

PERSONAL STUDIES OF INDIAN LIFE.

POLITICS AND "PIPE-DANCING."

WITH PICTURES BY A. CASTAIGNE.



THE MARK OF HONOR.

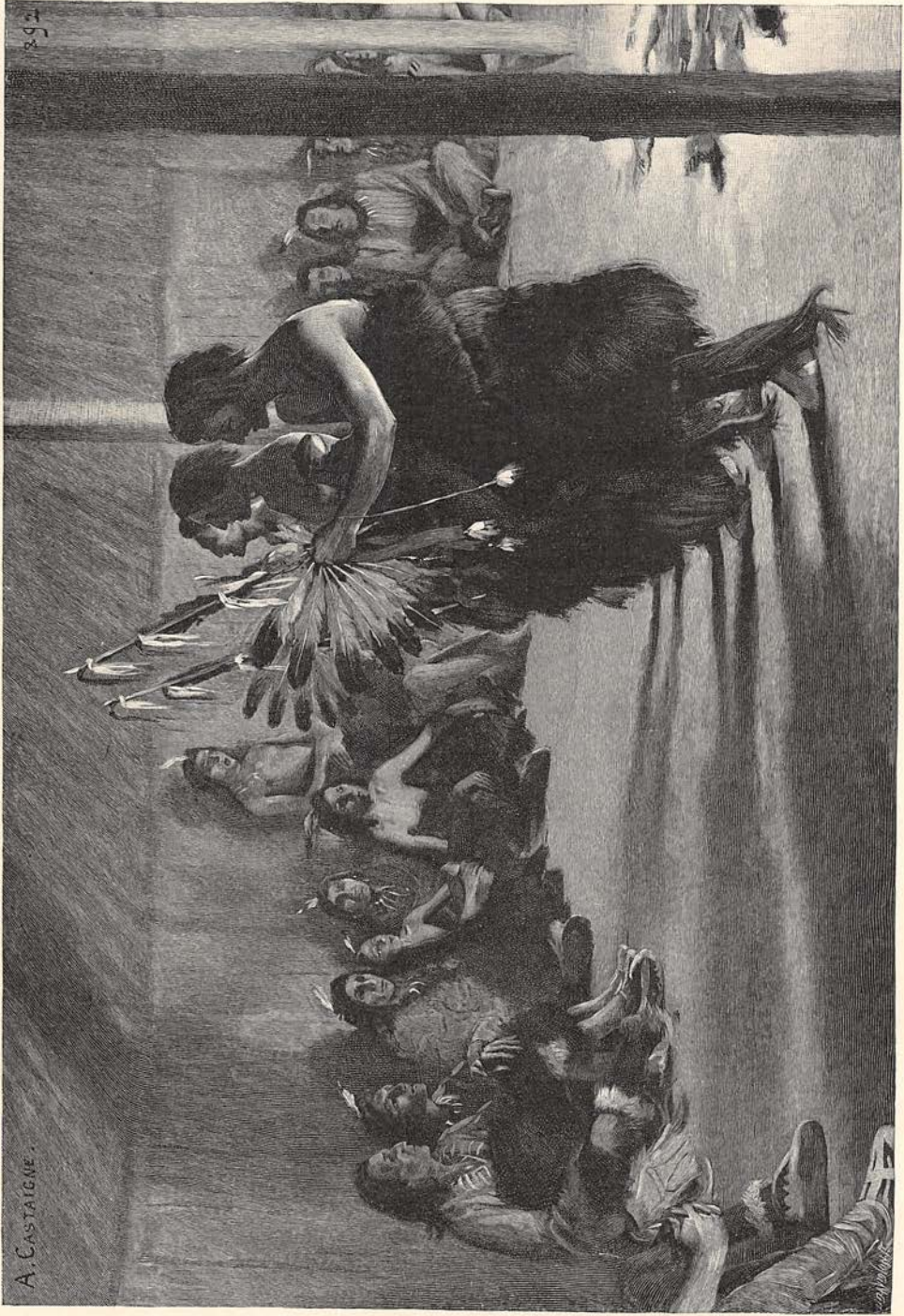
MEMBERS of an Indian tribe can hardly be considered as citizens of a State having a developed political organization, and yet they are not without a system of government, which serves to hold the people in order, and to preserve tribal unity and strength.

