neck bones, and the vertebra, were in their

proper places, though the weight of the earth above them had driven

them down, yet the entire frame was so perfect that it was an easy

matter to trace all the bones; the bones of the cranium were slightly

inclined toward the east. Around the neck were found coarse beads that

seemed to be of some hard substance and resembled chalk. A small lump

of red paint about the size of an egg was found near the right side of

this skeleton. The sutures of the cranium indicated the subject to

have been 25 or 28 years of age, and its top rested about 12 inches

below the mark of the plow.

"I made a further excavation toward the west of this grave and found

another skeleton, similar to the first, in a sitting posture, facing

the east. A rock was on the right, on which the bones of the right

hand were resting, and on this rock was a tomahawk which had been

about 7 inches in length, but was broken into two pieces, and was much

better finished than the first. Beads were also around the neck of

this one, but are much smaller and of finer quality than those on the

neck of the first. The material, however, seems to be the same. A much

larger amount of paint was found by the side of this than the first.

The bones indicated a person of large frame, who, I think, was about

50 years of age. Everything about this one had the appearance of

superiority over the first. The top of the skull was about 6 inches

below the mark of the plane.

"I continued the examination, and, after diligent search, found

nothing at the north side of the grave; but, on reaching the east,

found another skeleton, in the same posture as the others, facing the

west. On the right side of this was a rock on which the bones of the

right hand were resting, and on the rock was also a tomahawk, which

had been about 8 inches in length, but was broken into \_three\_

pieces, and was composed of much better material, and better finished

than the others. Beads were also found on the neck of this, but much

smaller and finer than those of the others. A larger amount of paint

than both of the others was found near this one. The top of the

cranium had been moved by the plow. The bones indicated a person of 40

years of age.

"There was no appearance of hair discovered; besides, the smaller

bones were almost entirely decomposed, and would crumble when taken

from their bed in the earth. These two circumstances, coupled with the

fact that the farm on which this grave was found was the first settled

in that part of the country, the date of the first deed made from Lord

Granville to John Perkins running back about 150 years (the land still

belonging to the descendants of the same family that first occupied

it), would prove beyond doubt that it is a very old grave.

"The grave was situated due east and west, in size about 9 by 6 feet,

the line being distinctly marked by the difference in the color of the

soil. It was dug in rich, black loam, and filled around the bodies

with white or yellow sand, which I suppose was carried from the river-

bank, 200 yards distant. The skeletons approximated the walls of the

grave, and contiguous to them was a dark-colored earth, and so

decidedly different was this from all surrounding it, both in quality

and odor, that the line of the bodies could be readily traced. The

odor of this decomposed earth, which had been flesh, was similar to

clotted blood, and would adhere in lumps when compressed in the hand.

"This was not the grave of the Indian warriors; in those we find pots

made of earth or stone, and all the implements of war, for the warrior

had an idea that after he arose from the dead he would need, in the

'hunting-grounds beyond,' his bow and arrow, war-hatchet, and

scalping-knife.

"The facts set forth will doubtless convince every Mason who will

carefully read the account of this remarkable burial that the American

Indians were in possession of at least some of the mysteries of our

order, and that it was evidently the grave of Masons, and the three

highest officers in a Masonic lodge. The grave was situated due east

and west; an altar was erected in the center; the south, west, and

east were occupied--\_the north was not;\_ implements of authority

were near each body. The difference in the quality of the beads, the

tomahawks in one, two, and three pieces, and the difference that the

bodies were placed from the surface, indicate beyond doubt that these

three persons had been buried by Masons, and those, too, that

understood what they were doing.

"Will some learned Mason unravel this mystery, and inform the Masonic

world how they obtained so much Masonic information?

"The tomahawks, maxillary bones, some of the teeth, beads, and other

bones, have been forwarded to the Smithsonian Institution at

Washington, D.C., to be placed among the archives of that institution

for exhibition, at which place they may be seen."

If Dr. Spainhour's inferences are incorrect, still there is a

remarkable coincidence of circumstances patent to every Mason.

CAVE BURIAL.

Natural or artificial holes in the ground, caverns, and fissures in

rocks have been used as places of deposit for the dead since the

earliest periods of time, and are used up to the present day by not

only the American Indians, but by peoples noted for their mental

elevation and civilization, our cemeteries furnishing numerous

specimens of artificial or partly artificial caves. As to the motives

which have actuated this mode of burial, a discussion would be out of

place at this time, except as may incidentally relate to our own

Indians, who, so far as can be ascertained, simply adopted caves as

ready and convenient resting places for their deceased relatives and

friends.

In almost every State in the Union burial caves have been discovered,

but as there is more or less of identity between them, a few

illustrations will serve the purpose of calling the attention of

observers to the subject.

While in the Territory of Utah, in 1872, the writer discovered a

natural cave not far from the House Range of mountains, the entrance

to which resembled the shaft of a mine. In this the Gosi-Ute Indians

had deposited their dead, surrounded with different articles, until it

was quite filled up; at least it so appeared from the cursory

examination made, limited time preventing a careful exploration. In

the fall of the same year another cave was heard of, from an Indian

guide, near the Nevada border, in the same Territory, and an attempt

made to explore it, which failed for reasons to be subsequently given.

This Indian, a Gosi-Ute, who was questioned regarding the funeral

ceremonies of his tribe, informed the writer that not far from the

very spot where the party were encamped was a large cave in which he

had himself assisted in placing dead members of his tribe. He

described it in detail and drew a rough diagram of its position and

appearance within. He was asked if an entrance could be effected, and

replied that he thought not, as some years previous his people had

stopped up the narrow entrance to prevent game from seeking a refuge

in its vast vaults, for he asserted that it was so large and extended

so far under ground that no man knew its full extent. In

consideration, however, of a very liberal bribe, after many refusals,

he agreed to act as guide. A rough ride of over an hour and the

desired spot was reached. It was found to be almost upon the apex of a

small mountain apparently of volcanic origin, for the hole which was

pointed out appeared to have been the vent of the crater. This

entrance was irregularly circular in form and descended at an angle.

As the Indian had stated, it was completely stopped up with large

stones and roots of sage brush, and it was only after six hours of

uninterrupted, faithful labor that the attempt to explore was

abandoned. The guide was asked if many bodies were therein, and

replied "Heaps, heaps," moving the hands upwards as far as they could

be stretched. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the

information received, as it was voluntarily imparted.

In a communication received from Dr. A. J McDonald, physician to the

Los Pinos Indian Agency, Colorado, a description is given of crevice

or rock-fissure burial, which follows.

"As soon as death takes place the event is at once announced by the

medicine-man, and without loss of time the squaws are busily engaged

in preparing the corpse for the grave. This does not take long;

whatever articles of clothing may have been on the body at the time of

death are not removed. The dead man's limbs are straightened out, his

weapons of war laid by his side, and his robes and blankets wrapped

securely and snugly around him, and now everything is ready for

burial. It is the custom to secure, if possible, for the purpose of

wrapping up the corpse, the robes and blankets in which the Indian

died. At the same time that the body is being fitted for interment,

the squaws having immediate care of it, together with all the other

squaws in the neighborhood, keep up a continued chant or dirge, the

dismal cadence of which may, when the congregation of women is large,

be heard for quite a long distance. The death song is not a mere

inarticulate howl of distress; it embraces expressions eulogistic in

character, but whether or not any particular formula of words is

adopted on such occasion is a question which I am unable, with the

materials at my disposal, to determine with any degree of certainty.

"The next duty falling to the lot of the squaws is that of placing the

dead man on a horse and conducting the remains to the spot chosen for

burial. This is in the cleft of a rock, and, so far as can be

ascertained, it has always been customary among the Utes to select

sepulchres of this character. From descriptions given by Mr. Harris,

who has several times been fortunate enough to discover remains, it

would appear that no superstitious ideas are held by this tribe with

respect to the position in which the body is placed, the space

accommodation of the sepulchre probably regulating this matter; and

from the same source I learn that it is not usual to find the remains

of more than one Indian deposited in one grave. After the body has

been received into the cleft, it is well covered with pieces of rock,

to protect it against the ravages of wild animals. The chant ceases,

the squaws disperse, and the burial ceremonies are at an end. The men

during all this time have not been idle, though they have in no way

participated in the preparation of the body, have not joined the

squaws in chanting praises to the memory of the dead, and have not

even as mere spectators attended the funeral, yet they have had their

duties to perform. In conformity with a long-established custom, all

the personal property of the deceased is immediately destroyed. His

horses and his cattle are shot, and his wigwam, furniture, &c.,

burned. The performance of this part of the ceremonies is assigned to

the men; a duty quite in accord with their taste and inclinations.

Occasionally the destruction of horses and other property is of

considerable magnitude, but usually this is not the case, owing to a

practice existing with them of distributing their property among their

children while they are of a very tender age, retaining to themselves

only what is necessary to meet every-day requirements.

"The widow 'goes into mourning' by smearing her face with a substance

composed of pitch and charcoal. The application is made but once, and

is allowed to remain on until it wears off. This is the only mourning

observance of which I have any knowledge.

"The ceremonies observed on the death of a female are the same as

those in the case of a male, except that no destruction of property

takes place, and of course no weapons are deposited with the corpse.

Should a youth die while under the superintendence of white men, the

Indians will not as a rule have anything to do with the interment of

the body. In a case of the kind which occurred at this agency some

time ago, the squaws prepared the body in the usual manner; the men of

the tribe selected a spot for the burial, and the employes at the

agency, after digging a grave and depositing the corpse therein,

filled it up according to the fashion of civilized people, and then at

the request of the Indians rolled large fragments of rocks on top.

Great anxiety was exhibited by the Indians to have the employes

perform the service as expeditiously as possible."

An interesting cave in Calaveras County, California, which had been

used for burial purposes, is thus described by Prof. J. D. Whitney:

[Footnote: Rep. Smithsonian Inst. 1867, p. 406.]

"The following is an account of the cave from which the skulls, now in

the Smithsonian collection, were taken. It is near the Stanislaus

River, in Calaveras County, on a nameless creek, about two miles from

Abbey's Ferry, on the road to Vallicito, at the house of Mr. Robinson.

There were two or three persons with me, who had been to the place

before and knew that the skulls in question were taken from it. Their

visit was some ten years ago, and since that the condition of things

in the cave has greatly changed. Owing to some alteration in the road,

mining operations, or some other cause which I could not ascertain,

there has accumulated on the formerly clean stalagmitic floor of the

cave a thickness of some 20 feet of surface earth that completely

conceals the bottom, and which could not be removed without

considerable expense. This cave is about 27 feet deep at the mouth and

40 to 50 feet at the end, and perhaps 30 feet in diameter. It is the

general opinion of those who have noticed this cave and saw it years

ago that it was a burying-place of the present Indians. Dr. Jones said

he found remains of bows and arrows and charcoal with the skulls he

obtained, and which were destroyed at the time the village of Murphy's

was burned. All the people spoke of the skulls as lying on the surface

and not as buried in the stalagmite."

The next description of cave burial, described by W. H. Dall

[Footnote: Contrib. to N. A. Ethnol., 1877, vol 1, p 62.], is so

remarkable that it seems worthy of admittance to this paper. It

relates probably to the Innuit of Alaska.

"The earliest remains of man found in Alaska up to the time of writing

I refer to this epoch [Echinus layer of Dall]. There are some crania

found by us in the lowermost part of the Amaknak cave and a cranium

obtained at Adakh, near the anchorage in the Bay of Islands. These

were deposited in a remarkable manner, precisely similar to that

adopted by most of the continental Innuit, but equally different from

the modern Aleut fashion. At the Amaknak cave we found what at first

appeared to be a wooden inclosure, but which proved to be made of the

very much decayed supra-maxillary bones of some large cetacean. These

were arranged so as to form a rude rectangular inclosure covered over

with similar pieces of bone. This was somewhat less than 4 feet long,

2 feet wide, and 18 inches deep. The bottom was formed of flat pieces

of stone. Three such were found close together, covered with and

filled by an accumulation of fine vegetable and organic mold. In each

was the remains of a skeleton in the last stages of decay. It had

evidently been tied up in the Innuit fashion to get it into its narrow

house, but all the bones, with the exception of the skull, were

reduced to a soft paste, or even entirely gone. At Adakh a fancy

prompted me to dig into a small knoll near the ancient shell-heap; and

here we found, in a precisely similar sarcophagus, the remains of a

skeleton, of which also only the cranium retained sufficient

consistency to admit of preservation. This inclosure, however, was

filled with a dense peaty mass not reduced to mold, the result of

centuries of sphagnous growth, which had reached a thickness of nearly

2 feet above the remains. When we reflect upon the well-known slowness

of this kind of growth in these northern regions, attested by numerous

Arctic travelers, the antiquity of the remains becomes evident."

It seems beyond doubt that in the majority of cases, especially as

regards the caves of the Western States and Territories, the

interments were primary ones, and this is likewise true of many of the

caverns of Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, for in the three States

mentioned many mummies have been found, but it is also likely that

such receptacles were largely used as places of secondary deposits.

The many fragmentary skeletons and loose bones found seem to

strengthen this view.

MUMMIES.

In connection with cave burial, the subject of mummifying or embalming

the dead may be taken up, as most specimens of the kind have generally

been found in such repositories.

It might be both interesting and instructive to search out and discuss

the causes which have led many nations or tribes to adopt certain

processes with a view to prevent that return to dust which all flesh

must sooner or later experience, but the necessarily limited scope of

this preliminary work precludes more than a brief mention of certain

theories advanced by writers of note, and which relate to the ancient

Egyptians. Possibly at the time the Indians of America sought to

preserve their dead from decomposition some such ideas may have

animated them, but on this point no definite information has been

procured. In the final volume an effort will be made to trace out the

origin of mummification among the Indians and aborigines of this

continent.

The Egyptians embalmed, according to Cassien, because during the time

of the annual inundation no interments could take place, but it is

more than likely that this hypothesis is entirely fanciful. It is said

by others they believed that so long as the body was preserved from

corruption the soul remained in it. Herodotus states that it was to

prevent bodies from becoming a prey to animal voracity. "They did not

inter them," says he, "for fear of their being eaten by worms; nor did

they burn, considering fire as a ferocious beast, devouring everything

which it touched." According to Diodorus of Sicily, embalmment

originated in filial piety and respect. De Maillet, however, in his

tenth letter on Egypt, attributes it entirely to a religious belief

insisted upon by the wise men and priests, who taught their disciples

that after a certain number of cycles, of perhaps thirty or forty

thousand years, the entire universe became as it was at birth, and the

souls of the dead returned into the same bodies in which they had

lived, provided that the body remained free from corruption, and that

sacrifices were freely offered as oblations to the manes of the

deceased. Considering the great care taken to preserve the dead, and

the ponderously solid nature of their tombs, it is quite evident that

this theory obtained many believers among the people. M. Gannal

believes embalmment to have been suggested by the affectionate

sentiments of our nature--a desire to preserve as long as possible the

mortal remains of loved ones; but MM. Volney and Pariaet think it was

intended to obviate, in hot climates especially, danger from

pestilence, being primarily a cheap and simple process, elegance and

luxury coming later; and the Count de Caylus states the idea of

embalmment was derived from the finding of desiccated bodies which the

burning sands of Egypt had hardened and preserved. Many other

suppositions have arisen, but it is thought the few given above are

sufficient to serve as an introduction to embalmment in North America.

From the statements of the older writers on North American Indians, it

appears that mummifying was resorted to among certain tribes of

Virginia, the Carolinas, and Florida, especially for people of

distinction, the process in Virginia for the kings, according to

Beverly, [Footnote: Hist. of Virginia, 1722, p 185] being as follows:

"The \_Indians\_ are religious in preserving the Corpses of their

Kings and Rulers after Death, which they order in the following

manner: First, they neatly flay off the Skin as entire as they can,

slitting it only in the Back; then they pick all the Flesh off from

the Bones as clean as possible, leaving the Sinews fastned to the

Bones, that they may preserve the Joints together: then they dry the

Bones in the Sun, and put them into the Skin again, which in the mean

time has been kept from drying or shrinking; when the Bones are placed

right in the Skin, they nicely fill up the Vacuities, with a very fine

white Sand. After this they sew up the Skin again, and the Body looks

as if the Flesh had not been removed. They take care to keep the Skin

from shrinking, by the help of a little Oil or Grease, which saves it

also from Corruption. The Skin being thus prepar'd, they lay it in an

apartment for that purpose, upon a large Shelf rais'd above the Floor.

This Shelf is spread with Mats, for the Corpse to rest easy on, and

skreened with the same, to keep it from the Dust. The Flesh they lay

upon Hurdles in the Sun to dry, and when it is thoroughly dried, it is

sewed up in a Basket, and set at the Feet of the Corpse, to which it

belongs. In this place also they set up a \_Quioccos,\_ or Idol,

which they believe will be a Guard to the Corpse. Here Night and Day

one or other of the Priests must give his Attendance, to take care of

the dead Bodies. So great an Honour and Veneration have these ignorant

and unpolisht People for their Princes even after they are dead."

It should be added that, in the writer's opinion, this account and

others like it are somewhat apocryphal, and it has been copied and

recopied a score of times.

According to Pinkerton [Footnote: Collection of Voyages, 1812, vol.

XIII, p 39.], the Werowanco preserved their dead as follows:

"... By him is commonly the sepulchre of their Kings. Their bodies are

first bowelled, then dried upon hurdles till they be very dry, and so

about the most of their joints and neck they hang bracelets, or chains

of copper, pearl, and such like, as they used to wear. Their inwards

they stuff with copper beads, hatchets, and such trash. Then lap they

them very carefully in white skins, and so roll them in mats for their

winding-sheets. And in the tomb, which is an arch made of mats, they

lay them orderly. What remaineth of this kind of wealth their Kings

have, they set at their feet in baskets. These temples and bodies are

kept by their priests.

"For their ordinary burials, they dig a deep hole in the earth with

sharp stakes, and the corpse being lapped in skins and mats with their

jewels they lay them upon sticks in the ground, and so cover them with

earth. The burial ended, the women being painted all their faces with

black coal and oil do sit twenty-four hours in the houses mourning and

lamenting by turns with such yelling and howling as may express their

great passions....

"Upon the top of certain red sandy hills in the woods there are three

great houses filled with images of their Kings and devils and tombs of

their predecessors. Those houses are near sixty feet in length, built

harbourwise after their building. This place they count so holy as

that but the priests and Kings dare come into them; nor the savages

dare not go up the river in boats by it, but they solemnly cast some

piece of copper, white beads, or pocones into the river for fear their

Okee should be offended and revenged of them.

"They think that their Werowances and priests which they also esteem

quiyoughcosughs, when they are dead do go beyond the mountains towards

the setting of the sun, and ever remain there in form of their Okee,

with their heads painted red with oil and pocones, finely trimmed with

feathers, and shall have beads, hatchets, copper, and tobacco, doing

nothing but dance and sing with all their predecessors. But the common

people they suppose shall not live after death, but rot in their

graves like dead dogs."

The remark regarding truthfulness will apply to this account in common

with the former.

