ORIGINAL SIOUX FOLK-LORE

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

A quarter-century of life among Indians as playmate, companion, correspondent, teacher, friend, and confidant has led to an effort to portray more effectively the folk-lore of the Indian, especially that of the Sioux.

Folk-lore has been defined as the traditional customs, beliefs, tales, or sayings, especially those of a superstitious or legendary nature, preserved unreflectively among a people; hence the comparative science which investigates the life and spirit of a people, as revealed in such customs and tales.

The word "Sioux," which means "little snake," is an inclusive term which refers to the tribe, the individual, and even the literature. As the literature of America has been enriched by the folk-ways of immigrants, it seems plausible that a further elucidation of Indian folk-lore might influence contemporary American literature.

METHOD

The material for this study has been obtained from published records, documents and treatises; and from personal observations, interviews, and correspondence.

Any study of folk-ways that are different from the white man's cannot follow entirely the traditional methods of research. For example, such original information as one is

able to glean from the Indian depends in no small measure upon the confidence which the inquirer is able to establish between himself and a tribesman, who under ordinary circumstances is extremely reticent to reveal to an outsider the mysteries of his tribe. This reticence springs from various sources. First, the Indian in general and the Sioux in particular, is a natural aristocrat; and in order to avoid being laughed at, he chooses not to reveal some of the odd beliefs of his race.[1] Secondly, many of the rites of the Indian are secret, and an orthodox Indian would no more think of revealing those mysteries to an outsider than would a member of a Masonic lodge reveal the secrets of his order. He does not mind divulging mysteries, provided the inquirer is known well enough to be adopted into the tribe. However, if the inquirer lacks the confidence of the tribe, he learns little. A possible third source of difficulty in collecting original material lies in the psychology of the Indian. Even the most careful workers have experienced difficulty in determining what it is. Specifically, if a worker should suggest an interpretation of an Indian rite, and ask an Indian friend for his opinion of the interpretation, certain Indians would concur, even though they know that the inquirer's interpretation is wrong, as they would consider it an offense against good taste to disagree with a friend. Another tribesman might deny or correct

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[1] James Truslow Adams, "Sioux," Dictionary of American History (New York, 1940), 5:25.

the interpretation, or might even give wrong information, not so much because he is averse to giving information, but purely because he considers that to deceive is fun. These things are mentioned merely to show how uncertain it is to generalize upon Indian psychology.

At the very outset the worker must realize that not all Indians are alike. It is true that since very early times there has been considerable inter-tribal borrowing, but it may be assumed a priori that originally the separate tribes had different customs, folk-ways, and mores; otherwise there would not have been different tribes. To a casual observer, an Indian headdress, moccasin, or waistcoat is nothing more than a headdress, moccasin and waistcoat; but to the Indian himself or to one trained in Indian lore, every variation in pattern, color, symbol, or decoration is a chapter in the history of the tribe of the wearer.

To the untrained observer, an Indian dance may seem unpremeditated stompings and gyrations. To the trained observer, the same dance is a symphony in rhythms and a study in elements of form. The first step in the investigation of folk-lore is for the student to familiarize himself as far as possible with the fundamentals at least of such scientific fields as anthropology, archeology, ethnology, and musicology. Other fields that the student will need to study are graphic arts, native folk-dances, and comparative mythology.

ORIGINAL SIOUX LEGENDS, MYTHS, SONGS, MASKS, AND DANCES

In making a survey of Sioux folk-lore, an attempt has been made to confine the subject for study, as far as possible, to original source material. From the literary point of view, the source material consists of the following:

Twenty-eight Sioux stories, recounted by Mrs. Marie McLaughlin, a quarter-blood Sioux of the Medawakanton clan[2]
Twenty Sioux legends from Smoky Day's Wigwam Evenings[3]
Forty-eight legends from the Tciwere branch of Siouxan stock[4]
Seven stories from Sioux students at Haskell Institute[5]
Seventeen Sioux stories preserved by Mrs. Margaret Speelman[6]
Five Wigwam Stories from the Dakota by Mary Katherine Judd[7]
Four Sioux myths found in the Mythology of All Races[8]
One Sioux medicine myth in The Golden Bough[9]
One Sioux mask[10]
One thunder ceremonial of the Sioux[11]
Eight Sioux legends by a number of Sioux authors in the U. S. Geographical Survey[12]

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2 Marie McLaughlin, Myths and Legends of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 1-200.
3 Alanson Skinner, "Traditions of the Iowa Indians," Journal of American Folk-Lore, 38: 425-506. 1925.
4 Charles A. Eastman and Elaine Eastman, Smoky Day's Wigwam Evenings (Boston, 1925), 1-148.
5 Haskell Institute, Indian Legends and Superstitions, (Lawrence, Kansas, 1914), 1-101.
6 Margaret Speelman, A Collection of American Folk Tales (Lawrence, Kansas, 1932), 1-325.
7 Mary Katherine Judd, Wigwam Stories (Boston, 1931), 1-277.
8 Hartley Alexander, Mythology of All Races (Boston, 1916), 10: 36-37, 98, 105.
9 James George Frazer, The Golden Bough (New York, 1935), 11: 268-269.
10 Hartley Alexander, Manito Masks (New York, 1925), 377-415.
11 Virginia Heath, Elements in Indian Ceremonials (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1914), 377-415.
12 Stephen Return Riggs, "Dakota Grammar Texts," U. S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region, (Washington, 1893), 9:239.

Six songs from the Dakota collected by Nellie Barnes[13]
Six poems from the Bureau of Ethnology[12]
Two hundred fifty-nine songs and dances by Frances Densmore[14]
Six dances by Julia Buttree[15]
One Sioux song quoted by Nellie Curtis[15]
A two hundred eighty-eight page autobiography by Luther Standing Bear[16]
A book on Indian theology by Charles A. Eastman[17]

The literature upon which this thesis is based, therefore, consists of a total of 140 original stories, legends, and myths; 278 original songs, dances, masques, and ceremonials; an autobiography by an Oglala chief; and a discussion of Sioux theology by a well-educated representative of the Santee Clan. These data, it would appear, are sufficiently broad to permit generalizations upon the folk-lore of the Sioux nation.

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13 Nellie Barnes, American Indian Love Lyrics (Lawrence, Kansas, 1921), 1-63.
14 Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington, 1918), 1-561.
15 Julia Buttree, The Rhythm of the Red Man (New York, 1921), 1-280.
16 Luther Standing Bear, My People the Sioux (New York, 1928), 1-228.
17 Charles A. Eastman, The Soul of the Indian (Boston, 1915), 1-190.

REPRESENTATIVE SIOUX CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIALS

Before one can understand, let alone appreciate, Sioux literature and music, one must know the customs and beliefs which underlie Sioux stories and songs and which give them meaning. In the brief account of customs and ceremonials which follows, no attempt has been made to give a day-by-day account of the life of the Sioux. However, an attempt has been made to assemble the important customs and beliefs of the tribe as a whole. Without some knowledge of the mores and rituals of the tribe, Sioux literature and music would be unintelligible. With such an understanding, however, Sioux literature and music not only take on meaning but, in many cases, become things of beauty.

Opinion concerning the original habitat of the Sioux varies. This much is certain: as far back as 1640 the Jesuit explorers were acquainted with Indians of the Lake Superior region, whom they called Nadowessioux.[18]

The diet of the Sioux was three-fourths meat, and since the men hunted buffalo, the tribe was nomadic.[19] Many customs and ceremonials of the Sioux were directly attributed to their way of living; their institutions were affected by the roaming of the tribe. The individual Sioux was physically

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[18] Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington, 1918), 2.
[19] L. H. Bailey, "Primitive Agriculture," Cyclopedia of Agriculture (New York, 1909), 2:50.

brave, but he was superstitious and feared assassination by sorcery. Trifling relics of his person, clippings of his hair or nails, spittle, remnants of his food, his very name, may, he fancies, be turned by the sorcerer to his destruction.[20] The names of the clan and their sub-divisions are objects of mysterious reverence among the Sioux.

The following institutions, customs, beliefs, and taboos lie at the base of most of the literature of the Sioux and motivate their art, songs, and dances.