The tribe is composed of gentes, and each gens in its turn is made up of groups of kindred forming sub-gentes; these have their distinctive names, their fixed positions around the council-fire of the gens, and often they have peculiar duties to perform.

The government, strictly speaking, is not by gentes, or by hereditary chieftaincy, but is an oligarchy representative of the people. Sometimes the oligarchy is composed of the head chiefs of each gens, and in some instances these officers must be taken from a particular sub-gens; but in all cases the man is elected by the people of the tribal division to which he be-

longs. Thus entrance into the rank of chief is obtained through election, but candidacy is gained solely by individual merit, and this merit must be attested by certain acts, which sometimes are of a ceremonial order, but always of such character as to prove the man possessed of qualities fitting him to become a leader of the people. The path to honor is open to every man in the tribe who has the courage, ability, and persistency to reach distinction. A place in the oligarchy necessarily falls to but few; a subordinate chief of marked power will often wield an influence over the tribe which cannot be ignored by the rulers.

The head chiefs are taken from the members of the oligarchy; the manner in which they are selected to fill this office varies in different tribes. In some instances the choice may be restricted to a certain gens, or to the chief who has performed a number of prescribed rites; but as



CIRCLING THE LODGE.

ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

these head chiefs always act in accord with their associate members of the oligarchy, that body stands as a unit. To this supreme council are relegated all the affairs of the tribe, except that of war, the highest grade of chieftainship devoting itself only to the preservation of peace and good order. The war power is vested in the people, who go forth individually, or in small companies, or, in some instances, are led by war captains, or war chiefs; but in general the regulation and control of war form no part of the tribal administrative system. The bond between the war power and the governing power is religious rather than secular; and while all Indians must defend their kindred with their lives, the position of the warrior as related to the tribe is one of defense, and is not constructive in policy.

In all tribes there are different orders of chiefs. The Omahas have two, unlimited as to the number of members—the Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae and the Ne'ka-ga-he Khu'dae. The general term Ne'ka-ga-he, or chief, is derived from three words signifying "the people," "to throw," and "the end arrived at," thus embodying the idea that the position has been reached by means of the will or act of the people.

The Omaha oligarchy was composed of seven members of the Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae. To these chiefs were confided the internal regulation of the tribe, the settlement of individual difficulties, the preservation of general tranquillity, the maintenance of established usages, the creation of chiefs, the direction of the tribe when on the annual hunt, and also the power to make tribal peace. From their decision there was no appeal. They represented the seven gentes having a Ne-ne-ba-tan sub-gens. Ne-ne-ba-tan means "owning a pipe," and the pipe was the symbol of the chief. In earlier days the seven chiefs were actually taken from these seven gentes, so that these only were represented in the oligarchy; but in the process of time the birthplace of a chief ceased to be a requisite, and the seven members of the oligarchy simply represented the gentes which originally furnished the ruling class. The two chiefs who could count the most wa-thin'ae-thae became the principal chiefs, and bore the title of Ne'ka-ga-he Oo'zhu. These chiefs represented the two divisions of the Hoo-thu-ga—the In-shta-sunda and the Hunga-shae-nu. The other five members of the oligarchy formed the advisory council of the two principal chiefs; in governmental action, however, the seven acted as a unit, unanimity being essential to a decision upon all affairs under their jurisdiction.

A member of the oligarchy could resign from age or infirmity, but he still held his title, and was permitted to name his successor. This

custom led to considerable intriguing, as it afforded opportunity for the installation of sons or favorites, although the man chosen must belong to the order of Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae. In the event of a death among the seven, the place was filled according to the rule of promotion, which was as follows: The members of this order when in council were grouped in a circle having an opening; the two principal chiefs occupied the place opposite the opening; the other members ranged themselves on each side; thus each one had his special seat in the order. This seat was not changed unless a vacancy by death occurred; then, if this vacancy was among the seven, the order was called together, and the man who could count the most wa-thin'ae-thae was entitled to the vacant place, and all between this man and the opening moved up one seat, thus closing the broken line. If one of the principal chiefs died or resigned, his place was taken by the man who was able to count most, whether it was the newcomer into the seven, or one of the old members.