The Congaree or Santee Indians of South Carolina, according to Lawson,

used a process of partial embalmment, as will be seen from the

subjoined extract from Schoolcraft; [Footnote: Hist. Indian Tribes of

the United States, 1854, Part IV, p. 155, \_et seq\_] but instead

of laying away the remains in caves, placed them in boxes supported

above the ground by crotched sticks.

"The manner of their interment is thus: A mole or pyramid of earth is

raised, the mould thereof being worked very smooth and even, sometimes

higher or lower, according to the dignity of the person whose monument

it is. On the top thereof is an umbrella, made ridgeways, like the

roof of a house. This is supported by nine stakes or small posts, the

grave being about 6 or 8 feet in length and 4 feet in breadth, about

which is hung gourds, feathers, and other such like trophies, placed

there by the dead man's relations in respect to him in the grave. The

other parts of the funeral rites are thus: As soon as the party is

dead they lay the corpse upon a piece of bark in the sun, seasoning or

embalming it with a small root beaten to powder, which looks as red as

vermilion; the same is mixed with bear's oil to beautify the hair.

After the carcass has laid a day or two in the sun they remove it and

lay it upon crotches cut on purpose for the support thereof from the

earth then they anoint it all over with the aforementioned ingredients

of the powder of this root and bear's oil. When it is so done they

cover it over very exactly with the bark of the pine or cypress tree

to prevent any rain to fall upon it, sweeping the ground very clean

all about it. Some of his nearest of kin brings all the temporal

estate he was possessed of at his death, as guns, bows and arrows,

beads, feathers, match coat etc. This relation is the chief mourner,

being clad in moss, with a stick in his hand, keeping a mournful ditty

for three or four days, his face being black with the smoke of pitch

pine mixed with bear's oil. All the while he tells the dead mans

relations and the rest of the spectators who that dead person was, and

of the great feats performed in his lifetime, all that he speaks

tending to the praise of the defunct. As soon as the flesh grows

mellow and will cleave from the bone they get it off and burn it,

making the bones very clean then anoint them with the ingredients

aforesaid, wrapping up the skull (very carefully) in a cloth

artificially woven of opossum's hair. The bones they carefully

preserve in a wooden box, every year oiling and cleansing them. By

these means they preserve them for many ages that you may see an

Indian in possession of the bones of his grandfather or some of his

relations of a longer antiquity. They have other sorts of tombs as

when an Indian is slain in, that very place they make a heap of stones

(or sticks where stones are not to be found), to this memorial every

Indian that passes by adds a stone to augment the heap in respect to

the deceased hero. The Indians make a roof of light wood or pitch pine

over the graves of the more distinguished, covering it with bark and

then with earth leaving the body thus in a subterranean vault until

the flesh quits the bones. The bones are then taken up, cleaned,

jointed, clad in white dressed deer skins, and laid away in the

\_Quiogozon,\_ which is the royal tomb or burial place of their

kings and war captains, being a more magnificent cabin reared at the

public expense. This Quiogozon is an object of veneration, in which

the writer says he has known the king, old men, and conjurers to spend

several days with their idols and dead kings, and into which he could

never gain admittance."

Another class of mummies are those which have been found in the

saltpeter and other caves of Kentucky, and it is still a matter of

doubt with archaeologists whether any special pains were taken to

preserve these bodies, many believing that the impregnation of the

soil with certain minerals would account for the condition in which

the specimens were found. Charles Wilkins [Footnote: Trans. Amer.

Antiq. Soc., 1820, vol. 1, p. 360] thus describes one:

"... exsiccated body of a female ... was found at the depth of about

10 feet from the surface of the cave bedded in clay strongly

impregnated with nitre, placed in a sitting posture, incased in broad

stones standing on their edges, with a flat stone covering the whole.

It was enveloped in coarse clothes, ... the whole wrapped in deer-

skins, the hair of which was shaved off in the manner in which the

Indians prepare them for market. Enclosed in the stone coffin were the

working utensils, beads, feathers, and other ornaments of dress which

belonged to her."

The next description is by Dr Samuel L. Mitchill: [Footnote: Trans.

and Coll. Amer. Antiq. Soc., 1820, vol. 1, p. 318]

[A letter from Dr. Mitchill of New York, to Samuel M. Burnside, Esq.,

Secretary of the American Antiquarian Society, on North American

Antiquities.]

"Aug 24th, 1815

"DEAR SIR: I offer you some observations on a curious piece of

American antiquity now in New York, It is a human body [Footnote: A

mummy of this kind, of a person of mature age, discovered in Kentucky,

is now in the cabinet of the American Antiquarian Society. It is a

female. Several human bodies were found enwrapped carefully in skins

and cloths. They were inhumed below the floor of the cave,

\_inhumed\_, and not lodged in catacombs.] found in one of the

limestone caverns of Kentucky. It is a perfect exsiccation, all the

fluids are dried up. The skin, bones, and other firm parts are in a

state of entire preservation. I think it enough to have puzzled Bryant

and all the archaologists.

"This was found in exploring a calcareous cave in the neighborhood of

Glasgow for saltpetre.

"These recesses, though under ground, are yet dry enough to attract

and retain the nitrick acid. It combines with lime and potash, and

probably the earthy matter of these excavations contains a good

proportion of calcareous carbonate. Amidst these drying and

antiseptick ingredients, it may be conceived that putrefaction would

be stayed, and the solids preserved from decay. The outer envelope of

the body is a deer skin, probably dried in the usual way and perhaps

softened before its application by rubbing. The next covering is a

deer's skin, whose hair had been cut away by a sharp instrument

resembling a hatter's knife. The remnant of the hair and the gashes in

the skin nearly resemble a sheared pelt of beaver. The next wrapper is

of cloth made of twine doubled and twisted. But the thread does not

appear to have been formed by the wheel, nor the web by the loom. The

warp and filling seem to have been crossed and knotted by an operation

like that of the fabricks of the northwest coast, and of the Sandwich

islands. Such a botanist as the lamented Muhlenburgh could determine

the plant which furnished the fibrous material.

"The innermost tegument is a mantle of cloth like the preceding, but

furnished with large brown feathers arranged and fastened with great

art so as to be capable of guarding the living wearer from wet and

cold. The plumage is distinct and entire, and the whole bears a near

similitude to the feathery cloaks now worn by the nations of the

northwestern coast of America. A Wilson might tell from what bird they

were derived.

"The body is in a squatting posture with the right arm reclining

forward and its hand encircling the right leg. The left arm hangs

down, with its hand inclined partly under the seat. The individual,

who was a male did not probably exceed the age of fourteen, at his

death. There is near the occiput a deep and extensive fracture of the

skull, which probably killed him. The skin has sustained little

injury, it is of a dusky colour, but the natural hue cannot be decided

with exactness from its present appearance. The scalp, with small

exceptions is cohered with sorrel or foxy hair. The teeth are white

and sound. The hands and feet, in their shrivelled state, are slender

and delicate. All this is worthy the investigation of our acute and

perspicacious colleague, Dr Holmes.

"There is nothing bituminous or aromatic in or about the body, like the

Egyptian mummies, nor are there bandages around any part. Except the

several wrappers, the body is totally naked. There is no sign of a

suture or incision about the belly whence it seems that the viscera

were not removed.

"It may now be expected that I should offer some opinion, as to the

antiquity and race of this singular exsiccation.

"First, then, I am satisfied that it does not belong to that class of

white men of which we are members.

"2dly. Nor do I believe that it ought to be referred to the bands of

Spanish adventurers, who, between the years 1500 and 1600, rambled up

the Mississippi, and along its tributary streams. But on this head I

should like to know the opinion of my learned and sagacious friend,

Noah Webster.

"3dly. I am equally obliged to reject the opinion that it belonged to

any of the tribes of aborigines, now or lately inhabiting Kentucky.

"4thly. The mantle of the feathered work, and the mantle of twisted

threads, so nearly resemble the fabricks of the indigines of Wakash

and the Pacifick islands, that I refer this individual to that era of

time, and that generation of men, which preceded the Indians of the

Green River, and of the place where these relicks were found. This

conclusion is strengthened by the consideration that such manufactures

are not prepared by the actual and resident red men of the present

day. If the Abbe Clavigero had had this case before him, he would have

thought of the people who constructed those ancient forts and mounds,

whose exact history no man living can give. But I forbear to enlarge;

my intention being merely to manifest my respect to the society for

having enrolled me among its members, and to invite the attention of

its Antiquarians to further inquiry on a subject of such curiosity.

"With respect, I remain yours,

"SAMUEL L. MITCHILL"

It would appear from recent researches on the Northwest coast that the

natives of that region embalmed their dead with much care, as may be

seen from the work recently published by W. H. Dall, [Footnote: Cont.

to N. A. Ethnol., 1877, vol. 1, p. 89] the description of the mummies

being as follows:

"We found the dead disposed of in various ways; first, by interment in

their compartments of the communal dwelling, as already described;

second, by being laid on a rude platform of drift-wood or stones in

some convenient rock shelter. These lay on straw and moss, covered by

matting, and rarely have either implements, weapons, or carvings

associated with them. We found only three or four specimens in all in

these places, of which we examined a great number. This was apparently

the more ancient form of disposing of the dead, and one which more

recently was still pursued in the case of poor or unpopular

individuals.

"Lastly, in comparatively modern times, probably within a few

centuries, and up to the historic period (1740), another mode was

adopted for the wealthy, popular, or more distinguished class. The

bodies were eviscerated, cleansed from fatty matters in running water,

dried, and usually placed in suitable cases in wrappings of fur and

fine grass matting The body was usually doubled up into the smallest

compass, and the mummy case, especially in the case of children, was

usually suspended (so as not to touch the ground) in some convenient

rock shelter. Sometimes, however, the prepared body was placed in a

lifelike position, dressed and armed. They were placed as if engaged

in some congenial occupation, such as hunting, fishing, sewing, etc.

With them were also placed effigies of the animals they were pursuing,

while the hunter was dressed in his wooden armor and provided with an

enormous mask, all ornamented with feathers and a countless variety of

wooden pendants, colored in gay patterns. All the carvings were of

wood, the weapons even were only fac-similes in wood of the original

articles. Among the articles represented were drums, rattles, dishes,

weapons, effigies of men, birds, fish, and animals, wooden armor of

rods or scales of wood, and remarkable masks, so arranged that the

wearer when erect could only see the ground at his feet. These were

worn at their religious dances from an idea that a spirit which was

supposed to animate a temporary idol was fatal to whoever might look

upon it while so occupied. An extension of the same idea led to the

masking of those who had gone into the land of spirits.

"The practice of preserving the bodies of those belonging to the

whaling class--a custom peculiar to the Kadiak Innuit--has erroneously

been confounded with the one now described. The latter included women

as well as men, and all those whom the living desired particularly to

honor. The whalers, however, only preserved the bodies of males, and

they were not associated with the paraphernalia of those I have

described. Indeed, the observations I have been able to make show the

bodies of the whalers to have been preserved with stone weapons and

actual utensils instead of effigies, and with the meanest apparel, and

no carvings of consequence. These details, and those of many other

customs and usages of which the shell heaps bear no testimony ... do

not come within my line."

Martin Sauer, secretary to Billings' Expedition [Footnote: Billings'

Exped. 1802, p. 167.] in 1802, speaks of the Aleutian Islanders

embalming their dead, as follows:

"They pay respect, however, to the memory of the dead, for they embalm

the bodies of the men with dried moss and grass; bury them in their

best attire, in a sitting posture, in a strong box, with their darts

and instruments; and decorate the tomb with various coloured mats,

embroidery, and paintings. With women, indeed, they use less ceremony.

A mother will keep a dead child thus embalmed in their hut for some

months, constantly wiping it dry; and they bury it when it begins to

smell, or when they get reconciled to parting with it."

Regarding these same people, a writer in the San Francisco Bulletin

gives this account-

"The schooner William Sutton, belonging to the Alaska Commercial

Company, has arrived from the seal islands of the company with the

mummified remains of Indians who lived on an island north of Ounalaska

one hundred and fifty years ago. This contribution to science was

secured by Captain Henning, an agent of the company, who has long

resided at Ounalaska. In his transactions with the Indians he learned

that tradition among the Aleuts assigned Kagamale, the island in

question, as the last resting-place of a great chief, known as

Karkhayahouchak. Last year the captain was in the neighborhood of

Kagamale, in quest of sea-otter and other furs and he bore up for the

island, with the intention of testing the truth of the tradition he

had heard. He had more difficulty in entering the cave than in finding

it, his schooner having to beat on and off shore for three days.

Finally, he succeeded in effecting a landing, and clambering up the

rocks he found himself in the presence of the dead chief, his family

and relatives.

"The cave smelt strongly of hot sulphurous vapors. With great care the

mummies were removed, and all the little trinkets and ornaments

scattered around were also taken away.

"In all there are eleven packages of bodies. Only two or three have as

yet been opened. The body of the chief is inclosed in a large basket-

like structure, about four feet in height. Outside the wrappings are

finely-wrought sea-grass matting, exquisitely close in texture, and

skins. At the bottom is a broad hoop or basket of thinly-cut wood, and

adjoining the center portions are pieces of body armor composed of

reeds bound together. The body is covered with the fine skin of the

sea-otter, always a mark of distinction in the interments of the

Aleuts, and round the whole package are stretched the meshes of a

fish-net, made of the sinews of the sea lion; also those of a bird-

net. There are evidently some bulky articles inclosed with the chief's

body, and the whole package differs very much from the others, which

more resemble, in their brown-grass matting, consignments of crude

sugar from the Sandwich Islands than the remains of human beings. The

bodies of a pappoose and of a very little child, which probably died

at birth or soon after it, have sea-otter skins around them. One of

the feet of the latter projects, with a toe-nail visible. The

remaining mummies are of adults.

"One of the packages has been opened, and it reveals a man's body in

tolerable preservation, but with a large portion of the face

decomposed. This and the other bodies were doubled up at death by

severing some of the muscles at the hip and knee joints and bending

the limbs downward horizontally upon the trunk. Perhaps the most

peculiar package, next to that of the chief, is one which incloses in

a single matting, with sea-lion skins, the bodies of a man and woman.

The collection also embraces a couple of skulls, male and female,

which have still the hair attached to the scalp. The hair has changed

its color to a brownish red. The relics obtained with the bodies

include a few wooden vessels scooped out smoothly; a piece of dark,

greenish, flat stone, harder than the emerald, which the Indians use

to tan skins; a scalp-lock of jet-black hair; a small rude figure,

which may have been a very ugly doll or an idol; two or three tiny

carvings in ivory of the sea-lion, very neatly executed, a comb, a

necklet made of birds' claws inserted into one another, and several

specimens of little bags, and a cap plaited out of sea-grass and

almost water-tight."

With the foregoing examples as illustration, the matter of embalmment

may be for the present dismissed, with the advice to observers that

particular care should be taken, in case mummies are discovered, to

ascertain whether the bodies have been submitted to a regular

preservative process, or owe their protection to ingredients in the

soil of their graves or to desiccation in arid districts.

URN-BURIAL.

To close the subject of subterranean burial proper, the following

account of urn-burial in Foster [Footnote: Pre-Historic Races, 1873,

p. 199] may be added:

"Urn-burial appears to have been practiced to some extent by the

mound-builders, particularly in some of the Southern States. In the

mounds on the Wateree River, near Camden, S. C., according to Dr.

Blanding, ranges of vases, one above the other, filled with human

remains, were found. Sometimes when the mouth of the vase is small the

skull is placed with the face downward in the opening, constituting a

sort of cover. Entire cemeteries have been found in which urn-burial

alone seems to have been practiced. Such a one was accidentally

discovered not many years since in Saint Catherine's Island, on the

coast of Georgia. Professor Swallow informs me that from a mound at

New Madrid, Mo, he obtained a human skull inclosed in an earthen jar,

the lips of which were too small to admit of its extraction. It must

therefore have been molded on the head after death."

"A similar mode of burial was practiced by the Chaldeans, where the

funeral jars often contain a human cranium much too expanded to admit

of the possibility of its passing out of it, so that either the clay

must have been modeled over the corpse, and then baked, or the neck of

the jar must have been added subsequently to the other rites of

interment." [Footnote: Rawlinson's Herodotus, Book 1, chap 198, note.]

It is with regret that the writer feels obliged to differ from the

distinguished author of the work quoted regarding urn-burial, for

notwithstanding that it has been employed by some of the Central and

Southern American tribes, it is not believed to have been customary,

but \_to a very limited extent,\_ in North America, except as a

secondary interment. He must admit that he himself has found bones in

urns or ollas in the graves of New Mexico and California, but under

circumstances that would seem to indicate a deposition long subsequent

to death. In the graves of the ancient peoples of California a number

of ollas were found in long-used burying places, and it is probable

that as the bones were dug up time and again for new burials they were

simply tossed into pots, which were convenient receptacles, or it may

have been that bodies were allowed to repose in the earth long enough

for the fleshy parts to decay, and the bones were then collected,

placed in urns, and reinterred. Dr. E. Foreman, of the Smithsonian

Institution, furnishes the following account of urns used for burial:

"I would call your attention to an earthenware burial-urn and cover,

Nos. 27976 and 27977, National Museum, but very recently received from

Mr. William McKinley, of Milledgeville, Ga. It was exhumed on his

plantation, ten miles below that city, on the bottom lands of the

Oconee River, now covered with almost impassable canebrakes, tall

grasses, and briers. We had a few months ago from the same source one

of the covers, of which the ornamentation was different but more

entire. A portion of a similar cover has been received also from

Chattanooga, Ga. Mr. McKinley ascribes the use of these urns and

covers to the Muscogees, a branch of the Creek Nation."

These urns are made of baked clay, and are shaped somewhat like the

ordinary steatite ollas found in the California coast graves, but the

bottoms instead of being round run down to a sharp apex; on the top

was a cover, the upper part of which also terminated in an apex, and

around the border, near where it rested on the edge of the vessel, are

indented scroll ornamentations.

The burial-urns of New Mexico are thus described by E. A. Barber:

[Footnote: Amer. Natural, 1876, vol X, p. 455 \_et seq\_]

"Burial-urns ... comprise vessels or ollas without handles, for

cremation, usually being from 10 to 15 inches in height, with broad,

open mouths, and made of coarse clay, with a laminated exterior

(partially or entirely ornamented). Frequently the indentations extend

simply around the neck or rim, the lower portion being plain."

So far as is known, up to the present time no burial-urns have been

found in North America resembling those discovered in Nicaragua by Dr.

J. C. Bransford, U. S. N., but it is quite within the range of

possibility that future researches in regions not far distant from

that which he explored may reveal similar treasures.

SURFACE BURIAL.

This mode of interment was practiced to only a limited extent, so far

as can be discovered, and it is quite probable that in most cases it

was employed as a temporary expedient when the survivors were pressed

for time. The Seminoles of Florida are said to have buried in hollow

trees, the bodies being placed in an upright position, occasionally

the dead being crammed into a hollow log lying on the ground. With

some of the Eastern tribes a log was split in half and hollowed out

sufficiently large to contain the corpse; it was then lashed together

with withes and permitted to remain where it was originally placed. In

some cases a pen was built over and around it. This statement is

corroborated by Mr. R. S. Robertson, of Fort Wayne, Ind., who states

in a communication received in 1877 that the Miamis practiced surface

burial in two different ways:

"... 1st. The surface burial in hollow logs. These have been found in

heavy forests. Sometimes a tree has been split and the two halves

hollowed out to receive the body, when it was either closed with

withes or confined to the ground with crossed stakes; and sometimes a

hollow tree is used by closing the ends.