Prenatal Charm

Pregnant Indian women carried a lock of hair in their bosoms, in the hope it would bring vital energy to the child that was to be born.[21] Hair was regarded by the Indian as being the source of strength and life to man.[22] When used as a charm by pregnant Indian women, it was thought to insure rebirth of the dead. Hair was more than a symbol; it was a magic vehicle of the strength of a dead person.[23]

During childbirth Sioux women assumed a kneeling posture, and the umbilical cord was wrapped around the finger of an

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20 James George Frazer, The Golden Bough (New York, 1935), 11: 224.
21 Hartley Alexander, Manito Masks (New York, 1925), 93.
22 Holy Bible. Cf. The biblical story of Sampson and Delilah, "Judges," 16: 17-19.
23 Hartley Alexander, Mythology of All Races (Boston, 1916), 10: 100.

attendant (usually an old woman). After the cord was cut the little coil was placed against the abdomen of the child, and fastened with a bandage, around the middle of the baby.[24]

A man whose wife was pregnant, was prohibited to smoke lest he should perish and she die in childbirth.[25]

Naming

The child was named according to the family's own custom. Either the child was named soon after birth, or it may not have been named for a considerable time afterward. There were two kinds of names among the Sioux: 1. True or personal names; 2. Names that refer to title or distinction. In certain clans, true names were used according to chronological order of boys or girls that were born into the family.[26]

First girls' dormitories at Indian schools are often called Winona Hall because Winona means first daughter; Harpen, second daughter; Hopistinna, third daughter; Wanske, fourth daughter; Wishake, fifth daughter. In naming sons, Chaske signifies first born; Hepan, second son; Hepi, third son; Catan, fourth son; Hake, fifth son.[27]

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[24] W. P. Clark, Indian Sign Language (Philadelphia, 1885), 278.
[25] Fredrick W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians (Washington, 1907), 2: 192.
[26] Ibid., 2: 265.
[27] W. P. Clark, Indian Sign Language (Philadelphia, 1885), 346.

Childhood names were retained until an individual achieved some personal glory; then a name was chosen to signify the feat which the individual had accomplished. Miss Lyla Hoffine did not give the hero of her story his name, Wi Sapa (Black Moon) until he was nine years of age.[28] Chief Standing Bear records that he was given his boy's name, Plenty Kill[29] (Ota Kte) when he was born, for his father had killed many enemies. When he became a Christian, while a student at Carlyle, he chose the name Luther for a baptismal name, and it was not until late in life when the elders of his clan chose him to be Chief of the Oglala Sioux that he received the name of Chief Standing Bear II.

Ear Piercing Ceremony

There is some evidence for the belief that the ear piercing ceremony among the Sioux was in some way comparable to the Christian sacrament of christening. At the ear piercing ceremony, often held in connection with the Sun Dance, a child was brought within the Sacred Circle, placed upon a bale of calico and sprinkled with water, after which small slits were cut in each ear and a German silver ring inserted.

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28 Lyla Hoffine, Wi Sapa (New York, 1939), 161.
29 Luther Standing Bear, My People the Sioux (New York, 1928), 6

Gifts were distributed by the child's parents at this ceremony.[30] There is no evidence, however, that the child received a baptismal name.

When Sioux became Christians they had no objection to accepting a Christian name. Other great changes in their status were always signalized by a change of name, so it was perfectly natural to Sioux psychology that they receive a new name at the time of the great event of their becoming a Christian.

Kinship

Among the seven council fires or clans of the Dakota, kinship was a complicated question, because there were no surnames. In addition to blood relationship, the responsibility a tribesman wished to assume toward a child was a matter of individual choice. Hannah Love Joy, a full-blood Santee Sioux of Flandreau, South Dakota, presented our daughter with a pair of moccasins, saying, "For Winona, my grandbaby." The moccasins were accepted as a token of friendship. Later the comment was explained by Mrs. Madeline McCurdy, three-quarter-blood Yankton Sioux, Flandreau, South Dakota, who said, "Whenever a person not a relative bestowed gifts or affections upon a child, the bestower determined the

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30 Stephen Return Riggs, op. cit., 230.

degree of relationship which he wished to assume toward the child. This custom was a sort of self-nomination to relationship."

Kindreds were classified into categories and the relationship term was applied to a person of that category. To be specific: all children call their maternal grandfather by the name of grandfather. Paternal uncles are called father. Paternal aunts, remain aunt. Maternal aunts are called sisters. Maternal uncles, remain uncles. Paternal uncles' children are called brothers and sisters. Paternal aunts' children are cousins. Maternal aunts' children are sisters and brothers. Maternal uncles' children are cousins.[31]

Toys and Games

Three types of toys common to Dakota children were: 1. Attraction and soothing toys; rattles and bows, and 2. Objects invented and appropriated for their own use; dolls that were made of stone, clay, wood, or rags.[32] There was a specific art connected with hand-made Sioux dolls. The body was made of rag which was covered with buckskin. The hair was made of neatly braided strands of black yarn. Female dolls wore no hair ornaments, for it is not good taste for a Sioux maiden to wear feathers or other hair trinkets. The facial

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31 W. P. Clark, Indian Sign Language (Philadelphia, 1885), 228.
32 Fredrick W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians (Washington, 1907), 2:797.

features of these dolls were formed of buckskin. The eyes and mouth were painted naturally. 3. Objects supplied by adults for educational, religious, or aesthetic purposes--drums, pea shooters, tops, and bows. Games invented for the same purposes were target shooting, stilts, slings, tops, playing house, forfeit plays, holding the breath, and shuttle cock.[33] Some Sioux games which involved objects supplied by adults were:

1. Hu-ta-na-cu-ti, (winter game.)
2. Pte-hes-te-pi.
3. Can-wa-ki-ya-pi.
4. Pa-slo-kan-pi (for boys).
5. Pa-slo-kan-pi (for girls).
6. Ica-slo-he.
7. Ta-si-ha.
8. Hanpa-pe-cunpi (moccasin game).
9. I-pa-ho-tun-pi.[34]

Puberty Ceremonies

Dakota puberty ceremonies among both sexes were considered a preparation for adulthood. Many of the customs that were observed during adolescence were measures of isolation and seclusion. Through these ceremonies, youngsters learned to accept responsibility, to rely upon their own judgment, and to wean themselves from home ties. When a young person left home, he was ready to accept the responsibility of Sioux citizenship.

Puberty ceremonies for girls were not so rigid as for

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33 Ibid., 1:51.
34 Luther Standing Bear, My People the Sioux (New York, 1928), 30-38.

boys. The entrance of a girl into womanhood was observed by a long ceremony called "singing over girls that bleed." This was observed after a girl's first menstrual period. The text of the dance was based upon the mating of the buffalo.[35] The father announced that he had a marriageable daughter. In so doing he brought her honor.[36] During menstruation women lived in seclusion, either in separate individual quarters or in the woods.

During the Sun Dance, unmarried women who had been chaste during the year were allowed to raise the right hand and touch the sacred tree. They bowed to the skull, and retired from the enclosure. Unchaste females who touched the tree were in danger of coming to a fatal end by being carried into the spirit land by a large animal.[37]

At puberty, the Sioux boy painted his face and went to a hill top where he observed a solitary fast. On the four corners of the buffalo robe he placed some tobacco and waited for a message from the four winds. This message - the boy's vision song - came from an animal or bird which thereafter became his "Totem," his ever-present help in time of need.[38] It was not common for clan "totem" to be used.

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35 Fredrick N. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians (Washington, 1907), 2:266.

36 Robert H. Lowie, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (New York, 1934), 240.

37 Stephen Return Riggs, "Dakota Grammar Texts," U. S. Geological and Geographical Survey (Washington, 1893), 231.

38 Frances Densmore, American Indians and Their Music (New York, 1926), 77.

Courtship and Marriage

A Dakota brave must obtain the consent of a maiden's parents before he could consider marriage. Sometimes he walked around the village, watching the young woman upon whom his attentions centered. It was the custom of the suitor to tie a pony before the tipi[39] of his beloved as a gift to the girl's father. Sometimes a suitor placed a slain deer at the door of the tipi. If either token was accepted, it signified that the brave had been accepted as the future son-in-law.[40]

Whenever a Chief's daughter was to be married, an old woman of the tribe would go throughout the camp announcing the marriage.[41] Often the marriage was a simple ceremony. Sometimes the brave would merely wrap his blanket around the maiden and walk with her to his tipi.[42]

Bride purchase was not degrading to a Dakota girl. In fact, it was considered the most honorable form of marriage. A tribesman was willing to pay for a competent bride of a good character. These marriages were looked upon as being more stable than a love match,[43] although there are legends of single and joint suicide when a love match had been thwarted.

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39 Sioux spelling of "teepee" or "tepee."
40 Alanson Skinner, "Traditions of Iowa (Sioux) Indians," Journal of American Folk-Lore, 32:472, 1925.
41 Ibid., 472.
42 Told to me by Ada B. Risser, retired Indian service teacher.
43 Robert H. Lowie, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (New York, 1934), 240.

Tipi

Sioux women owned the tipi. Upon their shoulders fell the heavy responsibility of dressing the hides and constructing the habitation.

In fleshing the hide the pelt was stretched on a frame, and this frame set at a 45-degree angle with the flesh side up. The bits of flesh were scraped off with the leg bone of a buffalo. An adz (an implement made of a stone blade with an elk-horn handle) was used in the laborious scraping process.

In the "braining" process, a paste of buffalo brains, hashed liver, and grease or pounded yucca was boiled together and applied to the skins with a sponge of soap-weed fiber. After the "braining" process, a bundle of dry grass was laid in the center of the hide and saturated with water. Then the skin was twisted into a solid ball and hung up to soak over night. The eastern Sioux used a decoction of oak bark in place of water in this process.