The names of these orders are significant. Ne'ka-ga-he Khu'dae, brown chief, refers to the color of the earth; Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae, dark chief, indicates the appearance of some elevated object as seen at a distance. These terms, Khu'dae and Sha'bae, present to the Omaha mind the teaching that until a man by his actions has attained distinction, he cannot be discriminated from the mass of men, where all are alike of one color, as of the ground. It is by deeds worthy of record that a man is elevated, that he rises from the level of his brethren, and stands above the horizon like a dark object—even as the sacred pole of the tribe, typical of the authority and honors of chieftainship, erected before the people, is seen as a dark object outlined against the sky.

Men ambitious of tribal distinction seldom sought entrance into the lower order of Ne'ka-ga-he Khu'dae; the acts requisite for admission were not graded and declared openly according to fixed tribal custom, but were passed upon and rated by the chiefs in council; members of this order were not entitled to become candidates for a place among the governing class, nor could they take part in the councils or attend the festivities of the higher order.

The election of members of the Khu'dae order took place in a council called by the Hunga-gens. This council was composed of all the chiefs of both orders. When the company was assembled, and the official pipes of the tribe were placed before the principal chiefs, some chief would mention the name of a candidate, and state what he had done; then, turning to another chief, would ask, "What has he given you?" In this way the man's record would be

canvassed openly. All having spoken, the seven principal chiefs consulted, and decided whether the man's gifts entitled him to become a Khu'dae. After the several candidates had been thus passed upon, the seven principal chiefs arose from the council, and the leaders, reverently holding the two official pipes with their stems elevated, walked slowly forth to pass around the Hoo-thu-ga, or tribal circle. When they came to the lodge of the man who had been elected a Khu'dae, they paused at the door of his tent. He had at this point the option to accept or refuse the honor. If he should say, "I do not wish to become a chief," and wave away the tribal pipes offered him to smoke, thus refusing permission to the chiefs to enter his lodge, they would pass on, leaving him as though he had not been proposed and elected. When a man accepted the position, he smoked the pipes as they were offered, whereupon the seven chiefs entered his lodge, and, bearing the official pipes before them, passed around his fire. This act signified to all the tribe that the man was henceforth a member of the order of Ne'ka-ga-he Khu'dae. Councils of this character were held at long and irregular intervals.

A man became a candidate for the order of Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae by having accomplished certain acts called wa-thin'ae-thae, a word indicating that a gift of prescribed articles has been made under certain circumstances, in accordance with ancient custom. When a man could count publicly one hundred wa-thin'ae-thae, he was entitled to enter the order through certain initiatory rites. His further promotion in the order was gained by his being able to count more than the required hundred of these acts; the greater the number, the higher the rank secured.

The prescribed articles used as gifts in the wa-thin'ae-thae were eagles, eagle war-bonnets, quivers (including bows and arrows), catlinite pipes with ornamented stems, wa-wan pipes, tobacco-pouches, otter-skins, buffalo-ropes, ornamented shirts, and leggings. In olden times burden-bearing dogs, tents, and pottery were in the list; these have been replaced more recently by horses, guns, blankets, red and blue cloth, silver medals, and brass kettles. Each of these articles, if presented to a chief, counted one; but if given to a man without rank, the gift won for the giver reputation only, and could not be regarded as wa-thin'ae-thae. The gifts to chiefs were in recognition of the governing power to which the aspirant thus paid tribute. It is worthy of notice that all of the raw materials used in construction, as well as the unmanufactured articles, were such as required of the man prowess as a hunter, care and industry in accumulating, and valor as a warrior. To obtain many of these things he