"2d. Surface burial where the body was covered by a small pen of logs

laid up as we build a cabin, but drawing in every course until they

meet in a single log at the top."

Romantically conceived, and carried out to the fullest possible extent

in accordance with the \_ante mortem\_ wishes of the dead, were the

obsequies of Blackbird, the great chief of the Omahas. The account is

given by George Catlin: [Footnote: Manners, Customs, &c., of North

American Indiana, 1844, vol. ii, p. 5]

"He requested them to take his body down the river to this his

favorite haunt, and on the pinnacle of this towering bluff to bury him

on the back of his favorite war-horse, which was to be buried alive

under him, from whence he could see, as he said, 'the Frenchmen

passing up and down the river in their boats.' He owned, amongst many

homes, a noble white steed, that was led to the top of the grass-

covered hill, and with great pomp and ceremony, in the presence of the

whole nation and several of the far-traders and the Indian agent, he

was placed astride of his horse's back, with his bow in his hand, and

his shield and quiver slung, with his pipe and his medicine bag, with

his supply of dried meat, and his tobacco-pouch replenished to last

him through the journey to the beautiful hunting grounds of the shades

of his fathers, with his flint and steel and his tinder to light his

pipes by the way; the scalps he had taken from his enemies' heads

could be trophies for nobody else, and were hung to the bridle of his

horse. He was in full dress, and fully equipped, and on his head waved

to the last moment his beautiful head-dress of the war-eagles' plumes.

In this plight, and the last funeral honors having been performed by

the medicine-men, every warrior of his band painted the palm and

fingers of his right hand with vermilion, which was stamped and

perfectly impressed on the milk-white sides of his devoted horse. This

all done, turfs were brought and placed around the feet and legs of

the horse, and gradually laid up to its sides, and at last over the

back and head of the unsuspecting animal, and last of all over the

head and even the eagle plumes of its valiant rider, where all

together have smouldered and remained undisturbed to the present day."

CAIRN BURIAL.

The next mode of interment to be considered is that of cairn or rock

burial, which has prevailed and is still common to a considerable

extent among the tribes living in the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra

Nevadas.

In the summer of 1872 the writer visited one of these rock cemeteries

in middle Utah, which had been used for a period not exceeding fifteen

or twenty years. It was situated at the bottom of a rock slide, upon

the side of an almost inaccessible mountain, in a position so

carefully chosen for concealment that it would have been almost

impossible to find it without a guide. Several of the graves were

opened and found to have been constructed in the following manner: A

number of bowlders had been removed from the bed of the slide until a

sufficient cavity had been obtained; this was lined with skins, the

corpse placed therein, with weapons, ornaments, etc., and covered over

with saplings of the mountain aspen; on top of these the removed

bowlders were piled, forming a huge cairn, which appeared large enough

to have marked the last resting place of an elephant. In the immediate

vicinity of the graves were scattered the osseous remains of a number

of horses which had been sacrificed no doubt during the funeral

ceremonies. In one of the graves, said to contain the body of a chief,

in addition to a number of articles useful and ornamental, were found

parts of the skeleton of a boy, and tradition states that a captive

boy was buried alive at this place.

In connection with this mode of burial it may be said that the ancient

Balearic Islanders covered their dead with a heap of stones, but this

ceremony was preceded by an operation which consisted in cutting the

body in small pieces and collecting in a pot.

CREMATION.

Next should be noted this mode of disposing of the dead, a common

custom to a considerable extent among North American tribes,

especially those living on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains,

although we have undoubted evidence that it was also practiced among

the more eastern ones. This rite may be considered as peculiarly

interesting from its great antiquity, for Tegg informs us that it

reached as far back as the Theban war, in the account of which mention

is made of the burning of Menoaeus and Archemorus, who were

contemporary with Jair, eighth judge of Israel. It was common in the

interior of Asia and among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and has also

prevailed among the Hindoos up to the present time. In fact, it is now

rapidly becoming a custom among civilized people.

While there is a certain degree of similarity between the performance

of this rite among the peoples spoken of and the Indians of North

America, yet, did space admit, a discussion might profitably be

entered upon regarding the details of it among the ancients and the

origin of the ceremony. As it is, simple narrations of cremation in

this country, with discursive notes and an account of its origin among

the Nishinams of California, by Stephen Powers, [Footnote: Cont. to N.

A. Ethnol., 1877, vol. iii, p. 341] seem to be all that is required at

this time.

"The moon and the coyote wrought together in creating all things that

exist. The moon was good, but the coyote was bad. In making men and

women the moon wished to so fashion their souls that when they died

they should return to the earth after two or three days, as he himself

does when he dies. But the coyote was evil disposed, and said this

should not be, but that when men died their friends should burn their

bodies, and once a year make a great mourning for them, and the coyote

prevailed. So, presently when a deer died, they burned his body, as

the coyote had decreed, and after a year they made a great mourning

for him. But the moon created the rattlesnake and caused it to bite

the coyote's son, so that he died. Now, though the coyote had been

willing to burn the deer's relations, he refused to burn his own son.

Then the moon said unto him, 'This is your own rule. You would have it

so, and now your son shall be burned like the others.' So he was

burned, and after a year the coyote mourned for him. Thus the law was

established over the coyote also, and, as he had dominion over men, it

prevailed over men likewise.

"This story is utterly worthless for itself, but it has its value in

that it shows there was a time when the California Indians did not

practice cremation, which is also established by other traditions. It

hints at the additional fact that the Nishinams to this day set great

store by the moon; consider it their benefactor in a hundred ways, and

observe its changes for a hundred purposes."

Another myth regarding cremation is given by Adam Johnston, in

Schoolcraft [Footnote: Hist. Indian tribes of the United States, 1854,

part IV, p. 224] and relates to the Bonaks, or root-diggers:

"The first Indians that lived were coyotes. When one of their number

died the body became full of little animals or spirits, as they

thought them. After crawling over the body for a time they took all

manner of shapes, some that of the deer, others the elk, antelope,

etc. It was discovered, however, that great numbers were taking wings,

and for a while they sailed about in the air, but eventually they

would fly off to the moon. The old coyotes or Indians, fearing the

earth might become depopulated in this way, concluded to stop it at

once, and ordered that when one of their people died the body must be

burnt. Ever after they continued to burn the bodies of deceased

persons."

Ross Cox [Footnote: Adventures on the Columbia River, 1831, vol. ii,

p. 387] gives an account of the process as performed by the Tolkotins

of Oregon:

"The ceremonies attending the dead are very singular, and quite

peculiar to this tribe. The body of the deceased is kept nine days

laid out in his lodge, and on the tenth it is buried. For this purpose

a rising ground is selected, on which are laid a number of sticks,

about seven feet long, of cypress, neatly split, and in the

interstices is placed a quantity of gummy wood. During these

operations invitations are dispatched to the natives of the

neighboring villages requesting their attendance at the ceremony. When

the preparations are perfected the corpse is placed on the pile, which

is immediately ignited, and during the process of burning, the

bystanders appear to be in a high state of merriment. If a stranger

happen to be present they invariably plunder him, but if that pleasure

be denied them, they never separate without quarreling among

themselves. Whatever property the deceased possessed is placed about

the corpse, and if he happened to be a person of consequence, his

friends generally purchase a capote, a shirt, a pair of trousers,

etc., which articles are also laid around the pile. If the doctor who

attended him has escaped uninjured, he is obliged to be present at the

ceremony, and for the last time tries his skill in restoring the

defunct to animation. Failing in this, he throws on the body a piece

of leather, or some other article, as a present, which in some measure

appeases the resentment of his relatives, and preserves the

unfortunate quack from being maltreated. During the nine days the

corpse is laid out the widow of the deceased is obliged to sleep along

side it from sunset to sunrise; and from this custom there is no

relaxation even during the hottest days of summer! While the doctor is

performing his last operations she must lie on the pile, and after the

fire is applied to it she cannot stir until the doctor orders her to

be removed, which, however, is never done until her body is completely

covered with blisters. After being placed on her legs, she is obliged

to pass her hands gently through the flame and collect some of the

liquid fat which issues from the corpse, with which she is permitted

to wet her face and body! When the friends of the deceased observe the

sinews of the legs and arms beginning to contract they compel the

unfortunate widow to go again on the pile, and by dint of hard

pressing to straighten those members.

"If during her husband's lifetime she has been known to have committed

any act of infidelity or omitted administering to him savory food or

neglected his clothing, etc, she is now made to suffer severely for

such lapses of duty by his relations, who frequently fling her in the

funeral pile, from which she is dragged by her friends; and thus

between alternate scorching and cooling she is dragged backwards and

forwards until she falls into a state of insensibility.

"After the process of burning the corpse has terminated, the widow

collects the larger bones, which she rolls up in an envelope of birch

bark, and which she is obliged for some years afterwards to carry on

her back. She is now considered and treated as a slave, all the

laborious duties of cooking, collecting fuel, etc., devolve on her.

She must obey the orders of all the women, and even of the children

belonging to the village, and the slightest mistake or disobedience

subjects her to the infliction of a heavy punishment. The ashes of her

husband are carefully collected and deposited in a grave, which it is

her duty to keep free from weeds; and should any such appear, she is

obliged to root them out with her \_fingers\_. During this

operation her husband's relatives stand by and beat her in a cruel

manner until the task is completed or she falls a victim to their

brutality. The wretched widows, to avoid this complicated cruelty,

frequently commit suicide. Should she, however, linger on for three or

four years, the friends of her husband agree to relieve her from her

painful mourning. This is a ceremony of much consequence, and the

preparations for it occupy a considerable time, generally from six to

eight months. The hunters proceed to the various districts in which

deer and beaver abound, and after collecting large quantities of meat

and fur return to the village. The skins are immediately bartered for

guns, ammunition, clothing, trinkets, etc. Invitations are then bent

to the inhabitants of the various friendly villages, and when they

have all assembled the feast commences, and presents are distributed

to each visitor. The object of their meeting is then explained, and

the woman is brought forward, still carrying on her back the bones of

her late husband, which are now removed and placed in a covered box,

which is nailed or otherwise fastened to a post twelve feet high. Her

conduct as a faithful widow is next highly eulogized, and the ceremony

of her manumission is completed by one man powdering on her head the

down of birds and another pouring on it the contents of a bladder of

oil. She is then at liberty to marry again or lead a life of single

blessedness; but few of them, I believe, wish to encounter the risk

attending a second widowhood.

"The men are condemned to a similar ordeal, but they do not bear it

with equal fortitude, and numbers fly to distant quarters to avoid the

brutal treatment which custom has established as a kind of religious

rite."

Perhaps a short review of some of the peculiar and salient points of

this narrative may be permitted. It is stated that the corpse is kept

nine days after death--certainly a long period of time, when it is

remembered that Indians as a rule endeavor to dispose of their dead as

soon as possible. This may be accounted for on the supposition that it

is to give the friends and relatives an opportunity of assembling,

verifying the death, and of making proper preparations for the

ceremony. With regard to the verification of the dead person, William

Sheldon [Footnote: Trans. Am. Antiq. Soc., 1820, vol. 1, p 377] gives

an account of a similar custom which was common among the Caraibs of

Jamaica, and which seems to throw some light upon the unusual

retention of deceased persons by the tribe in question, although it

must be admitted that this is mere hypothesis:

"They had some very extraordinary customs respecting deceased persons.

When one of them died, it was necessary that all his relations should

see him and examine the body in order to ascertain that he died a

natural death. They acted so rigidly on this principle, that if one

relative remained who had not seen the body all the others could not

convince that one that the death was natural. In such a case the

absent relative considered himself as bound in honor to consider all

the other relatives as having been accessories to the death of the

kinsman, and did not rest until he had killed one of them to revenge

the death of the deceased. If a Caraib died in Martinico or Guadaloupe

and his relations lived in St. Vincents, it was necessary to summon

them to see the body, and several months sometime elapsed before it

could be finally interred. When a Caraib died he was immediately

painted all over with \_roucou\_, and had his mustachios and the

black streaks in his face made with a black paint, which was different

from that used in their lifetime. A kind of grave was then dug in the

\_carbet\_ where he died, about 4 feet square and 6 or 7 feet deep.

The body was let down in it, when sand was thrown in, which reached to

the knees, and the body was placed in it in a sitting posture,

resembling that in which they crouched round the fire or the table

when alive, with the elbows on the knees and the palms of the hands

against the cheeks. No part of the body touched the outside of the

grave, which was covered with wood and mats until all the relations

had examined it. When the customary examinations and inspections were

ended the hole was filled, and the bodies afterwards remained

undisturbed. The hair of the deceased was kept tied behind. In this

way bodies have remained several months without any symptoms of decay

or producing any disagreeable smell. The \_roucou\_ not only

preserved them from the sun, air, and insects during their lifetime,

but probably had the same effect after death. The arms of the Caraibs

were placed by them when they were covered over for inspection, and

they were finally buried with them."

Again, we are told that during the burning the by-standers are very

merry. This hilarity is similar to that shown by the Japanese at a

funeral, who rejoice that the troubles and worries of the world are

over for the fortunate dead. The plundering of strangers present, it

may be remembered, also took place among the Indians of the Carolinas.

As already mentioned on a preceding page, the cruel manner in which

the widow is treated seems to be a modification of the Hindoo suttee,

but if the account be true, it would appear that death might be

preferable to such torments.

It is interesting to note that in Corsica, as late as 1743, if a

husband died women threw themselves upon the widow and beat her

severely. Bruhier quaintly remarks that this custom obliged women to

take good care of their husbands.

George Gibbs, in Schoolcraft, [Footnote: Hist. Indian Tribes of the

United States, 1853, part iii, p. 112.] states that among the Indians

of Clear Lake, California, "the body is consumed upon a scaffold built

over a hole, into which the ashes are thrown and covered"

According to Stephen Powers, [Footnote: Contrib. to N. A. Ethnol.,

1877, vol. iii, p. 169.] cremation was common among the Se-nel of

California. He thus relates it--

"The dead are mostly burned. Mr. Willard described to me a scene of

incremation that be once witnessed which was frightful for its

exhibitions of fanatic frenzy and infatuation. The corpse was that of

a wealthy chieftain, and as he lay upon the funeral pyre they placed

in his mouth two gold twenties, and other smaller coins in his ears

and hands, on his breast, etc., besides all his finery, his feather

mantles, plumes, clothing, shell money, his fancy bows, painted

arrows, etc. When the torch was applied they set up a mournful

ululation, chanting and dancing about him, gradually working

themselves into a wild and ecstatic raving, which seemed almost a

demoniacal possession, leaping, howling, lacerating their flesh. Many

seemed to lose all self-control. The younger English-speaking Indians

generally lend themselves charily to such superstitious work,

especially if American spectators are present, but even they were

carried away by the old contagious frenzy of their race. One stripped

off a broadcloth coat, quite new and fine, and ran frantically yelling

and cast it upon the blazing-pile. Another rushed up and was about to

throw on a pile of California blankets, when a white man, to test his

sincerity, offered him $16 for them, jingling the bright coins before

his eyes, but the savage (for such he had become again for the

moment), otherwise so avaricious, hurled him away with a yell of

execration and ran and threw his offering into the flames. Squaws,

even more frenzied, wildly flung upon the pyre all they had in the

world--their dearest ornaments, their gaudiest dresses, their strings

of glittering shells. Screaming, wailing, tearing their hair, beating

their breasts in their mad and insensate infatuation, some of them

would have cast themselves bodily into the flaming ruins and perished

with the chief had they not been restrained by their companions. Then

the bright, swift flames with their hot tongues licked this 'cold

obstruction' into chemic change, and the once 'delighted spirit' of

the savage was borne up....

"It seems as if the savage shared in Shakspeare's shudder at the

thought of rotting in the dismal grave, for it is the one passion of

his superstition to think of the soul of his departed friend set free

and purified by the swift purging heat of the flames, not dragged down

to be clogged and bound in the moldering body, but borne up in the

soft, warm chariots of the smoke toward the beautiful sun, to bask in

his warmth and light, and then, to fly away to the Happy Western Land.

What wonder if the Indian shrinks with unspeakable horror from the

thought of \_burying his friend's soul!\_--of pressing and ramming

down with pitiless clods that inner something which once took such

delight in the sweet light of the sun! What wonder if it takes years

to persuade him to do otherwise and follow our custom! What wonder if

even then he does it with sad fears and misgivings! Why not let him

keep his custom! In the gorgeous landscapes and balmy climate of

California and India incremation is as natural to the savage as it is

for him to love the beauty of the sun. Let the vile Esquimaux and the

frozen Siberian bury their dead if they will; it matters little, the

earth is the same above as below, or to them the bosom of the earth

may seem even the better; but in California do not blame the savage if

he recoils at the thought of going under ground! This soft, pale halo

of the lilac hills--ah, let him console himself if he will with the

belief that his lost friend enjoys it still! The narrator concluded by

saying that they destroyed full $500 worth of property. 'The

blankets,' said he with a fine Californian scorn of such absurd

insensibility to a good bargain, 'the blankets that the American

offered him $16 for were not worth half the money.'

"After death the Se-nel hold that bad Indians return into coyotes.

Others fall off a bridge which all souls must traverse, or are hooked

off by a raging bull at the further end, while the good escape across.

Like the Yokaia and the Konkan, they believe it necessary to nourish

the spirits of the departed for the space of a year. This is generally

done by a squaw, who takes pinole in her blanket, repairs to the scene

of the incremation, or to places hallowed by the memory of the dead,

where she scatters it over the ground, meantime rocking her body

violently to and fro in a dance and chanting the following chorus:

Hel-lel-li-ly,

Hel-lel-lo,

Hel-lel-lu.

"This refrain is repeated over and over indefinitely, but the words

have no meaning whatever."

Mr. Henry Gillman [Footnote: Amer. Natural, November, 1878, p. 753]

has published an interesting account of the exploration of a mound

near Waldo, Fla., in which he found abundant evidence that cremation

had existed among the former Indian population. It is as follows:

"In opening a burial-mound at Cade's Pond, a small body of water

situated about two miles northeastward of Santa Fe Lake, Florida, the

writer found two instances of cremation, in each of which the skull of

the subject, which was unconsumed, was used as the depository of his

ashes. The mound contained besides a large number of human burials,

the bones being much decayed. With them were deposited a great number

of vessels of pottery, many of which are painted in brilliant colors,

chiefly red, yellow, and brown, and some of them ornamented with

indented patterns, displaying not a little skill in the ceramic art,

though they are reduced to fragments. The first of the skulls referred

to was exhumed at a depth of 2 1/2 feet. It rested on its apex (base

uppermost), and was filled with fragments of half incinerated human

bones, mingled with dark-colored dust, and the sand which invariably

sifts into crania under such circumstances. Immediately beneath the

skull lay the greater part of a human tibia, presenting the peculiar

compression known as a platycnemism to the degree of affording a

latitudinal index of .512; while beneath and surrounding it lay the

fragments of a large number of human bones, probably constituting an

entire individual. In the second instance of this peculiar mode in

cremation, the cranium was discovered on nearly the opposite side of

the mound, at a depth of 2 feet, and, like the former, resting on its

apex. It was filled with a black mass--the residuum of burnt human

bones mingled with sand. At three feet to the eastward lay the shaft

of a flattened tibia, which presents the longitudinal index of .527.