In stripping, the skin was rolled out, twisted into a rope and stretched on a frame. Then the hide was scraped with a broad six-inch stone blade. In scraping the blade was drawn from top to bottom causing the water to ooze out. Then the skin was left to dry and bleach on the frame.

The graining is done with a globular piece of bone from the humerus of a large animal. The skin was rubbed with wood ashes or sand to a uniform thickness. Breaks and holes were repaired with an awl and sinew thread.

In the working or softening process, the skin was drawn across a rope of twisted sinew, in a see-saw fashion.[44]

Women pitched the tipi, and then covered the ground with pine boughs or dry grass. They also took down the tipi and loaded the domestic equipment on the travois when the tribe was ready for the march. From fourteen to twenty-six poles were used in constructing the tipi. The women cut, trimmed and peeled the bark from the poles. A skin of an animal, hung outside and above the entrance of the tipi, served as a door. The fireplace occupied the center of the tipi. An opening was left in the top so the smoke could escape. Beds were placed so the feet were toward the fire during winter. Sufficient light was transmitted into the interior because the skins were dressed so thin that sufficient light was transmitted even when the lodge was tightly covered.[45]

The place of honor in the tipi was the back part, opposite the door. This was occupied by the man, above which was hung a parflesche (buffalo skin, stripped of hair and stretched over a frame) upon which was painted his personal biography. The wife sat on the left, as one entered the tipi, to the right of her husband. The children sat between the father and mother. The grandmother, mother-in-law, or an aunt

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44 Fredrick W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians (Washington, 1907), 2:502.
45 W. P. Clark, Indian Sign Language (Philadelphia, 1885), 373.

occupied a position opposite the woman of the house.[46]

Medicine

When a Dakota was ill, he painted the stem of his pipe black and sent for a medicine man.[47] The sorcerer, or medicine man, was surrounded by a halo of mystery and an atmosphere of awe. He was a personage of great influence and importance, and he may well have developed into a chief or a king in many tribes. Indian doctors were not only magicians and soothsayers, they were also high priests. They superintended the conduct of the religious ceremonies and held council with the tribal chief before any important step was taken.[48]

The white shell was the emblem of the Grand Medicine Society and was considered a source of power.[49] The Dakota believed the medicine bag was sent from above. It was a mystery sack, attributed to Onktehi (Great Spirit of the Waters). The ordained bag consisted of the skin of an otter, raccoon, weasel, squirrel, loon, fish, or serpents. It contained four sorts of magic medicine to represent fowls, quadrupeds, herbs, and trees, symbolized by the following: swansdown, buffalo hair, grass roots, and bark from roots of trees.

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46 Stephen Return Riggs, "Dakota Grammar Texts," U. S. Geographical and Geological Survey (Washington, 1893), 204.
47 Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington, 1918), 124.
48 James George Frazer, The Golden Bough (New York, 1935), 1:356.
49 Frances Densmore, The American Indians and Their Music (New York, 1926), 89.

In the medicine ritual, hair was used to represent everything animate and inanimate. The lock of some deceased relative's hair was enveloped in several folds of skin and enclosed with a piece of tobacco in a parfleche. The medicine sack was neatly ornamented with bead or quill work, and fringed.

According to an ancient Sioux myth, the combination of the elements in the medicine sack was so powerful that no human being could withstand its magical influence. The God of the Waters prepared the first medicine for the bag. He tested the contents on four candidates for initiation. They perished. The God consulted his wife, the Goddess of the Earth. The priest threw a bean at the candidate, which the latter swallowed. Then the priest held up his hand and patted on the backs of the slain men with his right hand. Myriads of little shells were produced from the mouth of the candidate (which had the virtue of restoring life to the men slain by the medicine bag). This procedure was repeated on four more candidates for initiation, and the men came to life. This is the divine origin of the Medicine bag.[50]

Candidates for the Grand Medicine Society were steamed in a vapor bath four days.[51] Their fingers and toes were interlocked with sinews like bowstring, and the candidates were

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[50] James George Frazer, The Golden Bough (New York, 1935), 11:268-269.

[51] Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington, 1918), 53.

tied in buffalo robes.[52] Behind the candidate stood an aged member of the order, the master of ceremonies, who advanced uttering "Heen, Heen, Heen," with frightful emphasis. All around were persons demonstrating enthusiastic wild passions. The medicine sack was raised to a painted spot on the breast of the candidate and the tonwan (sacred magic) was discharged. A brother from behind gave a push and the candidate fell dead. Then the candidate was covered with blankets. Frenzied dancers gathered around in bewilderment, chanting the magic words of the supervisor. The master threw off the robe, chewed a piece of Onktehi, spurted the juice over the prostrate man, who came to life. The candidate spurted up the shell and was allowed to enjoy the medicine. Every initiated Dakota was thought to have a shell in his body.[53]

Peace and Friendship

The symbol for peace, among the Sioux, is a figure of a quartered circle. The quarters of one-half were the side for peace, and were devoted to earth and air. The quarter of the masculine side, or sky half, was for war. It was sacred to the spirits of fire and water.[54]

The Calumet (Catlenite) pipe, carved from pipestone was

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52 James George Frazer, The Golden Bough (New York, 1935), 11:268-269.
53 Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington, 1918), 245.
54 Hartley Alexander, Mythology of All Races (Boston, 1916), 10:98.

a symbol of peace and friendship. Comanches, Delawares, Mohawks, Choctaws, Shoshonies, Pawnees, Omahas, Mandans, Hurons, Ojibways, and Sioux used this stone.[55] When tribes came to Minnesota to secure the material, they established lodges on the reservation during June and July. They usually stayed two weeks, doing their hand-carved pipes and trinkets.[56]

The Sioux believed the pipe was given in a vision from the powers above. A symbolic pipestem was used and it was not perforated but was to be used with a pipe bowl. It was decorated with feathers and tufts of horsehair. A pair of stems was used in both hands. The peace pipe was supervised by a man especially appointed for the ceremony. He paused at each of the cardinal points and in front of the pipe. He approached the pipe and retreated four times. He held the pipe in his hands and prayed over it. He went to the fire for lighting. The the pipe was offered to the four cardinal points. He passed the pipe counter clockwise.[57]

Another version of the sacred pipe says: The tribe met after an unsuccessful hunt to decide what to do. They saw a beautiful maiden advancing toward them, telling them to go back to camp, and that she would come at sunrise to tell the tribe how to secure buffalo. A special lodge was built according to

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55 Henry W. Longfellow, The Song of Hiawatha (New York, 1901), 19.

56 Fredrick N. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians (Washington, 1907), 2:263.

57 Clark Wissler, Indians in the United States (New York, 1940), 46, 179, 271.

her specifications. When she arrived she carried a pipe, the stem of which was in her right hand and the bowl in the left.

After the maiden entered the lodge, the chief made a speech saying, "We trust that whatever message you have brought we may be able to abide by it." He offered her water, explaining that because of poverty, water was all the tribe could afford. She explained that the red bowl of the pipe represented the buffalo tribe, that it was to be used as a peacemaker, and that it should be called to administer help to the sick.

She spoke to the women, then to the children, and turning to the men said the pipe was to be used for good purposes in offering sacrifices and to be smoked when the tribe was in need of buffalo meat. To the chief she said, "You have been chosen to receive this in the name of the whole Sioux tribe. By this pipe the tribe shall live. Now we shall smoke the pipe."

Then the maiden lighted the pipe with a buffalo chip, which lay on the ground. She pointed the pipe to the sky, to the earth, and to the four cardinal points. Then she took a puff of the pipe and handed it to the chief. When the maiden departed, she turned into a white buffalo calf.

When the pipe is used in the smoking circle, it is passed to the left because that is the direction taken by the buffalo maiden when she departed.[58]

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[58] Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington, 1918), 64-67.

Hunka

A specific friendship ceremony among the Dakota, called Hunka, involved the use of the pipe. This was a ceremony between two persons. Entering into the bonds of Hunka brought obligations. The spoken ceremony is similar to this: "My friends, this man has done as a Hunka should do; he divided food with me, he gave me moccasins, shirt, and leggings. Now he is naked and has nothing. I will put red stripes on his face. He is Hunka and people will know that he has given his possessions away. They will know they should give to him."[59]

There is evidence that the ceremony was also used in the adoption of children.[60]

The Hunka (friendship) buffalo robe was a thing of beauty and a possession to be prized. It was colored in red, representing clouds of sunset, a full moon and fair weather; in blue, representing cloudless sky; in yellow, symbolic of forked lightning of the morning. In the left margin a red line represented a spider's web. Crescents on the right of the margin were phases of the moon. Blue meant a quarter moon, red meant a full moon. Next to the border were parallel lines with dots which represented the number of camps set during an expedition. A panel in the center of the robe meant

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[59] Clark Wissler, Indians in the United States (New York, 1940), 47.