had to travel far, and he was not only exposed to danger from enemies while securing them, but in bringing them home. Moreover, as upon the men devolved the arduous task of procuring all the meat needed for food, and the pelts used to make clothing, bedding, and tents, and as there was no medium for the exchange of labor in a tribe, such as money affords, each household had to provide from the very foundation, so to speak, every article it used or consumed. It will be seen that persistent work on the part of the men was necessary not only to provide food and clothing for the daily use of the family, but to accumulate the surplus necessary to afford leisure for the construction of the articles to be counted as wa-thin'ae-thae. The men made the bows and arrows, the war-bonnets, and the pipes; the ornamentation was the woman's task; her deft fingers prepared the porcupine quills, but her husband or brother had first to catch the wary little animal. For the slow task of embroidering with the dyed quills, she needed leisure and a home well stocked with food and securely defended from lurking war-parties. A cowardly, lazy fellow, or an impulsive, improvident Indian, could in no way acquire the property represented in the gifts. A thrifty man could seldom count his one hundred until well on in middle life, even though he wasted no opportunity. The stimulus to reach honors kept the tribe active and industrious; and the men who obtained high rank in chieftaincy reached that grade only by a slow process representing work and ability.

The Omahas had seven grades of wa-thin'ae-thae which, when accomplished, gave rank within the order of Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae, and also enhanced the chance of promotion to the oligarchy of Seven. Their order and value were not known to the people generally, nor to all the chiefs; those possessed of this secret were apt to keep it for the benefit of their aspiring kinsmen; the lack of this knowledge sometimes cost a man the loss of the advantage to which his gift really entitled him. The grades were:

First.—Procuring the materials necessary to make the Wa-sha-bae, an ornamented staff carried by the Wa-than, or leader of the annual buffalo hunt, upon whom rested the gravest responsibilities. His costly staff of office was constructed by the Wa-sha'bae-tan the sub-gens of the Hun-ga gens. The materials were a buffalo-hide with the hair removed, a crow, two eagles (the golden and the gray sea-eagle), a shell disk, sinew, a pipe with ornamented stem, and in olden times a cooking-jar of pottery, which in modern times has been replaced by a brass kettle. The money value here represented is not less than one hundred to one hundred and thirty dollars. If a Sha'bae chief should do this deed four times, he would rank the highest in

his order; but no Omaha, it is said, was ever able to accomplish this feat.

Second.—Named Bon'wa-ke-thae ("I caused the herald to call"). The seven principal chiefs, together with the member of the In-shita-sunda gens who was the keeper of the

bring a horse or a new robe, and present it to the pole, the gift being appropriated by the Wa-sha'bae-tan, the sub-gens of the Hun-ga gens, having charge of the pole. During this act the entire tribe would halt while the herald proclaimed the name of the giver.



THE CEREMONIAL REST.

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER.

ritual chanted during the filling of the tribal pipes, were summoned by the tribal herald to a feast given by the aspirant. Besides provisions for the feast, leggings, robes, bows and arrows, and tobacco were required as gifts. If it chanced that he was not on friendly terms with the keeper of the ritual, or if from any other motive the keeper desired to check the man's ambition, it lay in his power to thwart it by permitting the pipes to remain unfilled, in which case the gifts and feast would go for nothing.

Third.—Tying a horse at his tent door, and throwing a new robe over the entrance, a man would make a feast for the seven principal chiefs; the horse and robe being gifts for the invited dignitaries. An Omaha once gained high renown by counting eight acts of this grade, performing four in one day.