Both the skulls were free from all action of fire, and though

subsequently crumbling to pieces on their removal, the writer had

opportunity to observe their strong resemblance to the small

orthocephalic crania which he had exhumed from mounds in Michigan. The

same resemblance was perceptible in the other crania belonging to this

mound. The small, narrow, retreating frontal, prominent parietal

protuberances, rather protuberant occipital, which was not in the

least compressed, the well-defined supraciliary ridges, and the

superior border of the orbits, presenting a quadrilateral outline,

were also particularly noticed. The lower facial bones, including the

maxillaries, were wanting. On consulting such works as are accessible

to him, the writer finds no mention of any similar relics having been

discovered in mounds in Florida or elsewhere. For further particulars

reference may be had to a paper on the subject read before the Saint

Louis meeting of the American Association, August, 1878."

The discoveries made by Mr. Gillman would seem to indicate that the

people whose bones he excavated resorted to a process of partial

cremation, some examples of which will be given on another page. The

use of crania as receptacles is certainly remarkable, if not unique.

The fact is well known to archaeologists that whenever cremation was

practiced by Indians it was customary as a rule to throw into the

blazing pyre all sorts of articles supposed to be useful to the dead,

but no instance is known of such a wholesale destruction of property

as occurred when the Indians of southern Utah burned their dead, for

Dr. E. Foreman relates, in the American Naturalist for July, 1876, the

account of the exploration of a mound in that Territory, which proved

that at the death of a person not only were the remains destroyed by

fire, but all articles of personal property, even the very habitation

which had served as a home. After the process was completed, what

remained unburned was covered with earth and a mound formed.

A. S. Tiffany [Footnote: Proc. Dav. Acad. Nat Soc., 1867-76, p. 64.]

describes what he calls a cremation-furnace, discovered within seven

miles of Davenport, Iowa:

"... Mound seven miles below the city, a projecting point known as

Eagle Point. The surface was of the usual black soil to the depth of

from 6 to 8 inches. Next was found a burnt indurated clay, resembling

in color and texture a medium-burned brick, and about 30 inches in

depth. Immediately beneath this clay was a bed of charred human

remains 6 to 18 inches thick. This rested upon the unchanged and

undisturbed loess of the bluffs, which formed the floor of the pit.

Imbedded in this floor of unburned clay were a few very much

decomposed, but unburned, human bones. No implements of any kind were

discovered The furnace appears to have been constructed by excavating

the pit and placing at the bottom of it the bodies or skeletons which

had possibly been collected from scaffolds, and placing the fuel among

and above the bodies, with a covering of poles or split timbers

extending over and resting upon the earth, with the clay covering

above, which latter we now find resting upon the charred remains. The

ends of the timber covering, where they were protected by the earth

above and below, were reduced to charcoal, parallel pieces of which

were found at right angles to the length of the mound. No charcoal was

found among or near the remains, the combustion there having been

complete. The porous and softer portions of the bones were reduced to

pulverized bone-black. Mr. Stevens also examined the furnace. The

mound had probably not been opened after the burning."

This account is doubtless true, but the inferences may be incorrect.

Many more accounts of cremation among different tribes might be given

to show how prevalent was the custom, but the above are thought to be

sufficiently distinctive to serve as examples.

PARTIAL CREMATION.

Allied somewhat to cremation is a peculiar mode of burial which is

supposed to have taken place among the Cherokees or some other tribe

of North Carolina, and which is thus described by J. W Foster.

[Footnote: Pre-Historic Races, 1873, p. 149.]

"Up to 1819 the Cherokees held possession of this region, when, in

pursuance of a treaty, they vacated a portion of the lands lying in

the valley of the Little Tennessee River. In 1821 Mr. McDowell

commenced farming. During the first season's operations the plowshare,

in passing over a certain portion of a field, produced a hollow

rumbling sound, and in exploring for the cause the first object met

with was a shallow layer of charcoal, beneath which was a slab of

burnt clay about 7 feet in length and 4 feet broad, which, in the

attempt to remove, broke into several fragments. Nothing beneath this

slab was found, but on examining its under side, to his great surprise

there was the mould of a naked human figure. Three of these burned

clay sepulchers were thus raised and examined during the first year of

his occupancy, since which time none have been found until

recently.... During the past season (1872) the plow brought up another

fragment of one of these moulds, revealing the impress of a plump

human arm.

"Col. C. W. Jenkes, the superintendent of the Corundum mines, which

have recently been opened in that vicinity, advises me thus:

"'We have Indians all about us, with traditions extending back for 500

years. In this time they have buried their dead under huge piles of

stones. We have at one point the remains of 600 warriors under one

pile, but a grave has just been opened of the following construction:

A pit was dug, into which the corpse was placed, face upward; then

over it was moulded a covering of mortar, fitting the form and

features. On this was built a hot fire, which formed an entire shield

of pottery for the corpse. The breaking up of one such tomb gives a

perfect cast of the form of the occupant.'

"Colonel Jenkes, fully impressed with the value of these

archaeological discoveries, detailed a man to superintend the

exhumation, who proceeded to remove the earth from the mould, which he

reached through a layer of charcoal, and then with a trowel excavated

beneath it. The clay was not thoroughly baked, and no impression of

the corpse was left, except of the forehead and that portion of the

limbs between the ankles and the knees, and even these portions of the

mould crumbled. The body had been placed east and west, the head

toward the east. 'I had hoped,' continues Mr. McDowell, 'that the cast

in the clay would be as perfect as one I found 51 years ago, a

fragment of which I presented to Colonel Jenkes, with the impression

of a part of the arm on one side and on the other of the fingers, that

had pressed down the soft clay upon the body interred beneath.' The

mound-builders of the Ohio Valley, as has been shown, often placed a

layer of clay over the dead, but not in immediate contact, upon which

they builded fires; and the evidence that cremation was often resorted

to in their disposition are too abundant to be gainsaid."

This statement is corroborated by Mr. Wilcox: [Footnote: Proc. Acad.

Nat. Soc. Phila., Nov 1874, p 168.]

"Mr. Wilcox also stated that when recently in North Carolina his

attention was called to an unusual method of burial by an ancient race

of Indians in that vicinity. In numerous instances burial places were

discovered where the bodies had been placed with the face up and

covered with a coating of plastic clay about an inch thick. A pile of

wood was then placed on top and fired, which consumed the body and

baked the clay, which retained the impression of the body. This was

then lightly covered with earth."

It is thought no doubt can attach to the statements given, but the

cases are remarkable as being the only instances of the kind met with

in the extensive range of reading preparatory to a study of the

subject of burial, although it must be observed that Bruhier states

that the ancient Ethiopians covered the corpses of their dead with

plaster (probably mud), but they did not burn these curious coffins.

Another method, embracing both burial and cremation, has been

practiced by the Pitt River or Achomawi Indians of California, who

"bury the body in the ground in a standing position, the shoulders

nearly even with the ground. The grave is prepared by digging a hole

of sufficient depth and circumference to admit the body, the head

being cut off. In the grave are placed the bows and arrows, bead-work,

trappings, &c., belonging to the deceased; quantities of food,

consisting of dried fish, roots, herbs, &c., were placed with the body

also. The grave was then filled up, covering the headless body; then a

bundle of fagots was brought and placed on the grave by the different

members of the tribe, and on these fagots the head was placed, the

pile fired, and the head consumed to ashes; after this was done, the

female relatives of the deceased, who had appeared as mourners with

their faces blackened with a preparation resembling tar or paint,

dipped their fingers in the ashes of the cremated head and made three

marks on their right cheek. This constituted the mourning garb, the

period of which lasted until this black substance wore off from the

face. In addition to this mourning, the blood female relatives of the

deceased (who, by the way, appeared to be a man of distinction) had

their hair cropped short. I noticed while the head was burning that

the old women of the tribe sat on the ground, forming a large circle,

inside of which another circle of young girls were formed standing and

swaying their bodies to and fro and singing a mournful ditty. This was

the only burial of a male that I witnessed. The custom of burying

females is very different, their bodies being wrapped or bundled up in

skins and laid away in caves, with their valuables, and in some cases

food being placed with them in their mouths. Occasionally money is

left to pay for food in the spirit land."

This account is furnished by General Charles H. Tompkins, deputy

quartermaster-general, United States Army, who witnessed the burial

above related, and is the more interesting as it seems to be the only

well-authenticated case on record, although E. A. Barber [Footnote:

American Natural, Sept., 1878, p. 699.] has described what may

possibly have been a case of cremation like the one above noted:

"A very singular case of aboriginal burial was brought to my notice

recently by Mr. William Klingbeil, of Philadelphia. On the New Jersey

bank of the Delaware River, a short distance below Gloucester City,

the skeleton of a man was found buried in a standing position, in a

high, red, sandy-clay bluff overlooking the stream. A few inches below

the surface the neck bones were found, and below these the remainder

of the skeleton, with the exception of the bones of the hands and

feet. The skull being wanting, it could not be determined whether the

remains were those of an Indian or of a white man, but in either case

the sepulture was peculiarly aboriginal. A careful exhumation and

critical examination by Mr. Klingbeil disclosed the fact that around

the lower extremities of the body had been placed a number of large

stones, which revealed traces of fire, in conjunction with charred

wood, and the bones of the feet had undoubtedly been consumed. This

fact makes it appear reasonably certain that the subject had been

executed, probably as a prisoner of war. A pit had been dug, in which

he was placed erect, and a fire kindled around him. Then he had been

buried alive, or, at least, if he did not survive the fiery ordeal,

his body was imbedded in the earth, with the exception of his head,

which was left protruding above the surface. As no trace of the

cranium could be found, it seems probable that the head had either

been burned or severed from the body and removed, or else left a prey

to ravenous birds. The skeleton, which would have measured fully six

feet in height, was undoubtedly that of a man."

Blacking the face, as is mentioned in the first account, is a custom

known to have existed among many tribes throughout the world, but in

some cases different earths and pigments are used as signs of

mourning. The natives of Guinea smear a chalky substance over their

bodies as an outward expression of grief, and it is well known that

the ancient Israelites threw ashes on their heads and garments.

Placing food with the corpse or in its mouth, and money in the hand,

finds its analogue in the custom of the ancient Romans, who, some time

before interment, placed a piece of money in the corpse's mouth, which

was thought to be Charon's fare for wafting the departed soul over the

Infernal River. Besides this, the corpse's mouth was furnished with a

certain cake, composed of flour, honey, &c. This was designed to

appease the fury of Cerberus, the infernal doorkeeper, and to procure

a safe and quiet entrance. These examples are curious coincidences, if

nothing more.

BURIAL ABOVE GROUND.

Our attention should next be turned to sepulture above the ground,

including lodge, house, box, scaffold, tree, and canoe burial, and the

first example which may be given is that of burial in lodges, which is

by no means common. The description which follows is by Stansbury,

[Footnote: Explorations of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake of Utah,

1852, p. 43.] and relates to the Sioux:

"I put on my moccasins, and, displaying my wet shirt like a flag to

the wind, we proceeded to the lodges which had attracted our

curiosity. There were five of them pitched upon the open prairie, and

in them we found the bodies of nine Sioux laid out upon the ground,

wrapped in their robes of buffalo-skin, with their saddles, spears,

camp-kettles, and all their accoutrements piled up around them. Some

lodges contained three, others only one body, all of which were more

or less in a state of decomposition. A short distance apart from these

was one lodge which, though small, seemed of rather superior

pretensions, and was evidently pitched with great care. It contained

the body of a young Indian girl of sixteen or eighteen years, with a

countenance presenting quite an agreeable expression; she was richly

dressed in leggins of fine scarlet cloth elaborately ornamented; a new

pair of moccasins, beautifully embroidered with porcupine quills, was

on her feet, and her body was wrapped in two superb buffalo-robes

worked in like manner; she had evidently been dead but a day or two,

and to our surprise a portion of the upper part of her person was

bare, exposing the face and a part of the breast, as if the robes in

which she was wrapped had by some means been disarranged, whereas all

the other bodies were closely covered up. It was, at the time, the

opinion of our mountaineers that these Indians must have fallen in an

encounter with a party of Crows; but I subsequently learned that they

had all died of the cholera, and that this young girl, being

considered past recovery, had been arranged by her friends in the

habiliments of the dead, inclosed in the lodge alive, and abandoned to

her fate, so fearfully alarmed were the Indians by this to them novel

and terrible disease."

It might, perhaps, be said that this form of burial was exceptional,

and due to the dread of again using the lodges which had served as the

homes of those afflicted with the cholera, but it is thought such was

not the case, as the writer has notes of the same kind of burial among

the same tribe and of others, notably the Crows, the body of one of

their chiefs (Long Horse) being disposed of as follows.

"The lodge poles inclose an oblong circle some 18 by 22 feet at the

base, converging to a point at least 30 feet high, covered with

buffalo-hides dressed without hair except a part of the tail switch,

which floats outside like, and mingled with human scalps. The

different skins are neatly fitted and sewed together with sinew, and

all painted in seven alternate horizontal stripes of brown and yellow,

decorated with various life-like war scenes. Over the small entrance

is a large bright cross, the upright being a large stuffed white wolf-

skin upon his war lance, and the cross-bar of bright scarlet flannel,

containing the quiver of bow and arrows, which nearly all warriors

still carry, even when armed with repeating rifles. As the cross is

not a pagan but a Christian (which Long Horse was not either by

profession or practice) emblem, it was probably placed there by the

influence of some of his white friends. I entered, finding Long Horse

buried Indian fashion, in full-war dress, paint and feathers, in a

rude coffin, upon a platform about breast high, decorated with

weapons, scalps, and ornaments. A large opening and wind-flap at top

favored ventilation, and though he had lain there in an open coffin a

full month, some of which was hot weather, there was but little

effluvia; in fact, I have seldom found much in a burial-teepee, and

when this mode of burial is thus performed it is less repulsive than

natural to suppose."

This account is furnished by Col. P. W. Norris, superintendent of

Yellowstone National Park, he having been an eye-witness of what he

relates in 1876.

The Blackfeet, Sioux, and Navajos also bury in lodges, and the Indians

of Bellingham Bay, according to Dr. J. F. Hammond, U. S. A., place

their dead in carved wooden sarcophagi, inclosing these with a

rectangular tent of some white material.

Bancroft [Footnote: Nat. Races of Pac. States, 1874, vol. 1, p. 780.]

states that certain of the Indians of Costa Rica, when a death

occurred, deposited the body in a small hut constructed of plaited

palm reeds. In this it is preserved for three years, food being

supplied, and on each anniversary of the death it is redressed and

attended to amid certain ceremonies. The writer has been recently

informed that a similar custom prevailed in Demerara. No authentic

accounts are known of analogous modes of burial among the peoples of

the Old World, although quite frequently the dead were interred

beneath the floors of their houses, a custom which has been followed

by the Mosquito Indians of Central America and one or two of our own

tribes.

BOX BURIAL.

Under this head may be placed those examples furnished by certain

tribes on the Northwest coast who used as receptacles for the dead

wonderfully carved, large wooden chests, these being supported upon a

low platform or resting on the ground. In shape they resemble a small

house with an angular roof, and each one has an opening through which

food may be passed to the corpse.

Some of the tribes formerly living in New York used boxes much

resembling those spoken of, and the Creeks, Choctaws, and Cherokees

did the same.

Capt J. H. Gageby, U. S. A., furnishes the following relating to the

Creeks in Indian Territory:

"... are buried on the surface, in a box or a substitute made of

branches of trees, covered with small branches, leaves, and earth. I

have seen several of their graves, which after a few weeks had become

uncovered and the remains exposed to view. I saw in one Creek grave (a

child's) a small sum of silver, in another (adult male) some

implements of warfare, bow and arrows. They are all interred with the

feet of the corpse to the east. In the mourning ceremonies of the

Creeks the nearer relatives smeared their hair and faces with a

composition made of grease and wood ashes, and would remain in that

condition for several days, and probably a month."

TREE AND SCAFFOLD BURIAL.

We may now pass to what may be called aerial sepulture proper, the

most common examples of which are tree and scaffold burial, quite

extensively practiced even at the present time. From what can be

learned, the choice of this mode depends greatly on the facilities

present; where timber abounds, trees being used; if absent, scaffolds

being employed, the construction of which among the Yanktonais is

related as follows: [Footnote: Life of Belden, the White Chief, 1871,

p. 87.]

"These scaffolds are 7 to 8 feet high, 10 feet long, and 4 or 5 wide.

Four stout posts, with forked ends, are first set firmly in the

ground, and then in the forks are laid cross and side poles, on which

is made a flooring of small poles. The body is then carefully wrapped,

so as to make it watertight, and laid to rest on the poles. The reason

why Indians bury in the open air instead of under the ground is for

the purpose of protecting their dead from wild animals. In new

countries, where wolves and bears are numerous, a dead body will be

dug up and devoured, though it be put many feet under the ground. I

noticed many little buckets and baskets hanging on the scaffolds....

These had contained food and drink for the dead. I asked Washtella if

she was sure the soul ate and drank on its journey, and if the food

did not remain untouched in its basket. She replied, 'Oh, no, the food

and water is always gone.' I looked at the hundreds of ravens perched

on the scaffolds and could account for what became of most of the food

and water."...

John Young, Indian agent at the Blackfeet Agency, Montana, sends the

following account of tree-burial among this tribe:

"Their manner of burial has always been (until recently) to inclose

the dead body in robes or blankets, the best owned by the departed,

closely sewed up, and then, if a male or chief, fasten in the branches

of a tree so high as to be beyond the reach of wolves, and then left

to slowly waste in the dry winds. If the body was that of a squaw or

child, it was thrown into the underbrush or jungle, where it soon

became the prey of the wild animals. The weapons, pipes, &c., of men

were inclosed, and the small toys of children with them. The

ceremonies were equally barbarous, the relatives cutting off,

according to the depth of their grief, one or more joints of the

fingers, divesting themselves of clothing even in the coldest weather,

and filling the air with their lamentations. All the sewing up and

burial process was conducted by the squaws, as the men would not touch

nor remain in proximity to a dead body.

"When an Indian of any importance is departing, the squaws assemble in

the lodge or teepee and sing the death-song, recounting the prowess

and virtues of the dying one, and the oldest man at hand goes into the

open air and solemnly addresses the 'Great Spirit,' bespeaking a

welcome for him into the happy hunting grounds. Whatever property the

deceased has--lodge, arms, or ponies--if a will was made, it was

carefully carried out; if not, all was scrambled for by the relatives.

I have often had, when a man wanted to go out of mourning, to supply

the necessary clothing to cover his nakedness.