[60] Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington, 1918), 70.

"warrior's path." Even in warm weather, this robe was worn with the fur inside, so the beauty of the painting might be admired. It was usually worn by the men, and only women whose relatives were successful in war were allowed to wear the robe.[61]

The wampum belt was used as a pledge of friendship. It was always sent to a hostile tribe as a message of peace. Another token of friendship was a six-inch twist of tobacco, done up in a paper[62] and tied to a small piece of vermillion.[63]

Valor

In order to attain valor, the Sioux warrior would reduce the heart of a valiant enemy to powder, and swallow the powder, in the hope that he would attain the dead warrior's valor.[64]

Becoming a Chief

Becoming a chief was the greatest honor a Dakota may receive. He is chosen to be a leader among his people, not because of his popularity alone, but because other tribesman considered he would conscientiously accept the serious responsibilities of his tribe. In the ceremony of naming a chief, one of the old chiefs arose, wrapped his blanket around the

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61 Ibid., 77.
62 Wissler's account strikes a contemporary note. There is no evidence the ancient Sioux had any knowledge of paper.
63 George Catlin, North American Indians (London, 1864), 1:223.
64 James George Frazer, The Golden Bough (New York, 1935), 8:150.

candidate, and lighted the sacred pipe. When the lighted pipe was pointed to the sky, the east, the north, south, west and to mother earth, then the candidate placed his palms over the pipe three times.[65]

Death, Burial, and Mourning

Every older member of the Dakota tribe looked forward with pleasure to the Happy Hunting Ground.

Various burial rites are practiced by the Sioux. They buried in mounds and caves or placed the corpse in trees or upon platforms. The corpse was placed face down, head towards the south, with a piece of fat in its mouth. Scaffolds were commonly used for burial in winter, because the frozen ground made other methods unsatisfactory. Bones of a dead person were often carried about, bound up in a buffalo skin, until the members of the tribe could overtake relatives of the deceased, who for some reason had advanced more rapidly into the frontier. When all relatives were assembled, a funeral was held, at which ceremony the tribe danced. There is a specific burial for a warrior and quite a different one for women and children.

Women in mourning cut their hair short and scratched their arms, body, and legs with a flint. A widow danced

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[65] Luther Standing Bear, My People the Sioux (New York, 1928), 274.

around a circle, crying and wailing. The number of times she danced the circle determined how many years it would be before she would remarry.[66] Every personal possession and even property was given away by the mourning party.

Music and Dance

Because Sioux music and dances were so closely knit, it is proper to consider them jointly. Since rhythm was the most important part of Sioux music, it is natural to discuss the dance first.

The Indian drum was not only a percussion instrument, but it was magic also. Ordinarily, Sioux drums were made with hoops of bent wood inside of which were two rawhide heads, stitched together. Handles were cleverly made by slitting the edge of one head and stretching that piece of rawhide into a loop. In order to increase the tension of the drum, it was held near the fire. Symbolic designs in red, green, and black ornamented the drum. A favorite design was a four-pointed star.[67]

The rattle was used to accent the rhythm of the dance. Often the Sioux rattle was a wand covered with leather. Deer hoofs were attached to the wand.

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[66] David I. Bushnell, Burial of the Algonquian (Washington, 1927), 17-26.

[67] Frances Densmore, Handbook of Musical Instruments (Washington, 1927), 65.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

Sioux Indian Dolls

These dolls were made by Mrs. Sarah Wing,
full-blood Santee Sioux, Flandreau, South Dakota.

PLATE I

As soon as a child was strong enough safely to bear weight upon its feet, the parent held it around the body while the child was instructed in rudimentary tribal dance steps. A two year old child was able to perform fundamental dance steps as proficiently as it could walk.[68]

The rhythm of an Indian dance was quite intricate. Various rhythmic media that were employed were: 1. drum; 2. feet, 3. trunk of body, 4. the head, 5. rattle, and 6. voice. All these rhythms were different in pattern. A combination of six rhythms maintained in the same dance would leave the casual observer in such bewilderment that he might consider the dance conglomerate motion. Perhaps slow motion pictures could be used advantageously in determining these multiple rhythms.

Julia Buttree[69] has recorded dance steps for the following Sioux dances and the accompanying songs:

1. Hoop Dance.[70]
2. Grass Dance.[71]
3. Buffalo Dance.[72]
4. Kalomini.[73]
5. Scalp or Wounded Dance.[74]
6. Wind and the Cloud.[75]

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68 Personal observation of the Rabbit Dance.
69 Julia Buttree, Rhythm of the Red Man (New York, 1921), 1-280.
70 Ibid., 64.
71 Ibid., 103.
72 Ibid., 104.
73 Ibid., 106.
74 Ibid., 110.
75 Ibid., 111.

Other Sioux dances explained by Stephen R. Riggs are:[76]

1. Begging Dance.
2. Dance of Thanks.
3. No Flight Dance.
4. Circle Dance.
5. Scalp Dance.
6. Mystery Dance.
7. Sun Dance.

The Sun Dance was considered the important public performance of the Plains Indians.[77] When the warrior made a prayer for prolonged life he tortured himself to prove to the tribe that it was not because he feared death that he prayed to be spared, but he "asked life only for the sake of those who loved him."[78] The ceremonies took place from six months to a year after the making of the vow, in order to prepare suitably for the torture.[79]

These dances also had musical accompaniments, but corresponding music has not been recorded with Mr. Riggs' notations.

When Indians invoked the aid of the powerful spirits of the universe, they did not consider speech sacred enough to convey their message, so they burst into song.[80] All American Indian music had these common characteristics: 1. The descending pentatonic scale, and 2. Varied rhythm.

Through a study of Frances Densmore's music,[81] it has

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76 Stephen Return Riggs, "Dakota Grammar Texts," U. S. Geographical and Geological Survey (Washington, 1893), 224-232.
77 Charles A. Eastman, The Soul of the Indian (Boston, 1915), 55.
78 Ibid., 56.
79 Ibid., 57.
80 G. W. Chadwick and Frank Damrosch, "American Music," American History of Music (New York, 1910), 4:40.
81 Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington,1918), 561.

been discovered that seventy-five per cent of the songs have a compass of eight tones. Ninety-two per cent of the songs change rhythm.[82] It has been noticed that forty-three per cent of all the songs change rhythm in the second, third, or fourth measure. It is interesting to note that twenty-nine per cent of all the songs change rhythm at the end of the second measure. Nineteen per cent of all the songs change rhythm at the end of the first measure. Songs that change rhythm at the end of the third measure do not constitute so large a per cent. Fourteen per cent of all the songs are in the keys of b minor and g minor. The keys of a minor, c minor, and d minor are common also. Other musical keys have been employed, but none of them reoccur so frequently.

All Sioux songs were sung a definite number of times. For example, medicine songs were sung four times. Two sharp taps were beat upon the drum as a signal to end the dance. After these taps were sounded, the song was sung once more. During the dance it was the custom of the women to sing in a high falsetto, an octave above the men.[83]

Old Dakota love songs were closely akin to war songs. "I will go on the warpath, when your name I hear" is an example of this type of song. Three examples of modern Sioux

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82 Ibid., 38.
83 Frances Densmore, The American Indians and Their Music (New York, 1926), 10.

love songs are: 1. "Truth is Supreme,"[84] 2. "One Lover Pleases,"[85] 3. "Lover Comes in a Canoe."[86] Frances Densmore used treble and bass-clef in recording some of the love songs. In the early part of her work she used this method to show change of vocal register.[87]

SIOUX ART

Since the Sioux were a nomadic tribe, their art consisted largely of the decoration of their wearing apparel, their personal belongings, household utensils, and the tipi.

One of the most distinctive arts among the Sioux was beadwork. Probably the finest beadwork in American is that of the Teton Sioux.[88] Beads were not used as ornaments prior to the trading of the Indian with the white men. Before that time, porcupine quills were dyed with herbs, flattened with the teeth, and sewed to the hide by the use of an awl and sinew. Early beadwork was done in a similar manner. Figure 1 is an example of this type of beadwork. The baby moccasins are three generations old, yet they show the influence of the style of the white man, for they are not a true moccasin but a one-strap slipper.

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84 Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (Washington, 1918), 510.
85 Nellie Barnes, American Indian Love Lyrics (Lawrence, Kansas, 1926), 26.
86 Julia Buttree, The Rhythm of the Red Man (New York, 1921), 205.
87 Personal correspondence with Frances Densmore.
88 A. Hyatt Verrill, The American Indian (New York, 1924), 314.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

Sioux Beadwork

Fig. 1. Beaded baby slippers made by Nellie Buffalo Chief's grandmother with an awl and sinew.

Fig. 2. Beaded party bag made on a modern bead loom by Nellie Buffalo Chief.

