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If you could go back to the forks of the road—Back the long miles you have carried the load, Back to the place where you had to decide, By this way or that through your life to abide, Back to the sorrow and back of the cure, Back to the place where the future was fair— If you were there now, a decision to make, Oh, pilgrim of sorrow, which road would you take? The better you'd trodden the other long track, Suppose that again to the forks you went back, After you found that its promises fair Were but a delusion that led to a snare; This road you first traveled with sighs and tears, Though rocky and rough, was most grateful to bless you, With balm for each bruise and a charm for each ache— Oh, pilgrim of sorrow, which road would you take? —Hartford Religious Herald.

OUR INDIAN DANCES.

THERE ARE THREE KINDS, RELIGIOUS, SECULAR AND SOCIAL.

Among the More Warlike Tribes the Dance Was Followed by Horrible Tortures. For Which the Young Bucks as a Rule Volunteered.

Most of the Indian wars and threatened uprisings of late years have been brought about by the prevention of the performance of their ceremonies by the Indians. Of such a nature are the ghost dances and others. Although usually orderly and never indulging in the excesses of the avowed purpose of war, they have often awakened the dormant warlike spirit of the redskins, and on this account the Indian agents and officers at the army posts do all that they can to prevent them. The dances grow less numerous each year, and those that were once indulged in are no longer performed.

The most noted among the Indians for their dances were the Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Sioux Indians. The Cheyennes of Minnesota and the Arapahoes in these ceremonies to a less extent than did most of their neighbors. The three tribes first mentioned, however, were noted far and wide for the variety and number of their dances. While now the dances of rare occurrence and done in a perfunctory manner, it was far different in the old days before the Indian reached his present semi-civilized condition.

Indian dances are of three kinds—religious, ceremonial, secular and social. The religious, or medicine dances of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes are identical with the famous sun dance of the Sioux, and all the wild tribes had a dance which presented the same idea. This was the Cheyenne and Arapahoe dance followed by horrible tortures. The endurance of these tortures with stoicism was a great honor. For they were looked upon as a sign of courage and manliness, and as everybody knows, endurance was counted the greatest of human virtues. They were not a part of the medicine dance, but followed it as a supplemental ceremony.

A generation ago, when the Indian youth desired to put away childish things and become a man, he was obliged to go through an ordeal which would test his ability to endure. At the close of every medicine dance there would be a call for volunteers for torture. Those who offered themselves were usually young men, but now and then an old man would offer himself for the torture. Those who volunteered for the torture did not join in the dance, but spent a few days preceding in fasting and seclusion.

When the old medicine men decided that the proper time had arrived, they would send the volunteers to the place where they were stripped and then carefully examined to note if they were likely that they could undergo the torture without fatal injury. After this examination had been passed by all eligible there were simple religious ceremonies, and then the chief medicine man approached with a sharp knife. On some men he would make sharp incisions, two vertical and one on each breast, about two inches apart, passing the knife through the pectoral muscles. The parts between the incisions would be lifted up and fastened to a piece of wood. The free ends of the rope were then fastened to the top of the lodge pole. Sometimes the incisions were made through the muscles of the back and the rope stretched to blocks of wood or buffalo skulls. Others were dragged up into the air and fastened to the rafters. Their weight and struggles tore out the flesh and released them.

Each tribe usually had one purely religious dance each year. If a tribe were in good luck, the ceremony was performed two or three times. Of all the ceremonial dances the medicine dance took precedence, and the scalp dance came next in order of importance. The scalp dance on the day following the return of a successful war party and was only participated in by the members of that party. Before the dance a ceremony was performed by the warriors who took the scalps, no one else being permitted to be present or to see what was done. Those who took part in this would form a circle, men the skin of the scalps would be cut and the matter removed. Then each scalp would be stretched on a wooden stick and the hair dressed. Each warrior then attached his scalp to the stick.

When this ceremony had been completed, the circle was broken and all the warriors marched back to the camp and planted the poles with their scalps. The scalp dance in a circle in the middle of the spot selected for the dance. Those who had scalps were then joined by others who had taken scalps by ignominiously worshipping. Instead of taking part in the dance, thus won a right to take part in the dance.

A circle would be formed by the party around the scalp poles. At a signal the warriors joined hands and began a monotonous song, keeping time with slow steps while turning about the scalps. Faster and faster grew the dance, wilder and wilder. As it progressed whoops and yells were uttered. Higher and higher the men would leap, losing hands and brandishing their weapons. This would continue until not only the dancers, but those who witnessed the ceremony, would be completely intoxicated with mad excitement. Then one of the participants would spring from the circle and, standing in the middle, would relate the story and by his nervous repetition again and again the operation of taking scalps. When he finished, another took his place and told of his personal prowess, while finally those who had no scalps would tell of their deeds and how the "bad god" had prevented them from securing any scalps.