"Further mourning observances were and are, the women relatives

getting on some elevated spot near where the body rests, and keeping

up a dismal wail, frequently even in extreme cold weather, the greater

part of the night, and this is kept up often for a month. No cremation

or burying in a grave was practiced by them at any time. Pained by

often coming on skeletons in trees and the stench of half-consumed

remains in the brush, and shocked by the frequent mutilations visible,

I have reasoned with the poor savages. In one case, when a woman was

about to cut off a finger in evidence of her grief for the loss of a

child, she consented on entreaty to cut off only one joint, and on

further entreaty was brought to merely making a cut and letting out

some blood. This much she could not be prevailed upon to forego....

Their mourning and wailing, avoiding the defilement of touching a dead

body, and other customs not connected with burial observances,

strongly point to Jewish origin."

Keating [Footnote: Long's Exped. to the St. Peter's River, 1834, p.

392.] thus describes burial scaffolds:

"On these scaffolds, which are from 8 to 10 feet high, corpses were

deposited in a box made from part of a broken canoe. Some hair was

suspended, which we at first mistook for a scalp, but our guide

informed us that these were locks of hair torn from their heads by the

relatives to testify their grief. In the centre, between the four

posts which supported the scaffold, a stake was planted in the ground;

it was about six feet high, and bore an imitation of human figures,

five of which had a design of a petticoat, indicating them to be

females; the rest, amounting to seven, were naked, and were intended

for male figures; of the latter four were headless, showing that they

had been slain; the three other male figures were unmutilated, but

held a staff in their hand, which, as our guide informed us,

designated that they were slaves. The post, which is an usual

accompaniment to the scaffold that supports a warrior's remains, does

not represent the achievements of the deceased; but those of the

warriors that assembled near his remains danced the dance of the post,

and related their martial exploits. A number of small bones of animals

were observed in the vicinity, which were probably left there after a

feast celebrated in honor of the dead.

"The boxes in which the corpses were placed are so short that a man

could not lie in them extended at full length, but in a country where

boxes and boards are scarce this is overlooked. After the corpses have

remained a certain time exposed, they are taken down and buried. Our

guide, Renville, related to us that he had been a witness to an

interesting, though painful, circumstance that occurred here. An

Indian who resided on the Mississippi, hearing that his son had died

at this spot, came up in a canoe to take charge of the remains and

convey them down the river to his place of abode, but on his arrival

he found that the corpse had already made such progress toward

decomposition as rendered it impossible for it to be removed. He then

undertook, with a few friends, to clean off the bones. All the flesh

was scraped off and thrown into the stream, the bones were carefully

collected into his canoe, and subsequently carried down to his

residence."

Interesting and valuable from the extreme attention paid to details is

the following account of a burial case discovered by Dr. George M.

Sternberg, U. S. A., and furnished by Dr. George A. Otis, U. S. A.,

Army Medical Museum, Washington, D.C. It relates to the Cheyennes of

Kansas:

"The case was found, Brevet Major Sternberg states, on the banks of

Walnut Creek, Kansas, elevated about eight feet from the ground by

four notched poles, which were firmly planted in the ground. The

unusual care manifested in the preparation of the case induced Dr.

Sternberg to infer that some important chief was inclosed in it.

Believing that articles of interest were inclosed with the body, and

that their value would be enhanced if they were received at the Museum

as left by the Indians, Dr. Sternberg determined to send the case

unopened.

"I had the case opened this morning and an inventory made of the

contents. The case consisted of a cradle of interlaced branches of

white willow, about 6 feet long, 3 feet broad, and 3 feet high, with a

flooring of buffalo thongs arranged as a net-work. This cradle was

securely fastened by strips of buffalo-hide to four poles of ironwood

and cottonwood, about 12 feet in length. These poles doubtless rested

upon the forked extremities of the vertical poles described by Dr.

Sternberg. The cradle was wrapped in two buffalo-robes of large size

and well preserved. On removing these an aperture 18 inches square was

found at the middle of the right side of the cradle or basket. Within

appeared other buffalo-robes folded about the remains, and secured by

gaudy-colored sashes. Five robes were successively removed, making

seven in all. Then we came to a series of new blankets folded about

the remains. There were five in all--two scarlet, two blue, and one

white. These being removed, the next wrappings consisted of a striped

white and gray sack, and of a United States Infantry overcoat, like

the other coverings nearly new. We had now come apparently upon the

immediate envelopes of the remains, which it was now evident must be

those of a child. These consisted of three robes, with hoods very

richly ornamented with bead-work. These robes or cloaks were of

buffalo-calf skin about four feet in length, elaborately decorated

with bead-work in stripes. The outer was covered with rows of blue and

white bead-work, the second was green and yellow, and the third blue

and red. All were further adorned by spherical brass bells attached

all about the borders by strings of beads.

"The remains with their wrappings lay upon a matting similar to that

used by the Navajo and other Indians of the southern plains, and upon

a pillow of dirty rags, in which were folded a bag of red paint, bits

of antelope skin, bunches of straps, buckles, &c. The three bead-work

hooded cloaks were now removed, and then we successively unwrapped a

gray woolen double shawl, five yards of blue cassimere, six yards of

red calico, and six yards of brown calico, and finally disclosed the

remains of a child, probably about a year old, in an advanced stage of

decomposition. The cadaver had a beaver-cap ornamented with disks of

copper containing the bones of the cranium, which had fallen apart.

About the neck were long wampum necklaces with \_dentalium, unionida,

and auricula,\_ interspersed with beads. There were also strings of

the pieces of \_Haliotis\_ from the Gulf of California, so valued

by the Indians on this side of the Rocky Mountains. The body had been

elaborately dressed for burial, the costume consisting of a red-

flannel cloak, a red tunic, and frock-leggins adorned with bead-work,

yarn stockings of red and black worsted, and deerskin bead-work

moccasins. With the remains were numerous trinkets, a porcelain image,

a China vase, strings of beads, several toys, a pair of mittens, a fur

collar, a pouch of the skin of \_putorius vison\_, &c."

Another extremely interesting account of scaffold burial, furnished by

Dr. L. S. Turner, U. S. A., Fort Peck, Mont., and relating to the

Sioux, is here given entire, as it refers to certain curious mourning

observances which have prevailed to a great extent over the entire

globe:

"The Dakotas bury their dead in the tops of trees when limbs can be

found sufficiently horizontal to support scaffolding on which to lay

the body, but as such growth is not common in Dakota, the more general

practice is to lay them upon scaffolds from 7 to 10 feet high and out

of the reach of carnivorous animals as the wolf. These scaffolds are

constructed upon four posts set into the ground something after the

manner of the rude drawing which I inclose. Like all labors of a

domestic kind, the preparation for burial is left to the women,

usually the old women. The work begins as soon as life is extinct. The

face, neck, and hands are thickly painted with vermilion, or a species

of red earth found in various portions of the Territory when the

vermilion of the traders cannot be had. The clothes and personal

trinkets of the deceased ornament the body. When blankets are

available, it is then wrapped in one, all parts of the body being

completely enveloped. Around this a dressed skin of buffalo is then

securely wrapped, with the flesh side out, and the whole securely

bound with thongs of skins, either raw or dressed; and for ornament,

when available, a bright-red blanket envelopes all other coverings,

and renders the general scene more picturesque until dimmed by time

and the elements. As soon as the scaffold is ready, the body is borne

by the women, followed by the female relatives, to the place of final

deposit, and left prone in its secure wrappings upon this airy bed of

death. This ceremony is accompanied with lamentations so wild and

weird that one must see and hear in order to appreciate. If the

deceased be a brave, it is customary to place upon or beneath the

scaffold a few buffalo-heads which time has rendered dry and

inoffensive; and if he has been brave in war some of his implements of

battle are placed on the scaffold or securely tied to its timbers. If

the deceased has been a chief, or a soldier related to his chief, it

is not uncommon to slay his favorite pony and place the body beneath

the scaffold, under the superstition, I suppose, that the horse goes

with the man. As illustrating the propensity to provide the dead with

the things used while living, I may mention that some years ago I

loaned to an old man a delft urinal for the use of his son, a young

man who was slowly dying of a wasting disease. I made him promise

faithfully that he would return it as soon as his son was done using

it. Not long afterwards the urinal graced the scaffold which held the

remains of the dead warrior, and as it has not to this day been

returned I presume the young man is not done using it.

"The mourning customs of the Dakotas, though few of them appear to be

of universal observance, cover considerable ground. The hair, never

cut under other circumstances, is cropped off even with the neck, and

the top of the head and forehead, and sometimes nearly the whole body,

are smeared with a species of white earth resembling chalk, moistened

with water. The lodge, teepee, and all the family possessions except

the few shabby articles of apparel worn by the mourners, are given

away and the family left destitute. Thus far the custom is universal

or nearly so. The wives, mother, and sisters of a deceased man, on the

first, second, or third day after the funeral, frequently throw off

their moccasins and leggins and gash their legs with their butcher-

knives, and march through the camp and to the place of burial with

bare and bleeding extremities, while they chant or wail their dismal

songs of mourning. The men likewise often gash themselves in many

places, and usually seek the solitude of the higher point on the

distant prairie, where they remain fasting, smoking, and wailing out

their lamentations for two or three days. A chief who had lost a

brother once came to me after three or four days of mourning in

solitude almost exhausted from hunger and bodily anguish. He had

gashed the outer side of both lower extremities at intervals of a few

inches all the way from the ankles to the top of the hips. His wounds

had inflamed from exposure, and were suppurating freely. He assured me

that he had not slept for several days or nights. I dressed his wounds

with a soothing ointment, and gave him a full dose of an effective

anodyne, after which he slept long and refreshingly, and awoke to

express his gratitude and shake my hand in a very cordial and sincere

manner. When these harsher inflictions are not resorted to, the

mourners usually repair daily for a few days to the place of burial,

toward the hour of sunset, and chant their grief until apparently

assuaged by its own expression. This is rarely kept up for more than

four or five days, but is occasionally resorted to, at intervals, for

weeks, or even months, according to the mood of the bereft. I have

seen few things in life so touching as the spectacle of an old father

going daily to the grave of his child, while the shadows are

lengthening, and pouring out his grief in wails that would move a

demon, until his figure melts with the gray twilight, when, silent and

solemn, he returns to his desolate family. The weird effect of this

observance is sometimes heightened, when the deceased was a grown-up

son, by the old man kindling a little fire near the head of the

scaffold, and varying his lamentations with smoking in silence. The

foregoing is drawn from my memory of personal observances during a

period of more than six years' constant intercourse with several

subdivisions of the Dakota Indians. There may be much which memory has

failed to recall upon a brief consideration."

Perhaps a brief review of Dr. Turner's narrative may not be deemed

inappropriate here.

Supplying food to the dead is a custom which is known to be of great

antiquity; in some instances, as among the ancient Romans, it appears

to have been a sacrificial offering, for it usually accompanied

cremation, and was not confined to food alone, for spices, perfumes,

oil, etc., were thrown upon the burning pile. In addition to this,

articles supposed or known to have been agreeable to the deceased were

also consumed. The Jews did the same, and in our own time the Chinese,

Caribe and many of the tribes of North American Indians followed these

customs. The cutting of hair as a mourning observance is of very great

antiquity, and Tegg relates that among the ancients whole cities and

countries were shaved (\_sic\_) when a great man died. The Persians

not only shaved themselves on such occasions, but extended the same

process to their domestic animals, and Alexander, at the death of

Hephastin, not only cut off the manes of his horses and mules, but

took down the battlements from the city walls, that even towns might

seem in mourning and look bald. Scarifying and mutilating the body has

prevailed from a remote period of time, having possibly replaced, in

the process of evolution, to a certain extent, the more barbarous

practice of absolute personal sacrifice. In later days, among our

Indians, human sacrifices have taken place to only a limited extent,

but formerly many victims were immolated, for at the funerals of the

chiefs of the Florida and Carolina Indians all the male relatives and

wives were slain, for the reason, according to Gallatin, that the

hereditary dignity of Chief or Great Sun descended, as usual, by the

female line; and he, as well as all other members of his clan, whether

male or female, could marry only persons of an inferior clan. To this

day mutilation of the person among some tribes of Indians is usual.

The sacrifice of the favorite horse or horses is by no means peculiar

to our Indians, for it was common among the Romans, and possibly even

among the men of the Reindeer period, for at Solutre, in France, the

writer saw horses' bones exhumed from the graves examined in 1873. The

writer has frequently conversed with Indians upon this subject, and

they have invariably informed him that when horses were slain great

care was taken to select the poorest of the band.

Tree-burial was not uncommon among the nations of antiquity, for the

Colchiens enveloped their dead in sacks of skin and hung them to

trees; the ancient Tartars and Scythians did the same. With regard to

the use of scaffolds and trees as places of deposit for the dead, it

seems somewhat curious that the tribes who formerly occupied the

eastern portion of our continent were not in the habit of burying in

this way, which, from the abundance of timber, would have been a much

easier method than the ones in vogue, while the western tribes, living

in sparsely wooded localities, preferred the other. If we consider

that the Indians were desirous of preserving their dead as long as

possible, the fact of their dead being placed in trees and scaffolds

would lead to the supposition that those living on the plains were

well aware of the desiccating property of the dry air of that arid

region. This desiccation would pass for a kind of mummification.

The particular part of the mourning ceremonies, which consisted in

loud cries and lamentations, may have had in early periods of time a

greater significance than that of a mere expression of grief or woe,

and on this point Bruhier [Footnote: L' des signes de la Mort, 1742,

I, p. 475 \_et seq.\_] seems quite positive, his interpretation

being that such cries were intended to prevent premature burial. He

gives some interesting examples, which may be admitted here.

"The Caribs lament loudly, their wailings being interspersed with

comical remarks and questions to the dead as to why he preferred to

leave this world, having everything to make life comfortable. They

place the corpse on a little seat in a ditch or grave four or five

feet deep, and for ten days they bring food, requesting the corpse to

eat. Finally, being convinced that the dead will neither eat nor

return to life, they throw the food on the head of the corpse and fill

up the grave."

When one died among the Romans, the nearest parents embraced the body,

closed the eyes and mouth, and when one was about to die received the

last words and sighs, and then loudly called the name of the dead,

finally bidding an eternal adieu. This ceremony of calling the

deceased by name was known as the \_conclamation,\_ and was a

custom anterior even to the foundation of Rome. One dying away from

home was immediately removed thither, in order that this might be

performed with greater propriety. In Picardy, as late as 1743, the

relatives threw themselves on the corpse and with loud cries called it

by name, and up to 1855 the Moravians of Pennsylvania, at the death of

one of their number, performed mournful musical airs on brass

instruments from the village church steeple and again at the grave

[Footnote: The writer is informed by Mr. John Henry Boner that this

custom still prevails not only in Pennsylvania, but at the Moravian

settlement of Salem, North Carolina.] This custom, however, was

probably a remnant of the ancient funeral observances, and not to

prevent premature burial, or, perhaps, to scare away bad spirits.

W. L. Hardisty [Footnote: Rep. Smithsonian Inst., 1866, p. 319] gives

a curious example of log-burial in trees, relating to the Loucheux of

British America:

"They inclose the body in a neatly-hollowed piece of wood, and secure

it to two or more trees, about six feet from the ground. A log about

eight feet long is first split in two, and each of the parts carefully

hollowed out to the required size. The body is then inclosed and the

two pieces well lashed together, preparatory to being finally secured,

as before stated, to the trees"

With regard to the use of scaffolds as places of deposit for the dead,

the following theories by Dr. W. Gardner, U.S.A., are given:

"If we come to inquire why the American aborigines placed the dead

bodies of their relatives and friends in trees, or upon scaffolds

resembling trees, instead of burying them in the ground, or burning

them and preserving their ashes in urns, I think we can answer the

inquiry by recollecting that most if not all the tribes of American

Indians, as well as other nations of a higher civilization, believed

that the human soul, spirit or immortal part, was of the form and

nature of a bird, and as these are essentially arboreal in their

habits, it is quite in keeping to suppose that the \_soul-bird\_

would have readier access to its former home or dwelling-place if it

was placed upon a tree or scaffold than if it was buried in the earth;

moreover, from this lofty eyrie the souls of the dead could rest

secure from the attacks of wolves or other profane beasts, and guard

like sentinels the homes and hunting-grounds of their loved ones."

This statement is given because of a corroborative note in the

writer's possession, but he is not prepared to admit it as correct

without farther investigation.

PARTIAL SCAFFOLD BURIAL AND OSSUARIES

Under this heading may be placed the burials which consisted in first

depositing the bodies on scaffolds, where they were allowed to remain

for a variable length of time, after which the bones were cleaned and

deposited either in the earth or in special structures called by

writers "bone-houses." Roman [Footnote: Hist. of Florida, 1775, p.

89.] relates the following concerning the Choctaws:

"The following treatment of the dead is very strange ... As soon as

the deceased is departed, a stage is erected (as in the annexed plate

is represented) and the corpse is laid on it and covered with a bear

skin; if he be a man of note, it is decorated, and the poles painted

red with vermillion and bear's oil; if a child, it is put upon stakes

set across; at this stage the relations come and weep, asking many

questions of the corpse, such as, why he left them? did not his wife

serve him well? was he not contented with his children? had he not

corn enough? did not his land produce sufficient of everything? was he

afraid of his enemies? etc. and this accompanied by loud howlings; the

women will be there constantly, and sometimes with the corrupted air

and heat of the sun faint so as to oblige the bystanders to carry them

home; the men will also come and mourn in the same manner, but in the

night or at other unseasonable times, when they are least likely to be

discovered.

"The stage is fenced round with poles; it remains thus a certain time

but not a fixed space; this is sometimes extended to three or four

months, but seldom more than half that time. A certain set of

venerable old Gentlemen who wear very long nails as a distinguishing

badge on the thumb, fore and middle finger of each hand, constantly

travel through the nation (when i was there, i was told there were but

five of this respectable order) that one of them may acquaint those

concerned, of the expiration of this period, which is according to

their own fancy; the day being come, the friends and relations

assemble near the stage, a fire is made, and the respectable operator,

after the body is taken down, with his nails tears the remaining flesh

off the bones, and throws it with the entrails into the fire, where it

is consumed; then he scrapes the bones and burns the scrapings

likewise; the head being painted red with vermillion is with the rest

of the bones put into a neatly made chest (which for a Chief is also

made red) and deposited in the loft of a hut built for that purpose,

and called bone house; each town has one of these; after remaining

here one year or thereabouts, if he be a man of any note, they take

the chest down, and in an assembly of relations and friends they weep

once more over him, refresh the colour of the head, paint the box, and

then deposit him to lasting oblivion.

"An enemy nor one who commits suicide is buried under the earth as one

to be directly forgotten and unworthy the above ceremonial obsequies

and mourning."

Jones [Footnote: Antiquities of the Southern Indiana, 1873, p. 105.]

quotes one of the older writers, as follows, regarding the

\_Natchez\_ tribe:

"Among the Natchez the dead were either inhumed or placed in tombs.

These tombs were located within or very near their temples. They

rested upon four forked sticks fixed fast in the ground, and were

raised some three feet above the earth. About eight feet long and a

foot and a half wide, they were prepared for the reception of a single

corpse. After the body was placed upon it, a basket-work of twigs was

woven around and covered with mud, an opening being left at the head,

through which food was presented to the deceased. When the flesh had

all rotted away, the bones were taken out, placed in a box made of

canes, and then deposited in the temple. The common dead were mourned

and lamented for a period of three days. Those who fell in battle were

honored with a more protracted and grievous lamentation."