PLATE II

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Figure 2 is a party bag, made in modern beadwork style by Mrs. Luther Buffalo Chief, full-blood Yankton Sioux. In the bag Nellie (Mrs. Buffalo Chief) uses a white background which signifies snow or winter. The design is worked in a sky blue, the symbol of a lake or body of water; green, which represents summer or grass; and an amber. Yellow signifies a war horse, dawn, sunlight, clouds, or earth.[89] Black beads are used to outline the geometric pattern. Mrs. Buffalo Chief is Art Supervisor of the Rosebud Reservation Day Schools and Boarding Schools in southwestern South Dakota. Elements of the geometric designs employed were usually symbolic. Many beaded articles were created for use in daily life. Bags of skin were made into trunks for clothing, utensils, and equipment. Sometimes these articles were decorated with feathers.

Some of the most elaborate beadwork was found on Sioux cradles. The father prepared the framework of the cradle. Thin rods were placed side by side on an oval wooden frame, provided with a curved head-piece which was a bow of two small willow bands.[90] Ornaments of quills, beads, fringes, or bangles were used for decoration. There were two prongs which protruded from the back of the cradle so that the baby would be set against the tipi in an upright position. Often the mother carried the baby in the cradle which was strapped

89 Carrie Lyford, "Sioux Beadwork," Department of Interior (Lawrence, Kansas, n.d.), 1-27.
90 A. Hyatt Verrill, The American Indian (New York, 1924), 295.

to her back. It could be hung from the pommel of a saddle or be swung in the bough of a tree.[91] The Indian cradle had a tendency to produce straight limbs, sound lungs, and to promote long life.[92] It is dangerous to generalize about beadwork symbols, because the symbol signified to the Sioux tangible and intangible beliefs and objects.

Soon after the baby was born it was given a cold bath.[93] Then the baby was wrapped, ready to place in the cradle board. The blanket in which the baby was wrapped was placed in a diagonal position. The baby's head rested on the far corner of the blanket, opposite the person who was wrapping the baby. The feet of the little one extended to the opposite corner. The arms of the baby were parallel with the baby's body. Then the corner near the left hand of the baby was tightly folded across and on top of the abdomen. The next fold came from the corner nearest the right hand of the baby and was placed over the other folds. These folds were tied in a knot so as to keep the baby quiet and peaceful.[94]

The first utilitarian art a Sioux boy learned was to use a bow and arrow. At first his targets were inanimate objects - trees and stones. When he was able to kill rabbits and

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91 Fredrick N. Hodge, Handbook of the American Indian (Washington, 1907), 2:265.
92 George Catlin, North American Indians (London, 1848), 1:93.
93 Ibid., 1:265.
94 Personal information, Jennie Rude, R. N., Indian Service, Flandreau, South Dakota.

squirrels, he used a blunt arrowhead. Arrows are made of six parts: 1. head, 2. shaft, 3. foreshaft, 4. shaftment, 5. feathering, 6. nock. Feathering of an arrow was important because it was a means of identification. There may be two or three feathers on an arrow. For identification purposes a personal mark was made under the feathers.

Sharp arrows were of two classes: 1. lance-olate (which could be withdrawn), 2. sigitti, intended for holding the game. Lance-olate arrows were used for hunting, while sigitti arrows were used in war and for retrieving arrows. The Sioux cut shallow grooves lengthwise down their arrow-shafts, known as "lightning marks" or "blood grooves." The grooves kept the shaft from warping, aided in the direction of the arrow's flight, and allowed the blood to escape. Ends of arrows were lashed with sinew, straight or doubled under. The middle of the sinews was either free or glued down. Arrows also were used on prayer sticks.[95]

Beaded buckskin garments and a headdress of drooping eagle feathers were typical Sioux costumes. The sleeves and hemline of women's dresses and men's shirts were finished with fringe. Both men and women wore dentalium shells for earrings. They also wore beaded buckskin moccasins and leggings. The band of the war bonnet signified a military

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[95] Fredrick W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians (Washington, 1907), 2:203.

trophy or charm. War bonnets symbolized personal prowess of the wearer or performance of bravery.[96]

Reference has already been made to Sioux painting of the Hunka buffalo robe and of historical biographies, hung at the head of the bed in a tipi. Other painted objects were the exterior walls of the tipi, boxes, packing cases, bed covers, pillows, saddle blankets, shields and body armor. Various colors were used in painting these articles.[97]

Pictography was another highly specialized art among the Sioux. These carvings on stones or trees served as a calendar. They are a mine of information concerning the origin and migrations of an ancient people. In pictographic accounts, personal events and tribal history show an attempt at chronology.[98]

Pipestone carving was mentioned under peace pipe ceremonies.[99] The pipestone quarry containing the stone from which these pipes are made is located at Pipestone, Minnesota. It is surrounded by high cliffs. On one of the cliffs is a boulder upon which is carved lizards, snakes, otters, Indian

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96 H. W. Kreiger, "American Indian Costumes in the United States," Smithsonian Institute Report (Washington, 1928), 622-625.

97 Charles Stewart Leonard, "Indians," Encyclopedia Americana (New York, 1937), 25:48.

98 W. J. Powell, Fourth Annual Report of Ethnology (Washington, 1883), 127.

99 Cf., 19.

gods, rabbits, muskrats, together with a number of strange figures.[100] This quarry is of great importance and peculiar sacredness to the Sioux.[101] Other trinkets carved from pipestone in recent years include tomahawks, war clubs, paper knives, paper weights, table lamps, candelabra, and ash trays. Some of the present Sioux pipestone artisans whom I have watched carve are Henry Aungie, Joe Waubashaw, and Ezra Taylor. Harry Du Pree was considered the best pipestone carver among the present-day Sioux.[102] His work evidenced an inherent knowledge of media for expressing human and animal form. His figure work was akin to the art of sculpture. In 1938, Mr. Du Pree died at the age of twenty-seven. His home was in Flandreau, South Dakota.

FOLK-MOTIFS IN SIOUX LITERATURE

Little by little during the course of the past sixty years, a gratifying number of Dakota stories, legends, and myths have been printed and thus rescued from oblivion. Missionaries, ethnologists, and folk-lorists have succeeded in inducing a number of Sioux tribesmen to permit their stories to be recorded - no slight accomplishment in view of the fact

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100 W. P. Clark, Indian Sign Language (Philadelphia, 1885), 503.

101 Told to me by Henry Aungie, Santee Sioux, Flandreau, South Dakota.

102 Told to me by William Punnell, curio dealer, Flandreau, South Dakota.

that certain myths or legends were regarded among the Sioux as the exclusive property of the teller, to be told only by him or by one designated by him to tell them. By means of this tradition, a Sioux' rights to a certain myth or legend were protected as completely as if he had a copyright on it. In addition to these authentic stories assembled by reputable collectors, a number of educated Sioux men and women have seen the value of preserving their folk-stories for posterity, and have printed collections of original stories known to them. As a result, there are now available from authentic sources at least one hundred forty stories.

The Reverend Mr. Stephen R. Riggs collected eight myths by the following men of the Santee Clan: Michel Renville, the Reverend Mr. David Grey Cloud, Walking Elk, and James Garvie. These myths are recorded in the original Dakota language, followed by an English translation of the texts. Mrs. Marie McLaughlin, herself a quarter-blood Sioux of the Medawakanton, or Santee, Clan has recounted twenty-eight stories of her people. Dr. Charles A. Eastman, a three-quarter blood Sioux, has published a collection of twenty legends. Students of Haskell Institute have preserved seven Sioux legends. Mr. Alanson Skinner has published a total of forty-eight in the Journal of American Folk-Lore,[103] and Mrs. Margaret P.

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[103] Alanson Skinner, "Traditions of the Iowa (Sioux) Indians," Journal of American Folk-Lore, 38:425-506, 1925.

Speelman has recorded seventeen.[104]

In this study, every precaution has been taken to include only the most authentic texts as the basis for generalizations. Secondary sources - such as fiction and biography, using Sioux background for local color-no matter how carefully documented, have been studiously avoided. Reasons for this precaution will be obvious, no doubt, as the nature of the subject matter unfolds itself.

At first reading, isolated Dakota stories, or even limited collections such as those of Stephen Riggs, Mary Katherine Judd, and Hartley Alexander are likely to appear primitive and without particular significance. The stories may even appear rather silly. But when a sizable collection of them is studied in succession, a surprising similarity between Sioux folk-lore and the folk-lore of the ancient Greeks, the ancient Romans, and even of medieval peoples comes to light. Heretofore, workers in the field of Dakota literature have been content to stop with the recording of the stories, legends, and myths. As previously indicated, this phase of literary study is extremely important and should be continued as long as there is the remotest possibility of any new material's coming to light. But enough stories are now available to afford literary comparisons and through this literature to reconstruct the aesthetic life of these interesting

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104 Margaret Speelman, Collection of American Indian Folk-Tales (Lawrence, Kansas, 1932), 1-325.

and noble people.