The two dances I have mentioned were the great ones of the two wild tribes. There was also the given corn dance of the Sioux and the Navajos, which took place in honor of the ripening of the corn and often ended in wild orgies.

These were religious dances performed really as a matter of duty to the Great Spirit. But the keenest delight was taken by every tribe in the social dances. These varied greatly with each tribe. They were the scene of many a courtship. Sometimes the dancers were in couples and sometimes of the nature of reels, but usually they were of the all hands round circle order. During the chief pleasure of the Indian, they were the only place where they

been discontinued through the caution of the Indian agents, who have discouraged them. Sometimes war has been due to the forcible stopping of an innocent social dance from which no account have come if it had been allowed to proceed.—Chicago Times-Herald.

IN STRENGTH OF GOD. WE MUST STRIVE TO OVERTHROW EVERY ABOMINATION.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Preaches a Powerful Sermon Against Evil—Must Be Polite, as the Wrestlers of Old, in Combating Sin.

[Copyright, 1898, by American Press Association.] WASHINGTON, Nov. 6.—In this discourse Dr. Talmage selects one of the boldest figures of the Bible to present most practical and most forcible lessons. He is Ephesians vi, 12, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Squabbles and fastidiousness were never charged against Paul's rhetoric. In the year against evil he took the first weapon he could lay his hands on. For illustration, he employed the theater, the arena, the foot race, and there was nothing in the Christian's life, with its wealth of laurel and palm, or Nemean game, with its wreath of parsley, or any Roman circus, but he felt he had a right to put it in service of his battle. He was not surprised that in his day he was being a wrestling bout for aggressiveness? Philarch says that wrestling is the most artistic and cunning of athletic games. We must make a wrestling bout of our life, the lowest of spectacles, and wrestling, which is an effort in sport to put down another on floor or ground, and we—all of us—indulge in it. In our daily life, if we were healthful and plucky. The ancient wrestlers were first bathed in oil and then sprinkled with sand. The third throw decided the victor, and many a man who went down in the first throw or second throw in the third throw was on top, and his opponent under. The Romans did not like this game very much, for it was not savage enough to excite the people being allowed in the game. They preferred the foot of hungry panther on the breast of fallen martyr.

In wrestling, the opponents would bow in apparent suavity, advance face to face, put down both feet solidly, take each other by the arms and push each other backward and forward until the work began in earnest, and there were contortions and strangulations and violent strokes of the foot of one contestant against the foot of the other, the gripping and the pinning that threatened apoplexy or death, the defeated fell and the shouts of the spectators greeted the victor. I guess Paul had seen some of this, and he reminded him of the struggle of the soul with temptation and the struggle of truth with error and the struggle of heavenly forces against Apollonius and his disciples, and he pointed to an amanuensis, and he dictated my text to the one to Philemon, seem to have been dictated, and as the amanuensis goes on with his work I hear the groan and laugh and shout of earth and echo of heaven's content. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Polite Athletes. I notice that as these wrestlers advanced to throw each other they bowed one to the other. It was a civility, not only in Greek and Roman games, but in the wrestling in all the wrestling bouts at Clerkenwell, England, and in the famous wrestling match during the reign of Henry III, in St. Giles' Field, between John de Lexington and people of London. However rough a twist and hard a pull each wrestler contemplated giving his opponent, they approached each other with politeness and suavity. The gentlemen, the affability, the courtesy in no wise hindered the decisiveness of the contest. Well, Paul I see what you mean, and I will strive to call infidels fools. Do not call higher critics reproaches. Do not call all card players and theater goers children of the devil. Do not say that the depiction of hair part passed through and fastened to a piece of wood. The free ends of the rope were then fastened to the top of the lodge pole. Sometimes the incisions were made through the muscles of the back and the rope stretched to blocks of wood or buffalo skulls. Others were dragged up into the air and fastened to the rafters. Their weight and struggles tore out the flesh and released them.

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Remember also that those wrestlers went through several continuous courses of preparation for their work. They were put upon such diet as would best develop their muscles. As Paul says, "Every man that strive for the mastery is temperate in all things." The wrestlers were put under complete discipline—bathing, gymnastics, struggle in sport with each other to develop strength and, quickness to dodge of hand and trip of foot, stooping to fit each other off the ground, suddenly rushing forward, suddenly pulling backward, putting the left foot behind the other's right foot and getting the opponent off his balance, hard training for days and weeks and months, so that when they met

(Continued on fourth page.)

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