Bartram [Footnote: Bartram's Travel, 1791, p. 516.] gives a somewhat

different account from Roman of burial among the Choctaws of Carolina:

"The Choctaws pay their last duties and respect to the deceased in a

very different manner. As soon as a person is dead, they erect a

scaffold 18 or 20 feet high in a grove adjacent to the town, where

they lay the corps, lightly covered with a mantle; here it is suffered

to remain, visited and protected by the friends and relations, until

the flesh becomes putrid, so as easily to part from the bones; then

undertakers, who make it their business, carefully strip the flesh

from the bones, wash and cleanse them, and when dry and purified by

the air, having provided a curiously-wrought chest or coffin,

fabricated of bones and splints, they place all the bones therein,

which is deposited in the bone-house, a building erected for that

purpose in every town; and when this house is full a general solemn

funeral takes place; when the nearest kindred or friends of the

deceased, on a day appointed, repair to the bone-house, take up the

respective coffins, and, following one another in order of seniority,

the nearest relations and connections attending their respective

corps, and the multitude following after them, all as one family, with

united voice of alternate allelujah and lamentation, slowly proceeding

on to the place of general interment, when they place the coffins in

order, forming a pyramid; [Footnote: Some ingenious men whom I have

conversed with have given it as their opinion that all those pyramidal

artificial hills, usually called Indian mounds, were raised on this

occasion, and are generally sepulchres. However, I am of different

opinion.] and, lastly, cover all over with earth, which raises a

conical hill or mount; when they return to town in order of solemn

procession, concluding the day with a festival, which is called the

feast of the dead."

Morgan [Footnote: League of the Iroquois 1851, p. 171] also alludes to

this mode of burial:

"The body of the deceased was exposed upon a hark scaffolding erected

upon poles or secured upon the limbs of trees, where it was left to

waste to a skeleton. After this had been effected by the process of

decomposition in the open air, the bones were removed either to the

former house of the deceased, or to a small bark-house by its side,

prepared for their reception. In this manner the skeletons of the

whole family were preserved from generation to generation by the

filial or parental affection of the living After the lapse of a number

of years, or in a season of public insecurity, or on the eve of

abandoning a settlement, it was customary to collect these skeletons

from the whole community around and consign them to a common resting

place.

"To this custom, which is not confined to the Iroquois, is doubtless

to be ascribed the barrows and bone-mounds which have been found in

such numbers in various parts of the country. On opening these mounds

the skeletons are usually found arranged in horizontal layers, a

conical pyramid, those in each layer radiating from a common center.

In other cases they are found placed promiscuously."

D. G. Brinton [Footnote: Myths of the New World, 1868. p. 256.]

likewise gives an account of the interment of collected bones:

"East of the Mississippi nearly every nation was accustomed at stated

periods--usually once in eight or ten years--to collect and clean the

osseous remains of those of its number who had died in the intervening

time, and inter them in one common sepulcher, lined with choice furs,

and marked with a mound of wood, stone, or earth. Such is the origin

of those immense tumuli filled with the mortal remains of nations and

generations, which the antiquary, with irreverent curiosity, so

frequently chances upon in all portions of our territory. Throughout

Central America the same usage obtained in various localities, as

early writers and existing monuments abundantly testify. Instead of

interring the bones, were they those of some distinguished chieftain,

they were deposited in the temples or the council-houses, usually in

small chests of canes or splints. Such were the charnel-houses which

the historians of De Soto's expedition so often mention, and these are

the 'arks' Adair and other authors who have sought to trace the

descent of the Indians from the Jews have likened to that which the

ancient Israelites bore with them in their migrations.

"A widow among the Tahkalis was obliged to carry the bones of her

deceased husband wherever she went for four years, preserving them in

such a casket, handsomely decorated with feathers (Rich. Arc. Exp, p.

260). The Caribs of the mainland adopted the custom for all, without

exception. About a year after death the bones were cleaned, bleached,

painted, wrapped in odorous balsams, placed in a wicker basket, and

kept suspended from the door of their dwelling (Gumilla Hist. del

Orinoco I., pp. 199, 202, 204). When the quantity of these heirlooms

became burdensome they were removed to some inaccessible cavern and

stowed away with reverential care."

George Catlin [Footnote: Hist. N. A. Indians, 1844, I, p. 90.]

describes what he calls the "Golgothas" of the Mandans:

"There are several of these golgothas, or circles of twenty or thirty

feet in diameter, and in the center of each ring or circle is a little

mound of three feet high, on which uniformly rest two buffalo skulls

(a male and female), and in the center of the little mound is erected

'a medicine pole,' of about twenty feet high, supporting many curious

articles of mystery and superstition, which they suppose have the

power of guarding and protecting this sacred arrangement.

"Here, then, to this strange place do these people again resort to

evince their further affections for the dead, not in groans and

lamentations, however, for several years have cured the anguish, but

fond affection and endearments are here renewed, and conversations are

here held and cherished with the dead. Each one of these skulls is

placed upon a bunch of wild sage, which has been pulled and placed

under it. The wife knows, by some mark or resemblance, the skull of

her husband or her child which lies in this group, and there seldom

passes a day that she does not visit it with a dish of the best-cooked

food that her wigwam affords, which she sets before the skull at

night, and returns for the dish in the morning. As soon as it is

discovered that the sage on which the skull rests is beginning to

decay, the woman cuts a fresh bunch and places the skull carefully

upon it, removing that which was under it.

"Independent of the above-named duties, which draw the women to this

spot, they visit it from inclination, and linger upon it to hold

converse and company with the dead. There is scarcely an hour in a

pleasant day but more or less of these women may be seen sitting or

lying by the skull of their child or husband, talking to it in the

most pleasant and endearing language that they can use (as they were

wont to do in former days), and seemingly getting an answer back."

From these accounts it may be seen that the peculiar customs which

have been described by the authors cited were not confined to any

special tribe or area of country, although they do not appear to have

prevailed among the Indians of the northwest coast, so far as known.

SUPERTERRENE AND AERIAL BURIAL IN CANOES.

The next mode of burial to be remarked is that of deposit in canoes,

either supported on posts, on the ground, or swung from trees, and is

common only to the tribes inhabiting the northwest coast. From a

number of examples, the following, relating to the Clallams and

furnished by the Rev. M. Eells, missionary to the Skokomish Agency,

Washington Territory, is selected:

"The deceased was a woman about thirty or thirty-five years of age,

dead of consumption. She died in the morning, and in the afternoon I

went to the house to attend the funeral. She had then been placed in a

Hudson's Bay Company's box for a coffin, which was about 3 1/2 feet

long, 1 3/4 wide, and 1 1/2 high. She was very poor when she died,

owing to her disease, or she could not have been put in this box. A

fire was burning near by, where a large number of her things had been

consumed, and the rest were in three boxes near the coffin. Her mother

sang the mourning song, sometimes with others, and often saying. 'My

daughter, my daughter, why did you die?' and similar words. The burial

did not take place until the next day, and I was invited to go. It was

an aerial burial, in a canoe. The canoe was about 25 feet long. The

posts, of old Indian hewed boards, were about a foot wide. Holes were

cut in these, in which boards were placed, on which the canoe rested.

One thing I noticed while this was done which was new to me, but the

significance of which I did not learn. As fast as the holes were cut

in the posts green leaves were gathered and placed over the holes

until the posts were put in the ground. The coffin-box and the three

others containing her things were placed in the canoe and a roof of

boards made over the central part, which was entirely covered with

white cloth. The head part and the foot part of her bedstead were then

nailed on to the posts, which front the water, and a dress nailed on

each of these. After pronouncing the benediction, all left the hill

and went to the beach except her father, mother, and brother, who

remained ten or fifteen minutes, pounding on the canoe and mourning.

They then came down and made a present to those persons who were

there--a gun to me, a blanket to each of two or three others, and a

dollar and a half to each of the rest, there being about fifteen

persons present. Three or four of them then made short speeches, and

we came home.

"The reason why she was buried thus is said to be because she is a

prominent woman in the tribe. In about nine months it is expected that

there will be a '\_pot-latch\_' or distribution of money near this

place, and as each tribe shall come they will send a delegation of two

or three men, who will carry a present and leave it at the grave; soon

after that shall be done she will be buried in the ground. Shortly

after her death both her father and mother cut off their hair as a

sign of their grief."

George Gibbs [Footnote: Cont. N. A. Ethnol. 1877, I, p. 200.] gives a

most interesting account of the burial ceremonies of the Indians of

Oregon and Washington Territory, which is here reproduced in its

entirety, although it contains examples of other modes of burial

besides that in canoes; but to separate the narrative would destroy

the thread of the story:

"The common mode of disposing of the dead among the fishing tribes was

in canoes. These were generally drawn into the woods at some prominent

point a short distance from the village, and sometimes placed between

the forks of trees or raised from the ground on posts. Upon the

Columbia River the Tsinuk had in particular two very noted cemeteries,

a high isolated bluff about three miles below the mouth of the

Cowlitz, called Mount Coffin, and one some distance above, called

Coffin Rock. The former would appear not to have been very ancient.

Mr. Broughton, one of Vancouver's lieutenants, who explored the river,

makes mention only of \_several\_ canoes at this place; and Lewis

and Clarke, who noticed the mount, do not speak of them at all, but at

the time of Captain Wilkes's expedition it is conjectured that there

were at least 3,000. A fire caused by the carelessness of one of his

party destroyed the whole, to the great indignation of the Indians.

"Captain Belcher, of the British ship Sulphur, who visited the river

in 1839, remarks: 'In the year 1836 [1826] the small-pox made great

ravages, and it was followed a few years since by the ague.

Consequently Corpse Island and Coffin Mount, as well as the adjacent

shores, were studded not only with canoes, but at the period of our

visit the skulls and skeletons were strewed about in all directions.'

This method generally prevailed on the neighboring coasts, as at Shoal

Water Bay, etc. Farther up the Columbia, as at the Cascades, a

different form was adopted, which is thus described by Captain Clarke:

"About half a mile below this house, in a very thick part of the

woods, is an ancient Indian burial-place; it consists of eight vaults,

made of pine or cedar boards, closely connected, about eight feet

square and six in height, the top securely covered with wide boards,

sloping a little, so as to convey off the rain. The direction of all

these is east and west, the door being on the eastern side, and

partially stopped with wide boards, decorated with rude pictures of

men and other animals. On entering we found in some of them four dead

bodies, carefully wrapped in skins, tied with cords of grass and bark,

lying on a mat in a direction east and west, the other vaults

contained only bones, which in some of them were piled to a height of

four feet; on the tops of the vaults and on poles attached to them

hung brass kettles and frying-pans with holes in their bottoms,

baskets, bowls, sea-shells, skins, pieces of cloth, hair bags of

trinkets, and small bones, the offerings of friendship or affection,

which have been saved by a pious veneration from the ferocity of war

or the more dangerous temptation of individual gain. The whole of the

walls as well as the door were decorated with strange figures cut and

painted on them, and besides these were several wooden images of men,

some of them so old and decayed as to have almost lost their shape,

which were all placed against the sides of the vault. These images, as

well as those in the houses we have lately seen, do not appear to be

at all the objects of adoration in this place; they were most probably

intended as resemblances of those whose decease they indicate; and

when we observe them in houses they occupy the most conspicuous part,

but are treated more like ornaments than objects of worship. Near the

vaults which are still standing are the remains of others on the

ground, completely rotted and covered with moss; and as they are

formed of the most durable pine and cedar timber, there is every

appearance that for a very long series of years this retired spot has

been the depository for the Indians near this place."

"Another depository of this kind upon an island in the river a few

miles above gave it the name of Sepulcher Island. The \_Watlala\_,

a tribe of the Upper Tsinuk, whose burial place is here described, are

now nearly extinct; but a number of the sepulchers still remain in

different states of preservation. The position of the body, as noticed

by Clarke, is, I believe, of universal observance, the head being

always placed to the west. The reason assigned to me is that the road

to the \_me-mel-us-illa-hee\_, the country of the dead, is toward

the west, and if they place them otherwise they would be confused.

East of the Cascade Mountains the tribes whose habits are equestrian,

and who use canoes only for ferriage or transportation purposes, bury

their dead, usually heaping over them piles of stones, either to mark

the spot or to prevent the bodies from being exhumed by the prairie

wolf. Among the Yakamas we saw many of their graves placed in

conspicuous points of the basaltic walls which line the lower valleys,

and designated by a clump of poles planted over them, from which

fluttered various articles of dress. Formerly these prairie tribes

killed horses over the graves--a custom now falling into disuse in

consequence of the teachings of the whites.

"Upon Puget Sound all the forms obtain in different localities. Among

the Makah of Cape Flattery the graves are covered with a sort of box,

rudely constructed of boards, and else where on the Sound the same

method is adopted in some cases, while in others the bodies are placed

on elevated scaffolds. As a general thing, however, the Indians upon

the water placed the dead in canoes, while those at a distance from it

buried them. Most of the graves are surrounded with strips of cloth,

blankets, and other articles of property. Mr. Cameron, an English

gentleman residing at Esquimalt Harbor, Vancouver Island, informed me

that on his place there were graves having at each corner a large

stone, the interior space filled with rubbish. The origin of these was

unknown to the present Indians.

"The distinctions of rank or wealth in all cases were very marked;

persons of no consideration and slaves being buried with very little

care or respect. Vancouver, whose attention was particularly attracted

to their methods of disposing of the dead, mentions that at Port

Discovery he saw baskets suspended to the trees containing the

skeletons of young children, and, what is not easily explained, small

square boxes, containing, apparently, food. I do not think that any of

these tribes place articles of food with the dead, nor have I been

able to learn from living Indians that they formerly followed that

practice. What he took for such I do not understand. He also mentions

seeing in the same place a cleared space recently burned over, in

which the skulls and bones of a number lay among the ashes. The

practice of burning the dead exists in parts of California and among

the Tshimsyan of Fort Simpson. It is also pursued by the "Carriers" of

New California, but no intermediate tribes, to my knowledge, follow

it. Certainly those of the Sound do not at present.

"It is clear from Vancouver's narrative that some great epidemic had

recently passed through the country, as manifested by the quantity of

human remains uncared for and exposed at the time of his visit, and

very probably the Indians, being afraid, had burned a house, in which

the inhabitants had perished with the dead in it. This is frequently

done. They almost invariably remove from an place where sickness has

prevailed, generally destroying the house also.

"At Penn Cove Mr. Whidbey, one of Vancouver's officers, noticed

several sepulchers formed exactly like a sentry-box. Some of them were

open, and contained the skeletons, of many young children tied up in

baskets. The smaller bones of adults were likewise noticed, but not

one of the limb bones was found; which gave rise to an opinion that

these, by the living inhabitants of the neighborhood, were

appropriated to useful purposes, such as pointing their arrows,

spears, or other weapons.

"It is hardly necessary to say that such a practice is altogether

foreign to Indian character. The bones of the adults had probably been

removed and buried elsewhere. The corpses of children are variously

disposed of; sometimes by suspending them, at others by placing in the

hollows of trees, A cemetery devoted to infants is, however, an

unusual occurrence. In cases of chiefs or men of note much pomp was

used in the accompaniments of the rite. The canoes were of great size

and value--the war or state canoes of the deceased. Frequently one was

inverted over that holding the body, and in one instance, near

Shoalwater Bay, the corpse was deposited in a small canoe, which again

was placed in a larger one and covered with a third. Among the

\_Tsinuk\_ and \_Tsihalis\_ the \_tamahno-us\_ board of the owner was

placed near him. The Puget Sound Indians do not make these

\_tamahno-us\_ hoards, but they sometimes constructed effigies of

their chiefs, resembling the person as nearly as possible, dressed in

his usual costume, and wearing the articles of which he was fond. One

of these, representing the Skagit chief Sneestum, stood very

conspicuously upon a high bank on the eastern side of Whidbey Island

The figures observed by Captain Clarke at the Cascades were either of

this description or else the carved, posts which had ornamented the

interior of the houses of the deceased, and were connected with the

superstition of the \_tamahno-us\_. The most valuable articles of

property were put into or hung up around the grave, being first

carefully rendered unserviceable, and the living family were literally

stripped to do honor to the dead. No little self-denial must have been

practiced in parting with articles so precious, but those interested

frequently had the least to say on the subject. The graves of women

were distinguished by a cup, a Kamas stick, or other implement of

their occupation, and by articles of dress.

"Slaves were killed in proportion to the rank and wealth of the

deceased. In some instances they were starved to death, or even tied

to the dead body and left to perish thus horribly. At present this

practice has been almost entirely given up, but till within a very few

years it was not uncommon. A case which occurred in 1850 has been

already mentioned. Still later, in 1853, Toke, a Tsinuk chief living

at Shoalwater Bay, undertook to kill a slave girl belonging to his

daughter, who, in dying, had requested that this might be done. The

woman fled, and was found by some citizens in the woods half starved.

Her master attempted to reclaim her, but was soundly thrashed and

warned against another attempt.

"It was usual in the case of chiefs to renew or repair for a

considerable length of time the materials and ornaments of the burial-

place. With the common class of persons family pride or domestic

affection was satisfied with the gathering together of the bones after

the flesh had decayed and wrapping them in a new mat. The violation of

the grave was always regarded as an offense of the first magnitude and

provoked severe revenge. Captain Belcher remarks, 'Great secrecy is

observed in all their burial ceremonies, partly from fear of

Europeans, and as among themselves they will instantly punish by death

any violation of the tomb or wage war if perpetrated by another tribe,

so they are inveterate and tenaceously bent on revenge should they

discover that any act of the kind has been perpetrated by a white man.

It is on record that part of the crew of a vessel on her return to

this port (the Columbia) suffered because a person who belonged to her

(but not then in her) was known to have taken a skull, which, from the

process of flattening, had become an object of curiosity.' He adds,

however, that at the period of his visit to the river 'the skulls and

skeletons were scattered about in all directions; and as I was on most

of their positions unnoticed by the natives, I suspect the feeling

does not extend much beyond their relatives, and then only till decay

has destroyed body, goods, and chattels. The chiefs, no doubt, are

watched, as their canoes are repainted, decorated, and greater care

taken by placing them in sequestered spots.'

"The motive for sacrificing or destroying property on occasion of

death will be referred to in treating of their religious ideas.

Wailing for the dead is continued for a long time, and seems to be

rather a ceremonial performance than an act of spontaneous grief. The

duty, of course, belongs to the woman, and the early morning is

usually chosen for the purpose. They go out alone to some place a

little distant from the lodge or camp, and in a loud, sobbing voice

repeat a sort of stereotyped formula, as, for instance, a mother, on

the loss of her child, \_'Ah seahb shed-da bud-dah ah ta bud! ad-de-

dah,\_ Ah chief!' 'My child dead, alas!' When in dreams they see any

of their deceased friends this lamentation is renewed."