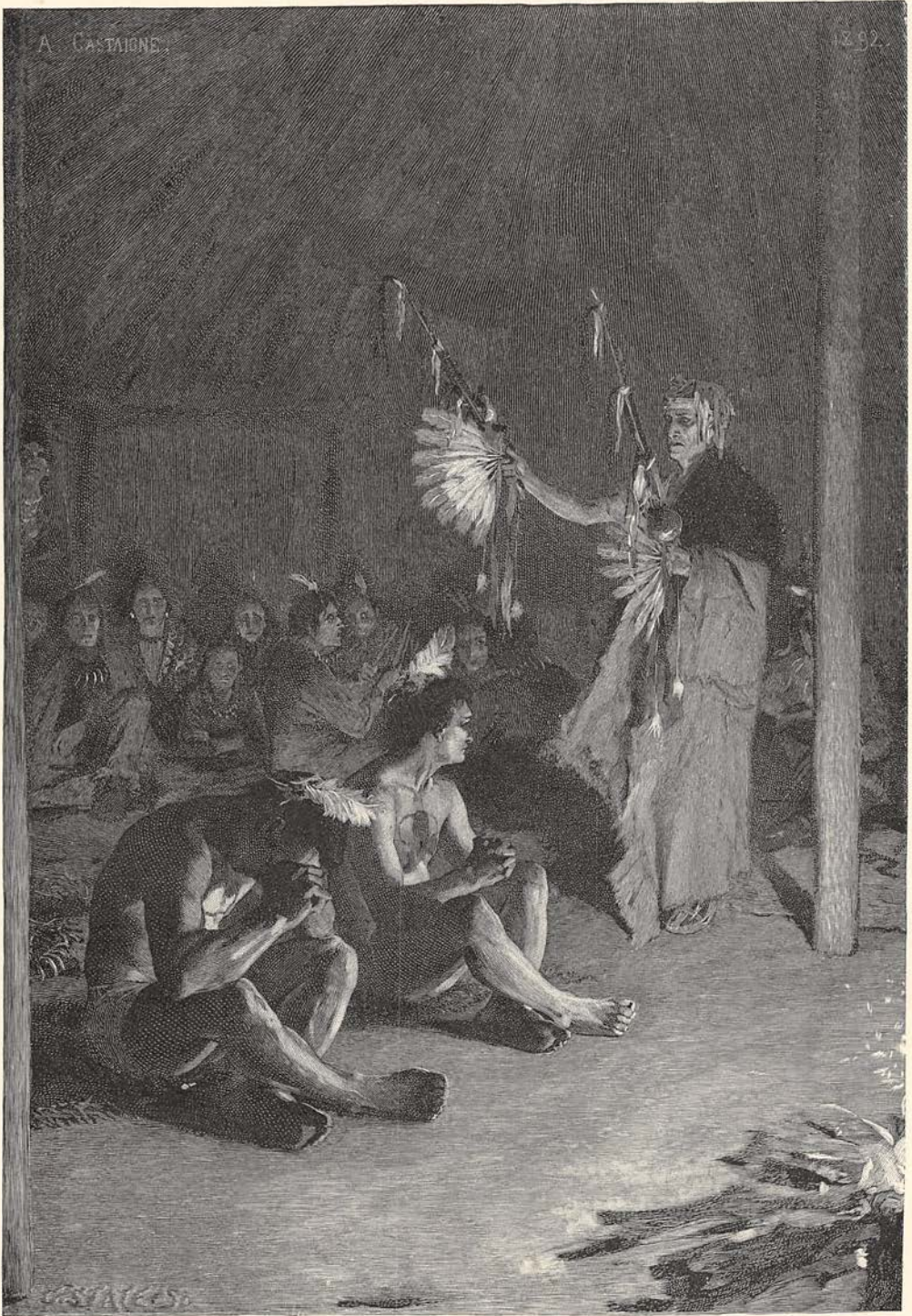
Fourth.—Called "Causing the people to halt," and only possible during the annual tribal hunt. The sacred pole being in advance with the seven principal chiefs, a man would

Fifth.—During the annual ceremony of the exhibition of the white buffalo-hide, a shell disk, moccasins, or some other article of value would be presented to it; the gifts becoming the property of the Wa-hrae-hae-tan, the sub-gens, having the care of this sacred object. To have full force this act, like the foregoing, must be repeated four times in one day.

Sixth.—"Going to see the dead" consisted of gifts to mourners of rank. The giving of a mule, a horse, and a bearskin by one man is the largest gift remembered under the sixth grade.

Seventh.—A man, through the chiefs, made contributions to the family of a person who had been killed in malice or by accident. The acceptance of these gifts, and the smoking of the tribal pipes, signified that the aggrieved parties were appeased, that further bloodshed was prevented, and peace restored in the tribe.

While these seven grades were the regular steps by which a man advanced to eminence in the order, his efforts would all fail of their



ENGRAVED BY CHARLES STATE.

PREPARING FOR THE FINAL DANCE.

end if his life proved him to be of a disputatious or quarrelsome temper, as a chief must be a man who can govern himself.

These grades depending for opportunity of accomplishment upon public ceremonies and events, that recurred but seldom, promotion through them was necessarily slow; there were, therefore, other methods by which honors could be obtained.