The preceding account of the customs, mores, and ceremonials of the Sioux was based largely upon accounts of the early explorers, missionaries, military men, and Indian agents who had spent some time among the tribe and observed the day-to-day life of the Sioux, as a newspaper correspondent might observe the events in the life of a foreign people.[105] These facts have been verified by such dependable autobiographies as those of Chief Standing Bear of the Oglala Clan and Dr. Charles A. Eastman of the Santee Clan; also by the writer's own experiences among the Santee Sioux at Flandreau, South Dakota.

In the original stories, however, no verification was necessary. The stories are authentic; each individual story exemplifies the Sioux "in his habit as he lived." By an isolated instance here and a chance reference there, in stories, it was often possible to piece together beliefs and customs that had not previously been observed.

Thus it appears the historical literary background of this study has supplied sufficient information to justify a few generalizations concerning the folk-lore.

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[105] Cf., 6.

Interpretation of Natural Phenomena

In addition to being taught to shoot, to track game, to foretell weather, it is to be expected that the intellectually curious Indian boy or girl would raise many questions relative to the world that he observed about him. It is likewise natural to assume that a particularly satisfactory explanation of natural phenomena would find a place in story and be handed down from generation to generation. Such stories are common to all primitive peoples, and Mrs. Marie McLaughlin records a number of such stories among the Sioux. The most interesting of these are "Why Bears travel only in Pairs," "Where the Indians got their first Corn," "Why the Rabbit has such a Short Tail," and "Why the Owl sees best at Night."[106] Similar stories among the Yakima explain "How the Chipmunk got his Stripes," and among the Iowa "Why Rabbits have Prominent Eyes."[107, 108]

Apologues

As the ancient Greeks had the fables of AEsop, and the Middle Ages had the bestiaries based upon Physiologus, so the Sioux had their animal stories that taught a moral lesson.

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106 Marie McLaughlin, Myths of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 117.

107 Haskell Institute, Indian Legends and Superstitions (Lawrence, Kansas, 1914), 43.

108 Ibid., 90.

The story of "The Little Mice" among the Sioux is another version of the age-old story of "The Ant and the Grasshopper." The Sioux story of "The Rabbit and the Frogs"[109] is an example of the old adage "There is always someone worse off than yourself." The following moral precepts are taught in stories recounted by Dr. Charles A. Eastman:[110]

1. If you are proud and selfish you will lose all in the end.
2. It is not a wise thing to boast too loudly.
3. Pride alone will not fill the stomach.
4. Patience and quick wit are better than speed (an analogue to our story of the "Hare and the Turtle").
5. Do not exult too soon; nor is it wise to tell of your brave deeds within the hearing of your enemy.
6. The midnight hunter steals at his own risk.
7. There is no meanness like ingratitude.
8. Do not harm your weaker brothers.
9. He who deceived others may himself be caught some day.
10. There is no life that is free from hardship and danger.
11. It is not wise to put the strong in authority over the weak.
12. Do not be too easily deceived.
13. The great father watches the unruly ones from the sky.
14. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.
15. Do not marry young strangers.
16. Be careful or mischief will find you out (an analogue to the biblical injunction, "Be sure your sins will find you out.").
17. Be not so rash in the future.[111]

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109 Haskell Institute, Indian Legends and Superstitions (Lawrence, Kansas, 1914), 57.

110 Charles A. Eastman, Smoky Day's Wigwam Evenings (Boston, 1925), 1-148.

111 Ibid., 1-148.

The Symbolism of the Cardinal Points

Unfortunately, the symbolism relative to the cardinal points among the Sioux is too fragmentary as yet to permit any generalization. We may be sure that, since in the White Buffalo Maiden Ceremony, in the Chief Ceremony, and the Peace Ceremony, the pipe is presented first to the heavens, then to the earth, and then to the four cardinal points of the compass, there was some symbolic significance in the directions. Some evidence of this fact is available in the stories, but the evidence is so meager that the best that can be done now is to present the evidence as a theory, hoping that future investigation may permit its verification as a fact. The Sioux were Sun worshippers, or at least revered the sun as a divine symbol, like the Christian cross. It may be stated categorically that they conceived of some Divine Spirit above that could look down into the hearts of men, and from Whom no secrets were hidden. There is some evidence that the Sioux believed the spirit ascended on its way to the Happy Hunting Ground, although evidence on this point, as will be pointed out later, is rather contradictory. There is a slight bit of evidence that the Sioux regarded the east as a symbol of hope. Mrs. Marie McLaughlin tells that the Sioux went to the east side of the ridge for revival.[112] In selecting a camp site,

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112 Marie McLaughlin, Myths of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 117.

a place was always selected so that the open space of the semi-circle was toward the east. Evidence of the significance of the north is almost totally lacking. The south was generally regarded as a friendly direction. The buffalo usually came from the south to graze in summer; and some are of the belief that the south was the location of the Happy Hunting Ground, although it may be that the Sioux merely looked upon the south as the probable location of an earthly paradise. It seems fairly certain that the west was regarded with foreboding. In Mrs. Marie McLaughlin's collection of stories, the Lightning Husband took his earthly wife and disappeared into the west.[113] Enemies were most numerous in the west; in an unnamed ceremony, a dead bird was hung so as to face the west; the insulted buffalo-wife of a Sioux retreated to the west; and the door of a witch's tipi or cave, as opposed to all Sioux custom, faced west.[114, 115, 116]

Totemism

Evidence of totemism among the Sioux, except as individual totems, has not previously been recorded; yet there is some evidence that among the Medawakanton, or Santee, for a time at least, the rabbit may have been a totem animal.

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113 Ibid., 123.
114 Ibid., 110.
115 Ibid., 170.
116 Ibid., 183.

Individual totem among the Sioux was practically universal. As a part of the puberty rites, the Sioux youth withdrew from the tribe, sought a high, isolated place, and remained in seclusion, fasting, until such time as a vision came to him. Usually some animal appeared to him bearing a divine message. Ever after, to him, that animal was an ever-present help in time of need. The institution was not materially different from that of a patron saint or a guardian angel.

Among the Medawakanton, or Santee, there are preserved no fewer than seven stories in which the rabbit plays a part entirely out of keeping with its usual characteristics. In "The Pet Rabbit" the little animal is treated as if it were a child, and at its accidental death the family goes through the traditional mourning ceremonies.[117] In another story, "White Plume," when the tribe was feasting there was no reference to the rabbit's being eaten, although practically every other animal, fish, and fowl, native to the area, were on the menu.[118] In another story there is a reference to a boy's killing a rabbit, but the reference to this animal's being helpful to the tribe were so frequent, there seems some evidence at least for believing that among the Santee the rabbit was a totem.[119]

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117 Ibid., 13.
118 Ibid., 158.
119 Ibid., 179.

Sacred Number

There is considerable evidence that various races and religious denominations have what appears to be a sacred number, but the basis for the selection of a particular number is sometimes difficult to determine. The Five Joys of the Blessed Virgin in the medieval church may be the counterpart of the five wounds of Christ.[120] The seven deadly sins may in some way be associated with the seven days - six and a day of rest - which the Lord utilized in the creation of the world. In the reference to the rain of forty days and forty nights in the time of Noah, the forty years' wandering of the Children of Israel in the time of Moses, the forty days which our Lord spent in the desert and the symbolic lenten season of forty days before Easter, the number forty may have no significance other than that forty is a round number representing a considerable space of time. However, just why forty was selected - if there ever was a reason - seems to be lost in obscurity.

The same may be said for the sacred number of the Sioux. It seems fairly evident that among the Sioux, four was a sacred number.[121] In the pubic ceremony, a Sioux youth, during his adolescent vigil, placed tobacco on the four corners of his buffalo robe. In the Buffalo Maiden Dance and

120 Although the "Five Joys of the Virgin" vary, the usual list is the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Assumption. Cf. J. E. Wells, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English (New Haven, 1926), 536+.

121 Charles A. Eastman, The Soul of the Indian (Boston, 1915), 7.

in the Peace Pipe Ceremony, the pipe in addition to being presented to the Great Mystery above and to Mother Earth below, was also always presented to the four cardinal points of the compass. In the legend of "White Plume," the hero's father presented the boy with four arrows - red, blue, yellow, and natural color - each with a special significance; and in the story of "Stoneboy," there were four brothers, and a special significance was attached to the fact that each of the brothers in succession did not return to camp at the end of the fourth day.[122, 123] Quite evidently four was a sacred number among the Sioux; but why four was originally selected is still a mystery.

Sioux Myths and Occidental Analogues

When one looks at the number of analogies between Sioux myths and the myths of Israel, Greece, Rome, the Anglo-Saxons, and medieval peoples in general, one's first impression is to assume that somewhere in the dim and extremely remote past the American Indian must have been an integral part of the original European or Near-Eastern stock. In fact, some religious investigators are quite convinced that the American Indians are descendants of the "Lost Tribes of Israel." Folklorists and most historians, however, are not at all inclined

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122 Marie McLaughlin, Myths and Legends of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 156.