With most of the Northwest Indians it was quite common, as mentioned

by Mr. Gibbs, to kill or bury with the dead a living slave, who,

failing to die within three days was strangled by another slave, but

the custom has also prevailed among other tribes and peoples, in many

cases the individuals offering themselves as voluntary sacrifices.

Bancroft states "that in Panama, Nata, and some other districts, when

a cacique died those of his concubines that loved him enough, those

that he loved ardently and so appointed, as well as certain servants,

killed themselves and were interred with him. This they did in order

that they might wait upon him in the land of spirits." It is well

known to all readers of history to what an extreme this revolting

practice has prevailed in Mexico, South America, and Africa.

AQUATIC BURIAL

As a confirmed rite or ceremony, this mode of disposing of the dead

has never been followed by any of our North American Indians, although

occasionally the dead have been disposed of by sinking in springs or

watercourses, by throwing into the sea, or by setting afloat in

canoes. Among the nations of antiquity the practice was not uncommon,

for we are informed that the Ichtliyophagi, or fish-eaters, mentioned

by Ptolemy, living in a region bordering on the Persian Gulf,

invariably committed their dead to the sea, thus repaying the

obligations they had incurred to its inhabitants. The Lotophagians did

the same, and the Hyperboreans, with a commendable degree of

forethought for the survivors, when ill or about to die, threw

themselves into the sea. The burial of Baldor "the beautiful," it may

be remembered, was in a highly decorated ship, which was pushed down

to the sea, set on fire, and committed to the waves. The Itzas of

Guatemala, living on the islands of Lake Peter, according to Bancroft,

are said to have thrown their dead into the lake for want of room. The

Indiana of Nootka Sound and the Chinooks were in the habit of thus

getting rid of their dead slaves, and, according to Timberlake, the

Cherokees of Tennessee "seldom bury the dead, but threw them into the

river."

After a careful search for well-authenticated instances of burial,

aquatic and semi-aquatic, but two have been found, which are here

given. The first relates to the Gosh-Utes, and is by Capt J. H.

Simpson: [Footnote: Exploration Great Salt Lake Valley, Utah, 1859, p.

48.]

"Skull Valley, which is a part of the Great Salt Lake Desert, and

which we have crossed to-day, Mr. George W. Bean, my guide over this

route last fall, says derives its name from the number of skulls which

have been found in it, and which have arisen from the custom of the

Goshute Indians burying their dead in springs, which they sink with

stones or keep down with sticks. He says he has actually seen the

Indians bury their dead in this way near the town of Provo, where he

resides."

As corroboration of this statement, Captain Simpson mentions in

another part of the volume that, arriving at a spring one evening,

they were obliged to dig out the skeleton of an Indian from the mud at

the bottom before using the water.

This peculiar mode of burial is entirely unique, so far as known, and

but from the well-known probity of the relator might well be

questioned, especially when it is remembered that in the country

spoken of water is quite scarce and Indians are careful not to pollute

the streams or springs near which they live. Conjecture seems useless

to establish a reason for this disposition of the dead.

The second example is by Catlin [Footnote: Hist. North American

Indians, 1844, II, p. 141] and relates to the Chinook.

"... This little cradle has a strap which passes over the woman's

forehead whilst the cradle rides on her back, and if the child dies

during its subjection to this rigid mode its cradle becomes its

coffin, forming a little canoe, in which it lie floating on the water

in some sacred pool, where they are often in the habit of fastening

their canoes containing the dead bodies of the old and young, or,

which is often the case, elevated into the branches of trees, where

their bodies are left to decay and their bones to dry whilst they are

bandaged in man skins and ominously packed in their canoes, with

paddles to propel and ladles to bail them out, and provisions to last

and pipes to smoke as they are performing their 'long journey after

death to their contemplated hunting grounds,' which these people think

is to be performed in their canoes."

LIVING SEPULCHERS

This is a term quaintly used by the learned M Pierre Muret to express

the devouring of the dead by birds and animals or the surviving

friends and relatives. Exposure of the dead to animals and birds has

already been mentioned, but in the absence of any positive proof it is

not believed that the North American Indians followed the custom,

although cannibalism may have prevailed to a limited extent. It is

true that a few accounts are given by authors, but these are

considered to be so apochryphal in character that for the present it

is deemed prudential to omit them. That such a means of disposing of

the dead was not in practice is somewhat remarkable when we take into

consideration how many analogies have been found in comparing old and

new world funeral observances, and the statements made by Bruhier,

Lafitau, Muret, and others, who give a number of examples of this

peculiar mode of burial.

For instance, the Tartars sometimes ate their dead, and the

Massageties, Derbices, and Effedens did the same, having previously

strangled the aged and mixed their flesh with mutton. Horace and

Tertulian both affirm that the Irish and ancient Britons devoured the

dead, and Lafitau remarks that certain Indians of South America did

the same, esteeming this mode of disposal more honorable and much to

be preferred than to rot and be eaten by worms. To the credit of our

savages, this barbarous and revolting practice is not believed to have

been practiced by them.

MOURNING, FEASTS, FOOD, DANCES, SONGS, GAMES, POSTS, FIRES, AND

SUPERSTITIONS IN CONNECTION WITH BURIAL.

The above subjects are coincidental with burial, and some of them,

particularly mourning, have been more or less treated of in this

paper, yet it may be of advantage to here give a few of the collected

examples, under separate heads.

MOURNING.

One of the most carefully described scenes of mourning at the death of

a chief of the Crows is related in the life of Beckwourth, [Footnote:

Autobiography of James Beckwourth, 1856, p. 260.] who for many years

lived among this people, finally attaining great distinction as a

warrior.

"I dispatched a herald to the village to inform them of the head

chief's death, and then, burying him according to his directions, we

slowly proceeded homewards. My very soul sickened at the contemplation

of the scenes that would be enacted at my arrival. When we drew in

sight of the village, we found every lodge laid prostrate. We entered

amid shrieks, cries, and yells. Blood was streaming from every

conceivable part of the bodies of all who were old enough to

comprehend their loss. Hundreds of fingers were dismembered; hair torn

from the head lay in profusion about the paths, wails and moans in

every direction assailed the ear, where unrestrained joy had a few

hours before prevailed. This fearful mourning lasted until evening of

the next day....

"A herald having been dispatched to our other villages to acquaint them

with the death of our head chief and request them to assemble at the

Rose Bud in order to meet our village and devote themselves to a

general time of mourning there met in conformity with this summons

over ten thousand Crows at the place indicated. Such a scene of

disorderly vociferous mourning no imagination can conceive nor any pen

portray. Long Hair cut off a large roll of his hair, a thing he was

never known to do before. The cutting and hacking of human flesh

exceeded all my previous experience; fingers were dismembered as

readily as twigs, and blood was poured out like water. Many of the

warriors would cut two gashes nearly the entire length of their arm,

then separating the skin from the flesh at one end, would grasp it in

their other hand and rip it asunder to the shoulder. Others would

carve various devices upon their breasts and shoulders and raise the

skin in the same manner to make the scars show to advantage after the

wound was healed. Some of their mutilations were ghastly and my heart

sickened to look at them, but they would not appear to receive any

pain from them."

From I. L. Mahan, United States Indian Agent for the Chippewas of Lake

Superior, Red Cliff, Wisconsin, the following detailed account of

mourning has been received.

There is probably no people that exhibit more sorrow and grief for

their dead than they. The young widow mourns the loss of her husband;

by day as by night she is heard silently sobbing; she is a constant

visitor to the place of rest; with the greatest reluctance will she

follow the raised camp. The friends and relatives of the young mourner

will incessantly devise methods to distract her mind from the thought

of her lost husband. She refuses nourishment but as nature is

exhausted she is prevailed upon to partake of food; the supply is

scant, but on every occasion the best and largest proportion is

deposited upon the grave of her husband. In the mean time the female

relatives of the deceased have according to custom submitted to her

charge a parcel made up of different cloths ornamented with bead-work

and eagles' feathers which she is charged to keep by her side--the

place made vacant by the demise of her husband--a reminder of her

widowhood. She is therefore for a term of twelve moons not permitted

to wear any finery, neither is she permitted to slicken up and comb

her head; this to avoid attracting attention. Once in a while a female

relative of deceased, commiserating with her grief and sorrow, will

visit her and voluntarily proceed to comb out the long-neglected and

matted hair. With a jealous eye a vigilant watch is kept over her

conduct during the term of her widowhood, yet she is allowed the

privilege to marry, any time during her widowhood, an unmarried

brother or cousin, or a person of the same \_Dodem\_ [\_sic\_]

(family mark) of her husband.

"At the expiration of her term, the vows having been faithfully

performed and kept, the female relatives of deceased assemble and,

with greetings commensurate to the occasion, proceed to wash her face,

comb her hair, and attire her person with new apparel, and otherwise

demonstrating the release from her vow and restraint. Still she has

not her entire freedom. If she will still refuse to marry a relative

of the deceased and will marry another, she then has to purchase her

freedom by giving a certain amount of goods and whatever else she

might have manufactured during her widowhood in anticipation of the

future now at hand. Frequently, though, during widowhood the vows are

disregarded and an inclination to flirt and play courtship or form an

alliance of marriage outside of the relatives of the deceased is being

indulged, and when discovered the widow is set upon by the female

relatives, her slick braided hair is shorn close up to the back of her

neck, all her apparel and trinkets are torn from her person, and a

quarrel frequently results fatally to some member of one or the other

side."

The substitution of a reminder for the dead husband, made from rags,

furs, and other articles, is not confined alone to the Chippewas,

other tribes having the same custom. In some instances the widows are

obliged to carry around with them, for a variable period, a bundle

containing the bones of the deceased consort.

Benson [Footnote: Life among the Choctaws, 1860, p. 294.] gives the

following account of their funeral ceremonies, embracing the

disposition of the body, mourning feast and dance:

"Their funeral is styled by them 'the last cry.'

"When the husband dies the friends assemble, prepare the grave, and

place the corpse in it, but do not fill it up. The gun, bow and

arrows, hatchet and knife are deposited in the grave. Poles are

planted at the head and the foot, upon which flags are placed; the

grave is then enclosed by pickets driven in the ground. The funeral

ceremonies now begin, the widow being the chief mourner. At night and

morning she will go to the grave and pour forth the most piteous cries

and wailings. It is not important that any other member of the family

should take any very active part in the 'cry,' though they do

participate to some extent.

"The widow wholly neglects her toilet, while she daily goes to the

grave during one entire \_moon\_ from the date when the death

occurred. On the evening of the last day of the moon the friends all

assemble at the cabin of the disconsolate widow, bringing provisions

for a sumptuous feast, which consists of corn and jerked beef boiled

together in a kettle. While the supper is preparing, the bereaved wife

goes to the grave, and pours out, with unusual vehemence, her bitter

wailings and lamentations. When the food is thoroughly cooked the

kettle is taken from the fire and placed in the center of the cabin,

and the friends gather around it, passing the buffalo-horn spoon from

hand to hand and from mouth to mouth till all have been bountifully

supplied. While supper is being served, two of the oldest men of the

company quietly withdraw and go to the grave and fill it up, taking

down the flags. All then join in a dance, which not unfrequently is

continued till morning; the widow does not fail to unite in the dance,

and to contribute her part to the festivities of the occasion. This is

the '\_last cry,\_' the days of mourning are ended, and the widow

is now ready to form another matrimonial alliance. The ceremonies are

precisely the same when a man has lost his wife, and they are only

slightly varied when any other member of the family has died. (Slaves

were buried without ceremonies.)"

FEASTS

In Beltrami [Footnote: Pilgrimage, 1828, ii, p. 443.] an account is

given of the funeral ceremonies of one of the tribes of the west,

including a description of the feast which took place before the body

was consigned to its final resting place:

"I was a spectator of the funeral ceremony performed in honor of the

manes of \_Cloudy Weather's\_ son-in-law, whose body had remained

with the Sioux, and was suspected to have furnished one of their

repasts. What appeared not a little singular and indeed ludicrous in

this funeral comedy was the contrast exhibited by the terrific

lamentations and yells of one part of the company while the others

were singing and dancing with all their might.

"At another funeral ceremony for a member of the \_Grand

Medicine,\_ and at which as \_a man of another world\_ I was

permitted to attend, the same practice occurred. But at the feast

which took place on that occasion an allowance was served up for the

deceased out of every article of which it consisted, while others were

beating, wounding, and torturing themselves, and letting their blood

flow both over the dead man and his provisions, thinking possibly that

this was the most palatable seasoning for the latter which they could

possibly supply. His wife furnished out an entertainment present for

him of all her hair and rags, with which, together with his arms, his

provisions, his ornaments, and his mystic medicine bag, he was wrapped

up in the skin which had been his last covering when alive. He was

then tied round with the bark of some particular trees which they use

for making cords, and bonds of a very firm texture and hold (the only

ones indeed which they have), and instead of being buried in the earth

was hung up to a large oak. The reason of this was that, as his

favorite Manitou was the eagle, his spirit would be enabled more

easily from such a situation to fly with him to Paradise."

Hind [Footnote: Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition, 1860, ii, p.

164.] mentions an account of a burial feast by De Brebeuf which

occurred among the Hurons of New York:

"The Jesuit missionary, P. de Brebeuf, who assisted at one of the

'feasts of the dead' at the village of Ossosane, before the dispersion

of the Hurons, relates that the ceremony took place in the presence of

2,000 Indians, who offered 1,200 presents at the common tomb, in

testimony of their grief. The people belonging to five large villages

deposited the bones of their dead in a gigantic shroud, composed of

forty-eight robes, each robe being made of ten beaver skins. After

being carefully wrapped in this shroud, they were placed between moss

and bark. A wall of stones was built around this vast ossuary to

preserve it from profanation. Before covering the bones with earth a

few grains of Indian corn were thrown by the women upon the sacred

relics. According to the superstitious belief of the Hurons the souls

of the dead remain near the bodies until the 'feast of the dead';

after which ceremony they become free, and can at once depart for the

land of spirits, which they believe to be situated in the regions of

the setting sun."

SUPERSTITION REGARDING BURIAL FEASTS.

The following account is by Dr. S G. Wright, acting physician to the

Leech Lake Agency, Minnesota:

"Pagan Indians, or those who have not become Christians, still adhere

to the ancient practice of feasting at the grave of departed friends;

the object is to feast with the departed; that is, they believe that

while they partake of the visible material the departed spirit

partakes at the same time of the spirit that dwells in the food. From

ancient time it was customary to bury with the dead various articles,

such especially as were most valued in lifetime. The idea was that

there was a spirit dwelling in the article represented by the material

article; thus the war-club contained a spiritual war-club, the pipe a

spiritual pipe, which could be used by the departed in another world.

These several spiritual implements were supposed, of course, to

accompany the soul, to be used also on the way to its final abode.

This habit has now ceased...."

FOOD.

This subject has been sufficiently mentioned elsewhere in connection

with other matters and does not need to be now repeated. It has been

an almost universal custom throughout the whole extent of the country

to place food in or near the grave of deceased persons.

DANCES.

Gymnastic exercises, dignified with this name, upon the occasion of a

death or funeral, were common to many tribes. It is thus described by

Morgan: [Footnote: League of the Iroquois, 1851, p. 297.]

"An occasional and very singular figure was called the 'dance for the

dead' It was known as the O-he-wa. It was danced by the women alone.

The music was entirely vocal, a select band of singers being stationed

in the center of the room. To the songs for the dead which they sang

the dancers joined in chorus. It was plaintive and mournful music.

This dance was usually separate from all councils and the only dance

of the occasion. It commenced at dusk or soon after and continued

until towards morning, when the shades of the dead who were believed

to be present and participate in the dance were supposed to disappear.

This dance was had whenever a family which had lost a member called

for it, which was usually a year after the event. In the spring and

fall it was often given for all the dead indiscriminately, who were

believed then to revisit the earth and join in the dance."

The interesting account which now follows is by Stephen Powers,

[Footnote: Cont. to North American Ethnol., 1878, iv, p. 164.] and

relates to the Yo-kai-a of California, containing other matters of

importance pertaining to burial.

"I paid a visit to their camp four miles below Ukiah, and finding

there a unique kind of assembly-house, desired to enter and examine

it, but was not allowed to do so until I had gained the confidence of

the old sexton by a few friendly words and the tender of a silver half

dollar. The pit of it was about 50 feet in diameter and 4 or 5 feet

deep, and it was so heavily roofed with earth that the interior was

damp and somber as a tomb. It looked like a low tumulus, and was

provided with a tunnel-like entrance about 10 feet long and 4 feet

high, and leading down to a level with the floor of the pit. The mouth

of the tunnel was closed with brush, and the venerable sexton would

not remove it until he had slowly and devoutly paced several times to

and fro before the entrance.

"Passing in I found the massive roof supported by a number of peeled

poles painted white and ringed with black and ornamented with rude

devices. The floor was covered thick and green with sprouting wheat,

which had been scattered to feed the spirit of the captain of the

tribe, lately deceased. Not long afterward a deputation of the Senel

came up to condole with the Yo-kai-a on the loss of their chief, and a

dance or series of dances was held which lasted three days. During

this time of course the Senel were the guests of the Yo-kai-a, and the

latter were subjected to a considerable expense. I was prevented by

other engagements from being present, and shall be obliged to depend

on the description of an eye-witness, Mr. John Tenney, whose account

is here given with a few changes.

"There are four officials connected with the building, who are

probably chosen to preserve order and to allow no intruders. They are

the assistants of the chief. The invitation to attend was from one of

them, and admission was given by the same. These four wore black vests

trimmed with red flannel and shell ornaments. The chief made no

special display on the occasion. In addition to these four, who were

officers of the assembly-chamber, there was an old man and a young

woman, who seemed to be priest and priestess. The young woman was

dressed differently from any other, the rest dressing in plain calico

dresses. Her dress was white covered with spots of red flannel, cut in

neat figures, ornamented with shells. It looked gorgeous and denoted

some office, the name of which I could not ascertain. Before the

visitors were ready to enter, the older men of the tribe were

reclining around the fire smoking and chatting. As the ceremonies were

about to commence, the old man and young woman were summoned, and,

standing at the end opposite the entrance, they inaugurated the

exercises by a brief service, which seemed to be a dedication of the

house to the exercises about to commence. Each of them spoke a few

words, joined in a brief chant, and the house was thrown open for

their visitors. They staid at their post until the visitors entered

and were seated on one side of the room. After the visitors then

others were seated, making about 200 in all, though there was plenty

of room in the center for the dancing.

"Before the dance commenced the chief of the visiting tribe made a

brief speech, in which he no doubt referred to the death of the chief

of the Yo-kai-a, and offered the sympathy of his tribe in this loss.

As he spoke, some of the women scarcely refrained from crying out, and

with difficulty they suppressed their sobs. I presume that he proposed

a few moments of mourning, for when he stopped the whole assemblage

burst forth into a bitter wailing, some screaming as if in agony. The

whole thing created such a din that I was compelled to stop my ears.

The air was rent and pierced with their cries. This wailing and

shedding of tears lasted about three or five minutes, though it seemed

to last a half hour. At a given signal they ceased, wiped their eyes,

and quieted down.