Among the Omahas, upon the death of a member of the tribe who is greatly respected, all societies suspend their meetings, and dancing ceases. A year will sometimes pass, and the entire village keep silence in honor of the dead. At length a chief calls the people together, and those who wish bring gifts of gay clothing and ornaments. When these are collected, two men, each of whom gives a horse for the honor of bearing the offerings to the mourners, go to them, saying:

"You have grieved many days, your hair has grown long; we have brought you these gifts that you may cut your hair, and return to the people."

Then the chief mourner cuts his hair, arrays himself in the gala dress, distributes the gifts to his near of kin, and the herald is sent forth to proclaim through the village, "Ye the people are told to be joyous again." And once more the lodges resound with song, merrymaking, and the rhythm of the dance. This act is called "Cutting the hair of the mourners," and was performed for the last time about forty years ago, after the death of the son of a noted man.

Contributions for the making of peace between the Omahas and another tribe were acts of public merit, and could be counted by the donors as *wa-thin'ae-thae*.

If the camp was quiet, a man might add to his score by placing a robe on the arms of a child, and bidding the small messenger take the gift to a certain chief, who, on receiving it, would emerge from his lodge and, passing about the village, call aloud the name of the giver.

Wa-ha-he, a noted man who died about forty years ago, defied the custom of confining the counting of the gifts to those which were made only to chiefs. One day a very old woman came to his tent, entered the door, and sat down. No one noticed her, but after a while the chief bade his wife clothe the old woman. So the packs were opened, leggings, petticoat, and tunic of red cloth were put upon her, and a red blanket wrapped about her form; then the chief arose, placed corn in her hand, and sent her home. The appearance of the gaily clad old woman, bearing corn, attracted the attention of all the people, and the chief, already of high rank, was permitted to add this act in

behalf of the beggar to his number of *wa-thin'ae-thae*.

When a candidate for admission into the order of *Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae* could count his one hundred, the record represented a money value of over three thousand dollars. Besides this large sum he had also to provide for the ceremony of initiation. The fee consisted of one hundred articles, one or more of which must be horses, its total value exceeded one hundred dollars, and this did not include the provisions required for the entertainment of the chiefs and other guests during the four days occupied in the ceremonies.

When everything was in readiness, the candidate invited to his lodge the seven principal chiefs and all the members of the order of *Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae*. Up to this time the man had never spoken of his ambition to enter the order; during all the years of preparation he had worked silently for this occasion. The herald's announcement soon brought a crowd about the candidate's lodge, where no one but the *Ne'ka-ga-he Sha'bae* could enter. These men, as they arrived, took their seats in silence, while the concourse outside, composed of *Ne'ka-ga-he Khu'dae*, young warriors, secret aspirants to chieftainship, steadily increased in numbers. Among these were the man's relatives, who moved anxiously about, desirous of helping when his memory of a deed became confused; for any one was permitted to question, controvert, and try to embarrass the candidate while he was within, counting his *wa-thin'ae-thae*. The excitement without the lodge contrasted sharply with the decorum within, where the man stood before the assembled chiefs, holding in a bundle one hundred reeds, each reed representing a particular gift. As he took a reed from the bundle he described the article he had given, the man to whom it was presented, and detailed minutely the circumstances of the act. As these frequently extended over twenty years or more, the test as to accuracy of memory was severe, particularly as every effort was made by those within, as well as by those without, to disconcert the candidate. The seven principal chiefs formed a sort of jury. When they were satisfied of the exactness of a count, the man laid that reed aside, and ever after he could count that deed unchallenged. It took two or three days for the recital of the record of the one hundred. If the man passed the ordeal successfully, he was then granted permission to put the mark of honor on a virgin, his own daughter, or some other damsel whom he had secretly selected, it being the general belief that if the choice was made known prior to the time of the ceremony, the maid would die, or misfortune and ill success attend the man.



THE FINAL DANCE.