123 Ibid., 162.

to accept this belief.[124] They are of the general opinion that as a matter of evolution every tribe or race will be confronted with similar problems and that it will solve its problems in more or less the same way. Although the data about to be presented unquestionably show a number of analogies between Sioux culture and the culture of various Indo-European and biblical peoples, these data are not to be construed as meaning that the Sioux - or any other American Indian - had any connection with the European peoples in the Pre-Columbian era.

Sioux Myths and Biblical Analogues

In the Sioux story of "The Bound Children," some individuals are fed by crows in much the same fashion that the ravens fed Elijah.[125] In the same manner, St. Cuthbert, among the Northumbrian Angles, was fed by an eagle.[126] To the mind of a Sioux there would be nothing unusual in an individual's being fed by birds. It was a perfectly natural part of his philosophy of totemism. If he were in desperate need of advice, his totem would tell him what he desired to know. If he were in need of food, his totem - a buffalo, a beaver, a crow - would furnish him with food.

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124 W. P. Clark, Indian Sign Language (Philadelphia, 1885), 7.
125 Marie McLaughlin, Myths and Legends of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 61.
126 William Craigie, Easy Readings in Anglo-Saxon (Edinburgh, 1927), 20.

There are deep-seated friendships among the Sioux similar to the friendship of David and Jonathan, but such friendships are common to all races. It is unusual, perhaps, to find a man more attached to a friend than he is attached to his own brothers. Among the Greeks there were Damon and Pythias, among the Franks there were Roland and Oliver, in Chaucer there were Palamon and Arcita of "The Knight's Tale," and in Kipling's "The Ballad of East and West" there were "the Colonel's son" and "Kamal's son." Among the Sioux such a deep-seated friendship was regarded as perfectly natural. Life among the Sioux was uncertain at best. In general, the Sioux were a peaceful people, but they led a dangerous life. They were surrounded by powerful enemies. They were a hunter rather than a sedentary people. The dangers of the chase were numerous. The lack of buffalo might threaten the life of the whole tribe. Battles against the Chippewas or the dangers of the chase might carry off a man at any time. Attached as a Sioux was to his family, he would make an agreement with any man who would stand by him to the death. The Hunka ceremony was a public acknowledgment of such a promise. By this ceremony, two Sioux faithfully promised that each would defend the life of the other, even if he lost his own life in so doing; and in the event that either of them fell, the surviving one would look after the children of the deceased as if they were his own. It is entirely erroneous to

assume that there was anything psychopathic about the Hunka ceremony. To the mind of a Sioux, Hunka was no more psychopathic than would be a modern insurance policy.

As a third evidence of analogies between biblical stories and Sioux myths, there is among the Sioux in the story of "The Boy and the Turtles" a prayer for the driving out of an evil spirit somewhat similar to the story of Christ's casting the Devil into swine.[127] Such stories are not common to the Israelites and the Sioux only; they are prevalent among all races. Most primitive peoples believe that to be good is natural. If one is not good, one is possessed by an evil spirit; and he will remain so possessed until the evil spirit is cast out. The current expression, "to fight like one possessed," is a remnant of the ancient belief. Casting out an evil spirit was not peculiar to the Sioux. The Hoop Dance of the Taos Indians is an evidence of an analogous belief, except in the Taos Hoop-Dance the person "possessed" eludes the evil spirit by his contortions.

It would appear, therefore, that the psychology of totemism, Hunka, and the "individual possessed" grew up among the Sioux as a result of their way of life, and that stories embodying these elements have no direct connection with analogous situations in the Bible.

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127 Marie McLaughlin, Myths and Legends of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 100.

In addition, as Dr. Charles A. Eastman has pointed out, the Sioux stories of creation have nothing in common with the biblical accounts of creation in Genesis. Eastman is of the opinion that the story of the "Blood-Clot Boy" is the Sioux creation myth.[128] This story, with variations, is recorded in three separate Sioux sources - by Riggs, by McLaughlin, and by Skinner - but the blood clot worn in the bosom is more nearly analogous to the humming bird creation-motif among the Mexican Indians than it is to any incident in the Hebrew accounts of creation.[129, 130, 131]

Eastman also calls attention to other parallels between Sioux practices and Christian beliefs and ritual.[132] For example, whereas the snake tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden, it is the spider (Unktomi) which is most likely to beguile the Sioux.[133] The ear-piercing ceremony among the Sioux occupied a place comparable to baptism in the Christian Church. The

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128 Charles A. Eastman, The Soul of an Indian (Boston, 1915), 143.

129 Stephen R. Riggs, "The Doings of the Blood-Clot Boy," "Dakota Texts," U.S. Geographical and Geological Survey (Washington, 1893), 101.

130 Marie McLaughlin, Myths and Legends of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 82.

131 Alanson Skinner, "Traditions of the Iowa (Sioux) Indians," Journal of American Folk-Lore, 38:450, 1925.

132 Charles A. Eastman, The Soul of the Indian (Boston, 1915), 120.

133 It is interesting to note in passing that among the Hopi Indians the snake is an object of reverence. Such reverence, however, springs naturally from the Hopi way of life.

"freeing-of-the-ghost" motif in Dakota literature is not materially different from the institution of "prayers for the repose of the soul" in the Catholic Church. The "freeing-of-the-ghost" motif is found in the Sioux "Story of the Peace Pipe" and "Two Young Friends."[134] The story of "The Unfaithful Wife," as recorded in Genesis, is comparable to "The Unvisited Island" and "Thrown Away."[135, 136, 137]

"Jonah and the Whale" is similar to "Dore and Wahredna" and "Hiawatha's Fishing."[138, 139, 140]

But the Sioux attitude toward Unktomi, the ear-piercing ceremony, "the freeing-of-the-ghost," "The Unfaithful Wife," or the "Whale" motifs have no connection with the Bible or Christian discipline.

Sioux Stories and the Classics

As the Greeks had their Aesop's fables, the Roman their Physiologus, and the later Middle Ages their beast fables, beast epics, and bestiaries, so the Sioux had their stories

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134 Marie McLaughlin, Myths and Legends of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 44.
135 Holy Bible, "Genesis," 39:7-19.
136 Alanson Skinner, "Traditions of the Iowa (Sioux) Indians," Journal of American Folk-Lore, 38:139, 1925.
137 Ibid., 38:446-447.
138 Holy Bible, "Judges," 1:1-17.
139 Alanson Skinner, "Traditions of the Iowa (Sioux) Indians," Journal of American Folk-Lore, 38:420, 1925.
140 Henry W. Longfellow, The Song of Hiawatha (New York, 1901), 70-71.

of Smoky Day. As has already been pointed out, all races seem to have hit upon the beast fable as an effective pedagogical device, although it is of interest to note that among the Sioux there is nothing so far-fetched in its symbolism as the bestiaries of the later Middle Ages.[141] As the Greeks had their Polyphemous and their Proteus, so the Sioux had their giants and their mischievous genie (Witkotko) who could change his form at will.[142] As the Roman read the future by the flight of birds, the Sioux sometimes regarded the actions of animals as portents.[143] The Sioux story of Mo'poski (Blunt Arrows) has much in common with the Greek story of the tendon of Achilles.[144] Although there are a number of striking similarities between Dakota stories and Greek and Roman legends, there is not the slightest objective evidence that the ancient Sioux even heard of the Classical literatures. The similarities, however, are not entirely accidental. In the case of the fables, at least, we have the case of various peoples at various times being confronted with the same problem and solving the problem in the same fashion.

Sioux and Anglo-Saxon Analogues

It is a popular custom among the uninformed to laugh at such Sioux names as "Plenty Kill," "Standing Bear," "Pretty

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141 Cf., 30.
142 Ibid., "How the Rabbit Lost His Tail," 68+.
143 Ibid., "The Bound Children," 61+.
144 Alanson Skinner, "Traditions of the Iowa (Sioux) Indians," Journal of American Folk-Lore, 38:478, 1925.

Feather," "Star Boy," "Sore Eyes;" but persons who laugh at these names would probably be much surprised to learn that at a comparable stage of development the Angles and Saxons used names that were not materially different from these. Beowulf, the hero of the oldest English epic, probably meant "Bee-wolf" or "Bear," and Panzer has found many examples of the Bear's-Son motif in early Teutonic literature.[145] Heorogar and Hrothgar in the same epic, have some relation to "spear;" Healfdene means "Half-Dane;" and similarly Adolph means "Noble Wolf;" Alfred, "Elf in Council;" "Bernard," "Bold as a Bear;" Bertram, "Bright Raven;" Everard, "Strong as a Wild Boar;" and among women, Brunhilde means "Brown Battle;" Wealtheow, "Foreign Servant;" Gertrude, "Spear Maiden;" and Hilda, Hildegarde, and Mathilda have some connection with "Battle Maiden."