"Then preparations were made for the dance. One end of the room was

set aside for the dressing-room. The chief actors were five men, who

were muscular and agile. They were profusely decorated with paint and

feathers, while white and dark stripes covered their bodies. They were

girt about the middle with cloth of bright colors, sometimes with

variegated shawls. A feather mantle hung from the shoulder, reaching

below the knee; strings of shells ornamented the neck, while their

heads were covered with a crown of eagle feathers. They had whistles

in their mouths as they danced, swaying their heads, bending and

whirling their bodies; every muscle seemed to be exercised, and the

feather ornaments quivered with light. They were agile and graceful as

they bounded about in the sinuous course of the dance.

"The five men were assisted by a semicircle of twenty women, who only

marked time by stepping up and down with short step; they always took

their places first and disappeared first, the men making their exit

gracefully one by one. The dresses of the women were suitable for the

occasion. They were white dresses trimmed heavily with black velvet. The

stripes were about three inches wide, some plain and others edged like

saw-teeth. This was an indication of their mourning for the dead chief

in whose honor they had prepared that style of dancing. Strings of

haliotis and pachydesma shell beads encircled their necks, and around

their waists were belts heavily loaded with the same material. Their

head-dresses were more showy than those of the men. The head was

encircled with a bandeau of otters' or beavers' fur, to which were

attached short wires standing out in all directions, with glass or shell

beads strung on them, and at the tips little feather flags and quail

plumes. Surmounting all was a pyramidal plume of feathers, black, gray,

and scarlet, the top generally being a bright scarlet bunch, waving and

tossing very beautifully. All these combined gave their heads a very

brilliant and spangled appearance.

"The first day the dance was slow and funereal, in honor of the Yo-

kai-a chief who died a short time before. The music was mournful and

simple being a monotonous chant in which only two tones were used,

accompanied with a rattling of split sticks and stamping on a hollow

slab. The second day the dance was more lively on the part of the men,

the music was better, employing airs which had a greater range of tune

and the women generally joined in the chorus. The dress of the women

was not so beautiful as they appeared in ordinary calico. The third

day if observed in accordance with Indian custom the dancing was still

more lively and the proceedings more gay just as the coming home from

a Christian funeral is apt to be much more jolly than the going out."

A Yo-kai-a widow's style of mourning is peculiar. In addition to the

usual evidences of grief she mingles the ashes of her dead husband

with pitch making a white tar or unguent, with which she smears a band

about two inches wide all around the edge of the hair (which is

previously cut off close to the head) so that at a little distance she

appears to be wearing a white chaplet.

It is their custom to feed the spirits of the dead for the space of

one year by going daily to places which they were accustomed to

frequent while living, where they sprinkle pinole upon the ground. A

Yo-kai-a mother who has lost her babe goes every day for a year to

some place where her little one played when alive or to the spot where

the body was burned and milks her breasts into the air. This is

accompanied by plaintive mourning and weeping and piteous calling upon

her little one to return and sometimes she sings a hoarse and

melancholy chant and dances with a wild ecstatic swaying of her body.

SONGS.

It has nearly always been customary to sing songs at not only funerals

but for varying periods of time afterwards although these chants may

no doubt occasionally have been simply wailing or mournful

ejaculation. A writer [Footnote: Am. Antiq., April-May-June 1879, p.

251.] mentions it as follows:

"At almost all funerals there is an irregular crying kind of singing

with no accompaniments, but generally all do not sing the same melody

at the same time in unison. Several may sing the same song and at the

same time, but each begins and finishes when he or she may wish. Often

for weeks, or even months, after the decease of a dear friend, a

living one, usually a woman, will sit by her house and sing or cry by

the hour; and they also sing for a short time when they visit the

grave or meet an esteemed friend whom they have not seen since the

decease. At the funeral both men and women sing. No. 11 I have heard

more frequently some time after the funeral, and No. 12 at the time of

the funeral, by the Twanas (For song see p. 251.) The words are simply

an exclamation of grief, as our word 'alas'; but they also have other

words which they use, and sometimes they use merely the syllable

\_la\_. Often the notes are sung in this order, and sometimes not,

but in some order the notes \_do\_ and \_la,\_ and occasionally

\_mi,\_ are sung."

GAMES.

It is not proposed to describe under this heading examples of those

athletic and gymnastic performances following the death of a person

which have been described by Lafitau, but simply to call attention to

a practice as a secondary or adjunct part of the funeral rites, which

consists in gambling for the possession of the property of the

defunct. Dr. Charles E. McChesney, U. S. A., who for some time was

stationed among the Wahpeton and Sisseton Sioux, furnishes a detailed

and interesting account of what is called the "ghost gamble." This is

played with marked wild-plum stones. So far as ascertained it is

peculiar to the Sioux.

"After the death of a wealthy Indian the near relatives take charge of

the effects, and at a stated time--usually at the time of the first

feast held over the bundle containing the lock of hair--they are

divided into many small piles, so as to give all the Indians invited

to play an opportunity to win something. One Indian is selected to

represent the ghost, and he plays against all the others, who are not

required to stake anything on the result, but simply invited to take

part in the ceremony, which is usually held in the lodge of the dead

person, in which is contained the bundle inclosing the lock of hair.

In cases where the ghost himself is not wealthy the stakes are

furnished by his rich friends, should he have any. The players are

called in one at a time, and play singly against the ghost's

representative, the gambling being done in recent years by means of

cards. If the invited player succeeds in beating the ghost he takes

one of the piles of goods and passes out when another is invited to

play, etc., until all the piles of goods are won. In cases of men only

the men play and in cases of women the women only take part in the

ceremony."

Before the white men came among these Indians and taught them many of

his improved vices this game was played by means of figured plum

seeds, the men using eight and the women seven seeds figured as

follows:

"Two seeds are simply blackened on one side the reverse containing

nothing. Two seeds are black on one side with a small spot of the

color of the seed left in the center, the reverse side having a black

spot in the center, the body being plain. Two seeds have a buffalo's

head on one side and the reverse simply two crossed black lines. There

is but one seed of this kind in the set used by the women. Two seeds

have half of one side blackened and the rest left plain so as to

represent a half moon, the reverse has a black longitudinal line

crossed at right angles by six small ones. There are six throws

whereby the player can win and five that entitle him to another throw.

The winning throws are as follows, each winner taking a pile of the

ghost's goods:

"Two plain ones up, two plain with black spots up, Buffalo's head up,

and two half moons up wins a pile. Two plain black ones up, two black

with natural spot up, two longitudinally crossed ones up, and the

transversely crossed one up wins a pile. Two plain black ones up, two

black with natural spots up, two half moons up, and the transversely

crossed one up wins a pile. Two plain black ones, two black with

natural spot up, two half moons up, and the buffalo's head up wins a

pile. Two plain ones up, two with black spots up, two longitudinally

crossed ones up, and the transversely crossed one up wins a pile. Two

plain ones up, two with black spots up, buffalo's head up, and two

long crossed up wins a pile. The following throws entitle to another

chance to win: two plain ones up, two with black spots up, one half

moon up, one longitudinally crossed one up, and Buffalo's head up

gives another throw, and on this throw if the two plain ones up and

two with black spots with either of the half moons or Buffalo's head

up, the player takes a pile. Two plain ones up, two with black spots

up, two half moons up, and the transversely crossed one up entitles to

another throw, when, if all of the black sides come up excepting one,

the throw wins. One of the plain ones up and all the rest with black

sides up gives another throw, and the same then turning up wins. One

of the plain black ones up with that side up of all the others having

the least black on gives another throw, when the same turning up again

wins. One half moon up with that side up of all the others having the

least black on gives another throw, and if the throw is then

duplicated it wins. The eighth seed, used by the men has its place in

their game whenever its facings are mentioned above. I transmit with

this paper a set of these figured seeds, which can be used to

illustrate the game if desired. These seeds are said to be nearly a

hundred years old, and sets of them are now very rare."

For assisting in obtaining this account Dr. McChesney acknowledges his

indebtedness to Dr C. C. Miller, physician to the Sisseton Indian

Agency.

POSTS.

These are placed at the head or foot of the grave, or both, and have

painted or carved on them a history of the deceased or his family,

certain totemic characters, or, according to Schoolcraft, not the

achievements of the dead, but of those warriors who assisted and

danced at the interment. The northwest tribes and others frequently

plant poles near the graves, suspending therefrom bits of rag flags,

horses tails, etc. The custom among the present Indians does not exist

to any extent. Beltrami [Footnote: Pilgrimage, 1828, ii, p. 308.]

speaks of it as follows.

"Here I saw a most singular union. One of these graves was surmounted

by a cross, whilst upon another close to it a trunk of a tree was

raised, covered with hieroglyphics recording the number of enemies

slain by the tenant of the tomb and several of his tutelary Manitous."

FIRES.

It is extremely difficult to determine why the custom of building

fires on or near graves originated, some authors stating that the soul

thereby underwent a certain process of purification, others that

demons were driven away by them, and again that they were to afford

light to the wandering soul setting out for the spirit land. One

writer states that "the Algonkins believed that the fire lighted

nightly on the grave was to light the spirit on its journey. By a

coincidence to be explained by the universal sacredness of the number,

both Algonkins and Mexicans maintained it for \_four\_ nights

consecutively. The former related the tradition that one of their

ancestors returned from the spirit land and informed their nation that

the journey thither consumed just four days, and that collecting fuel

every night added much to the toil and fatigue the soul encountered,

all of which could be spared it". So it would appear that the belief

existed that the fire was also intended to assist the spirit in

preparing its repast. "Stephen Powers [Footnote: Cont. to N. A.

Ethnol., 1877, ii, p.58] gives a tradition current among the Yurok of

California as to the use of fires.

"After death they keep a fire burning certain nights in the vicinity

of the grave. They hold and believe, at least the 'Big Indians' do,

that the spirits of the departed are compelled to cross an extremely

attenuated greasy pole, which bridges over the chasm of the debatable

land, and that they require the fire to light them on their darksome

journey. A righteous soul traverses the pole quicker than a wicked

one, hence they regulate the number of nights for burning a light

according to the character for goodness or the opposite which the

deceased possessed in this world." Dr. Emil Bessels, of the Polaris

expedition, informs the writer that a somewhat similar belief obtains

among the Esquimaux.

SUPERSTITIONS.

An entire volume might well be written which should embrace only an

account of the superstitions regarding death and burial among the

Indians, so thoroughly has the matter been examined and discussed by

various authors, and yet so much still remains to be commented on, but

in this work, which is simply preliminary, and is hoped will be

provocative of future efforts, it is deemed sufficient to give only a

few accounts. The first is by Dr. W. Mathews, U. S. A., [Footnote:

Ethnol. and Philol. of the Hidatsa Indians. U.S. Geol. Surv. of Terr.,

1877, p. 409] and relates to the Hidatsa:

"When a Hidatsa dies his shade lingers four nights around the camp or

village in which he died, and then goes to the lodge of his departed

kindred in the 'village of the dead.' When he has arrived there he is

rewarded for his valor, self-denial, and ambition on earth by

receiving the same regard in the one place as in the other, for there

as here the brave man is honored and the coward despised. Some say

that the ghosts of those that commit suicide occupy a separate part of

the village, but that their condition differs in no wise from that of

the others. In the next world human shades hunt and live in the shades

of buffalo and other animals that have here died. There, too, there

are four seasons, but they come in an inverse order to the terrestrial

seasons. During the four nights that the ghost is supposed to linger

near his former dwelling, those who disliked or feared the deceased,

and do not wish a visit from the shade, scorch with red coals a pair

of moccasins which they leave at the door of the lodge. The smell of

the burning leather they claim keeps the ghost out; but the true

friends of the dead man take no such precautions."

From this account it will be seen that the Hidatsa as well as the

Algonkins and Mexicans believed that four days were required before

the spirit could finally leave the earth. Why the smell of burning

leather should he offensive to spirits it would perhaps be fruitless

to speculate on.

The next account, by Keating, [Footnote: Long's Exped., 1824, ii, p.

l58.] relating to the Chippewas, shows a slight analogy regarding the

slippery-pole tradition already alluded to:

"The Chippewas believe that there is in man an essence entirely

distinct from the body; they call it \_Ochechag,\_ and appear to

supply to it the qualities which we refer to the soul. They believe

that it quits the body at the time of death and repairs to what they

term \_Chekechekchekawe;\_ this region is supposed to be situated

to the south and on the shores of the great ocean. Previous to

arriving there they meet with a stream which they are obliged to cross

upon a large snake that answers the purpose of a bridge; those who die

from drowning never succeed in crossing the stream; they are thrown

into it and remain there forever. Some souls come to the edge of the

stream but are prevented from passing by the snake that threatens to

devour them: these are the souls of the persons in a lethargy or

trance. Being refused a passage, these souls return to their bodies

and reanimate them. They believe that animals have souls and even that

inorganic substances such as kettles etc., have in them a similar

essence."

In this land of souls all are treated according to their merits. Those

who have been good men are free from pain, they have no duties to

perform, their time is spent in dancing and singing and they feed upon

mushrooms which are very abundant The souls of bad men are haunted by

the phantom of the persons or things that they have injured, thus if a

man has destroyed much property the phantoms of the wrecks of this

property obstruct his passage wherever he goes, if he has been cruel

to his dogs or horses they also torment him after death. The ghosts of

those whom during his lifetime he wronged are there permitted to

avenge their injuries. They think that when a soul has crossed the

stream it cannot return to its body, yet they believe in apparitions

and entertain the opinion that the spirits of the departed will

frequently revisit the abodes of their friends in order to invite them

to the other world and to forewarn them of their approaching

dissolution.

Stephen Powers in his valuable work so often quoted, gives a number of

examples of superstitions regarding the dead of which the following

relates to the Karok of California.

"How well and truly the Karok reverence the memory of the dead is

shown by the fact that the highest crime one can commit is the \_pet-

chi-e-ri\_, the mere mention of the dead relative's name. It is a

deadly insult to the survivors and can be atoned for only by the same

amount of blood money paid for willful murder. In default of that they

will have the villain's blood.... At the mention of his name the

moldering skeleton turns in his grave and groans. They do not like

stragglers even to inspect the burial place.... They believe that the

soul of a good Karok goes to the 'happy western land' beyond the great

ocean. That they have a well grounded assurance of an immortality

beyond the grave is proven, if not otherwise, by their beautiful and

poetical custom of whispering a message in the ear of the dead....

Believe that dancing will liberate some relative's soul from bonds of

death and restore him to earth"

According to the same author, when a Kelta dies a little bird flies

away with his soul to the spirit land. If he was a bad Indian a hawk

will catch the little bird and eat him up soul and feathers, but if he

was good he will reach the spirit land. Mr. Powers also states that

"The Tolowa share in the superstitious observance for the memory of

the dead which is common to the Northern Californian tribes When I

asked the chief Tahhokolli to tell me the Indian words for 'father'

and 'mother' and certain others similar, he shook his head mournfully

and said 'all dead,' 'all dead,' 'no good.' They are forbidden to

mention the name of the dead, as it is a deadly insult to the

relatives,"... and that the "Mat-toal hold that the good depart to a

happy region somewhere southward in the great ocean, but the soul of a

bad Indian transmigrates into a grizzly bear, which they consider of

all animals the cousin-german of sin."

The Mosquito Indians of Central America studiously and superstitiously

avoid mentioning the name of the dead, in this regard resembling those

of our own country.

FINAL REMARKS.

We have thus briefly, though it is hoped judiciously and carefully,

reviewed the subject of Indian burial, avoiding elaborate discussion,

as foreign to the purpose of the work, simply pointing out from the

carefully gleaned material at our disposal such examples and detached

accounts as may serve as guides to those whose interest in the subject

may lead them to contribute to the final volume. Before closing,

however, it is necessary to again allude to the circular which has

been forwarded to observers and call attention to some additional

matters of importance connected with the queries, which are as

follows: [Footnote: Advantage has been taken to incorporate with the

queries certain modifications of those propounded by Schoolcraft in

his well-known work on the Indian tribes of the United States,

relating to the same subject.]

1st. NAME OF THE TRIBE, present appellation; former, if differing any;

and that used by the Indians themselves.

2d. LOCALITY, PRESENT AND FORMER.--The response should give the range

of the tribe and be full and geographically accurate.

3d. DEATHS AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES; what are the important and

characteristic facts connected with these subjects? How is the corpse

prepared after death and disposed of? How long is it retained? Is it

spoken to after death as if alive? when and where? What is the

character of the addresses? What articles are deposited with it; and

why? Is food put in the grave, or in or near it afterwards? Is this

said to be an ancient custom? Are persons of the same gens buried

together, and is the clan distinction obsolete, or did it ever

prevail?

4th. MANNER OF BURIAL, ANCIENT AND MODERN; STRUCTURE AND POSITION OF

THE GRAVES; CREMATION--Are burials usually made in high and dry

grounds? Have mounds or tumuli been erected in modern times over the

dead? How is the grave prepared and finished? What position are bodies

placed in? Give reasons therefor if possible. If cremation is or was

practiced, describe the process, disposal of the ashes, and origin of

custom or traditions relating thereto. Are the dead ever eaten by the

survivors? Are bodies deposited in springs or in any body of water?

Are scaffolds or trees used as burial places; if so, describe

construction of the former and how the corpse is prepared, and whether

placed in skins or boxes. Are bodies placed in canoes? State whether

they are suspended from trees, put on scaffolds or posts, allowed to

float on the water or sunk beneath it, or buried in the ground. Can

any reasons be given for the prevalence of any one or all of the

methods? Are burial posts or slabs used, plain, or marked, with flags

or other insignia of position of deceased. Describe embalmment,

mummification, desiccation, or if antiseptic precautions are taken,

and subsequent disposal of remains. Are bones collected and

reinterred, describe ceremonies, if any, whether modern or ancient. If

charnel houses exist or have been used, describe them.

5th. MOURNING OBSERVANCES--Is scarification practiced, or personal

mutilation? What is the garb or sign of mourning? How are the dead

lamented? Are periodical visits made to the grave? Do widows carry

symbols of their deceased children or husbands, and for how long? Are

sacrifices, human or otherwise, voluntary or involuntary, offered? Are

fires kindled on graves, why, and at what time, and for how long?

6th. BURIAL TRADITIONS AND SUPERSTITIONS--Give in full all that can be

learned on these subjects, as they are full of interest and very

important.

In short, every fact bearing on the disposal of the dead, and

correlative customs are needed, and details should be as succinct and

full as possible.

One of the most important matters upon which information is needed is

the "why" and "wherefore" for every rite and custom, for, as a rule,

observers are content to simply state a certain occurrence as a fact,

but take very little trouble to inquire the reason for it.

The writer would state that any material the result of careful

observation will be most gratefully received and acknowledged in the

final volume, and he would here confess the lasting obligation he is

under to those who have already contributed in response to his call.

Criticism and comments are earnestly invited from all those interested

in the special subject of this paper and anthropology in general

Contributions are also requested from persons acquainted with curious

forms of burial prevailing among other tribes of savage men.

In addition to the many references, etc, given by the various members

of the Bureau of Ethnology, communications have been received from the

following persons, although their accounts may not have been alluded

to in this volume; should omissions of names have occurred it is hoped

attention will be called to the fact.

The writer acknowledges with pleasure the assistance he has received

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