During the nights of the second and third days of the counting, the girl, clad in gala dress made for the occasion, and decked with many ornaments, danced before the assembled chiefs. On the fourth day the mark of honor was placed upon her. This was the only way in which the honor of a chief could descend to his child. The mark was a small round spot, less than a half-inch in diameter, tattooed in the center of the forehead, and called H'thae-khae. The process of putting the emblem on the maid was spoken of as Wae-h'thae-khae; the name of the sacred pole of the tribe was Wa-h'thae-khae. Thus the name of the symbol, and the act of placing it on the forehead, signified that the right to do this was derived from the sacred pole which symbolized the united power of the priest and chief. Besides this spot on the forehead, a four-pointed star having an open circle in the center was tattooed on the chest just beneath the throat, and on the back below the neck; occasionally a small star or turtle was outlined on the back of the hands.

On the fourth day the blankets, robes, and other goods that composed the fee of one hundred articles to be given to the man who tattooed the emblems, were gathered together in a low pile forming a sort of bed, on which the girl was laid. The instrument used in tattooing was a bunch of needles securely fastened together with leather, and ornamented at the top with a small bell. Moistened charcoal made from the box-elder was pricked into the skin, to the sound of the songs belonging to this ceremony, while the tinkling of the bell on the needles answered to the rapid accompaniment of the drum-beats. The operation lasted all day, and it was a point of honor on the part of the girl to make no complaint, otherwise she would be thought to have strayed from a virtuous life. The songs used on this occasion, and the emblems placed upon the girl, indicate that this rite refers to the ancient worship of the sun and the elements. By it also the newly elected chief was taught that the religion and traditions of his ancestors were now confided to his keeping, and that thenceforth he stood between his people and the unseen powers in a relation partaking of the priestly character. Thereafter his conduct must be more circumspect, and his walk and conversation slow and well considered. The girl upon whom the mark was placed was also held to a higher standard of life than that demanded of ordinary women: she now belonged to a class that stood for social rank and order.

The rite of placing the symbols upon a virgin was intimately connected with the ceremonies of the Ne-ne-ba wae-ah-wan, during which there were opportunities for a man to perform acts he could count as wa-thin'ae-

thae. Ne-ne-ba wae-ah-wan means "Pipes to sing with." Songs form an important part of the ritual of these pipes, and are accompanied by rhythmic movements of the pipes and their bearers, which have been characterized by white people as dancing, and the ceremony spoken of as the "pipe or calumet dance"; but the movements are not like ordinary dancing, except in a part of the ceremony which occurs on the fourth night.

The calumet, according to the records of early observers, from Marquette down to the present day, has been closely associated with the idea of fellowship and peace. In many tribes the sacred characteristics and the peculiar religious teaching of the ritual have been lost, while among the Sioux the calumet ceremonies have become degraded into the "begging-dance."

The Ne-ne-ba wae-ah-wan, or wa-wan, is the formal presentation of the pipes by a man of one gens or tribe to a man of another gens or tribe. By means of this ceremony the two men become bound by a tie equal to that of father and son. As the honors given and received could affect a man's standing in the tribe, the consent of the chiefs was necessary to the undertaking or reception of a wa-wan party; and as the ceremonies required considerable outlay of property, both on the part of the one who took and the one who received the pipes, the relatives and friends of both parties were always consulted, that they might render assistance.

The gifts that were presented by the wa-wan party were eagle war-bonnets, bows and arrows, red-stone pipes, tobacco-bags, otter-skins, leggings, buffalo-ropes, and, in recent times, brass kettles, guns, and blankets; the pipes made return gifts of ponies. In olden times he gave pottery, bows and arrows, dogs, and tents. The dogs most valued were large, shaggy animals resembling wolves, very strong as burden-bearers and sometimes noted for hunting. The breed is said to be extinct. The leader of the wa-wan provided the two pipes peculiar to this ceremony, a crotched stick, two gourd-rattles, a buffalo-bladder tobacco-pouch, a whistle made from the wing-bone of the eagle, three downy eagle-feathers, and the skin of a wildcat having the head and claws intact.