The institution of Hunka, previously described, is not materially different from the institution of Comitatus which Tacitus observed among the early Teutons, except that among the Teutons it was dishonorable for the battle leader to be outdone by any of his men on the field of battle, and it was dishonorable for warriors to retreat before the battle leader had left the field; whereas among the Sioux, Hunka was an agreement between two warriors that neither would leave the field until he was sure that the other was either safe or

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145 Fredrick Klaeber, "Introduction," Beowulf (New York, 1936), xxv.

beyond all help.[146]

Sioux Stories and Popular Medieval Motifs

Among the Sioux there are a number of stories based upon motifs similar to those that were popular throughout the Middle Ages and even later. Dr. Charles A. Eastman mentions an instance of alter ego that would have been dear to the heart of any man in the Middle Ages.[147] Eastman relates that two men belonged to enemy tribes - Sioux and Chippewa - and although they had never met, each knew intuitively of the existence of the other. Once when the enemy tribes were about to do battle, the Sioux refused to allow his men to fight, because he knew that his alter ego was somewhere among the opposing force. When the two met, they recognized each other at sight, and so alike were they that the songs of both - although one's songs were in Chippewa and the other's in Dakota - proved to be identical.

Stories of "other-world" experiences are common throughout the romances of the Middle Ages and evidences of this motif are found as late as Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci." "The Story of the Lost Wife" is an example of this motif in the literature of the Sioux.[148]

The "tree-locked" and "earth-trapped" motifs are really

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146 William W. Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition (Cambridge, 1930), 51.

147 Charles A. Eastman, The Soul of the Indian (Boston, 1915), 169.

148 Marie McLaughlin, Myths and Legends of the Sioux (Bismark, North Dakota, 1916), 37.

two phases of the same theme, and both are found in the stories of the Sioux. The story of "Merlin" in Medieval Romance is perhaps the best known story containing the "tree-locked" motif, although a brief reference to the same theme is made with regard to Ariel in Shakespeare's The Tempest. The Dakota story of "White Plume" contains a reference to a character who is "tree-bound" and the motif is not materially different to the "tree-locked" motif in medieval literature.[149] In the Dakota story of "The Faithful Lovers," a character has his feet held fast in the back of a gigantic turtle.[150] This motif is not materially different from the familiar "earth-trapped" theme.

Riddles and guessing rewards and forfeits are common to folk literature from the time that OEdipus guessed the riddle of the Sphinx. Aldhelm is supposed to have written a hundred riddles in Latin, and there are nearly that many in West-Saxon, formerly assigned to Cynewulf, and found in the Exeter Book. In many folk stories, if the contestant fails to answer the riddle or to choose the correct one among a number of objects, he forfeits his life. Bassanio's choice of the right casket in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice is a familiar example of this type. The Dakota story of "Pretty Feathered Forehead" is strikingly similar to the casket scene in Shakespeare.[151]

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149 Ibid., 165.
150 Ibid., 24.
151 Ibid., 175.

An estranged wife decides to rejoin her people, the buffalo. The repentant husband decides to try to recapture her affections. To do this, he must stand successfully a number of tests on pain of death if he should happen to guess incorrectly. One of the tests is to identify his wife's work-box or bag among several that are strikingly similar to it. Through the connivance of his young son, who knows the answers to the tests, the husband is enabled to "guess" correctly. Of course, there is no reason to suspect that the writer of this ancient legend ever heard of Shakespeare.

"Unspelling Motifs" in medieval literature are common from the days of Marie de France's story of the werewolf, through the anonymous stories of "Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnal" and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," to Chaucer's "The Wife of Bath's Tale," and Gower's "The Tale of Florent." Ordinarily, in an "unspelling motif," someone must do something that will break a charm and release the person under a spell. This may be no more than the bestowing of a kiss upon a sleeping princess to arouse her from a prolonged sleep. It may be as much as the exchange of blows with an axe, as in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." In the Dakota stories of "How the Rabbit Lost his Tail" and "The Two Young Friends," there are several instances of a character's willingness to change places with another character only to find that by so doing he has unintentionally broken a spell.[152]

[152] Ibid., 70, 73, 126.

There were common characteristics in the stories of "Midas" and in "The Head of Gold."[153] "The Franklin's Tale" in Chaucer contained a theme of impossibility which was like "World Man."[154] In the Nibelung Saga the "sword motif" in Siegfried was similar to "Excalibur" in Le Morte D'Arthur.[155] "Scalped Man" had a sacred "sword motif" also.[156] As usual, there is no evidence that the ancient Sioux story teller had any knowledge of the same motif in medieval literature.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROSE OF THE SIOUX

In the foregoing discussion of the prose literature of the Sioux - brief though it is - it is hoped that the numerous parallels may help to raise Sioux literature to the level that it deserves. It would be a mistake to assume, because parallels have been drawn between Sioux stories and the legends and myths of the Greeks, Roman, Anglo-Saxons and some of the other motifs of medieval literature, that the literature of Sioux can be favorably compared with the whole literatures of the Classical languages or the whole literature of the Middle Ages. After all, there was no Homer, Sophocles, Vergil, Beowulf poet, or Chaucer among the Sioux. On the other hand, it would be equally erroneous to assume, because most of the

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153 Harry T. Peck, Harper's Dictionary Classical Literature (New York, 1923), 1042.

154 Stephen Return Riggs, "Dakota Grammar Texts," U. S. Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region (Washington, 1893), 9:109.

155 Alanson Skinner, "Traditions of the Iowa (Sioux) Indians," Journal of American Folk-Lore, 38:445, 1925.

156 Paul Lieder, British Poetry and Prose (New York, 1928), 150.

Dakota stories employ the personification of animals, that they are simple narratives suitable only for children. It is manifestly unfair to the Sioux to judge his primitive civilization by twentieth century standards. If comparisons are made between his civilization and our own, it is only fair that the comparisons be based upon the same cultural levels. On the item of naming individuals, our system - on the same cultural level - was little different from that of the Sioux. In explaining natural phenomena, the Sioux was no more ingenuous than the ancient Greeks. The apologues of the Sioux were just as pointed and just as practical as those of any other people.

Unfortunately, some of the parallels between the prose literature of the Sioux and the literatures of peoples in the Middle Ages leave many questions unanswered. The "Freeing-of-the-Ghost," the "tree-locked" and "earth-trapped" motifs, "other world experiences," "riddles," "unspelling," "Sacred Numbers," and the belief in an alter ego are interesting in that they sprang up among the Sioux quite independently of any foreign influence; but why they should have come into existence either in the Middle Ages or among the Sioux is still shrouded in mystery.

Far more important, however, in the study of literary parallels, is the light which certain institutions among the Sioux throw upon certain beliefs among our own people. Sioux

civilization was primitive, and the relation between literature and life was direct. Occasionally, in the literature of the Sioux a relationship can be seen between cause and effect that has become obscure in our more complicated civilization. For example, the institution of totemism may throw some light upon the incident of Elijah's being fed by the ravens. The Sioux institution of Hunka makes simple and natural such friendships as Damon and Pythias, or Roland and Oliver, which pseudo-Freudians have in all probability misinterpreted.

SUMMARY

1. From a quarter of a century of contacts with the Indians and with the aid of numerous published documents, the folk-lore of the Indians, especially that of the Sioux, has been studied.

2. Sioux culture was practically dependent upon the supply of buffalo, therefore opportunities for cultural expansion were circumscribed. Within those narrow limits, however, Sioux culture was entirely adequate to the needs of the tribe. It is not to be expected that the Sioux would quickly abandon deep-seated beliefs which his tribe found to be workable. The most sensible approach in the amalgamation of the white and the red races would be for the white man to try to understand the Indian point of view.

3. Sioux customs and beliefs occasionally explain obscure points in our own folk-lore. That which in our

complicated civilization has become obscure, frequently becomes obvious in the light of the less complicated civilization of the Sioux.

4. In the realm of pure art - beadwork, quillwork, carving, dances, etc. - Sioux designs are worthy of study in and for themselves.

5. Fortunately, Sioux songs are adequately represented in the collection of Miss Frances Densmore. In the light of the success of this pioneer work, the government should not rest until all the Indian songs, dances, and stories still extant in America are recorded and preserved for posterity. It is regrettable that in Carl Sandburg's "The American Song Bag" not one song by the "First Americans" is recorded.

The white man has encroached upon the land and privacy of the Indian; for that reason it is hoped that this study is a sincere account of the beliefs, ideals, and the unique character of the Sioux tribe. As Dr. Charles Eastman has said, "Its simplicity, its reverence, its bravery and uprightness must be left to make their own appeal to the American of today, who is the inheritor of our homes, our names, and our traditions. Since there is nothing left but remembrance, at least, let that remembrance be just."[157]

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157 Charles A. Eastman, The Soul of an Indian (Boston, 1915), 171.

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