A wa-wan party usually consisted of eight or twelve men, and for several nights before starting they met together to practise the songs, as it was a point of honor to have the ceremonies pass off creditably. On the day of starting, the leader selected one of the party to carry the catskin, in which were wrapped in a long bundle the pipes, stick, rattles, tobacco-pouch, whistle, and feathers. The provisions for the journey and for the feasts to be given during

the four days required for the ceremony, together with the gifts to be distributed, were tied in bundles and packed upon ponies. When all was ready, the party moved off amid the good wishes of the camp, often having two hundred miles or more to travel before reaching their destination; they had, however, no fear of war-parties, for all such must turn aside to avoid meeting the pipes, which had a right to pass in peace over the country. Should game be plenty, a little hunting was permissible; but the party never scattered, nor could they bathe, or drink water from the hand, before the close of the ceremony, for fear they might bring storms. If the weather should prove unpleasant, the party could halt for the rites of augury concerning their success, but if the sun shone, this observance was deferred until within twenty-four hours of the end of their journey. When this point was reached, one of the elder men of the party was selected by the leader to be the bearer of the tobacco-pouch to the lodge of the man for whom the pipes were destined. The messenger was clothed in the ceremonial manner, wearing leggings, breech-cloth, mocasins, the buffalo-robe wrapped about him in a peculiar fashion with the hair outside, and one of the downy eagle-feathers tied in his braided scalp-lock; three young men, similarly attired, with the exception of the feather, attended the bearer of the pouch. On reaching the village, they walked in single file to the lodge of the man who was to act as host, and presented the pouch. The man at once summoned his kindred for consultation, because as from twelve to thirty ponies must be given away, the question was a serious one; for should a man accept the honor, and present only a few ponies, he would suffer disgrace, having attempted to do that which he could not carry out properly. Either poverty or a recent death in the family was an honorable reason for refusing the pipes; or, if the leader was a youthful aspirant for honors, and the one asked to receive the pipes a man of mark, he was permitted to refuse because of the difference in rank between himself and the leader of the wa-wan party. The acceptance of the pouch indicated also the acceptance of the ceremony, and the messenger went back with the word, "Bid the leader come; we are ready for him."

During the absence of the messenger the rites of augury as to success were performed, and by the time the men returned bringing the tidings that the pipes were accepted, the wa-wan party was ready to start toward the village. The pipes were taken from the catskin, and the latter, with the crotched stick showing above the head, was carried by the neck, the carrier walking between the two pipe-bearers.

These three men were dressed in the same manner as the messenger, and when near the village the ritual of song began, each stage of advance having its peculiar song, as when entering the village, and when meeting the messenger from the host, who conducted them to the tent set apart for the ceremonies. The words hidden amid the musical syllables of the song of approach sung on entering the lodge are, "Peace, the one good gift, that do I bring you." There are songs appropriate to the act of laying down the pipes, the accompanying movements representing the eagle alighting on its nest. Just before these songs were sung, the catskin was laid on a cleared space at the back of the tent, a few feet from the fire. The crotched stick was thrust into the ground at the mouth of the cat, and when the pipes were laid, the mouthpieces of the two rested in the crotch, pointing toward the east, that of the pipe having the white feathers lying uppermost. Under the large feathers the rattles were placed. The space between the pipes and the fire was never stepped upon, except by a man who should advance there to make gifts to the pipes.

The pipes disposed of, the wa-wan party—with the exception of the pipe-bearers, who could not leave their charge—busied themselves unpacking and preparing for the evening's festivity. About sunset the host entered the lodge, laid the tobacco-pouch in its place near the pipes, and took the seat which belonged to him, the middle of the south side of the tent. The head-men of his gens or tribe sat at his left, the young men at his right, while about the door of the lodge huddled the poor of the village. The leader and his party occupied the north side.

The feast prepared by the wa-wan party could not be eaten, nor could singing begin until some young man from the host's side gave a pony by saying, "Father, arise; sing for us." The host at once rose, and advanced to the young man who had made the gift, paused before him, lifted both hands, palms outward, and dropped them slowly; then he passed his right hand over his left arm, from shoulder to wrist, and repeated the same motion with the left hand upon his right arm; afterward he slowly moved in front of his kindred and gens, addressing each one by a term of relationship, raising his right hand, palm outward, in token of thanks. Meanwhile the leader crossed over to the young man who had made the gift, and gave the same sign of thanks. The leader then raised his right hand, palm outward, and turned his body to the left, then to the right, thus covering with thanks the host's side of the lodge. While this was going on an old man from among the poor at the door of the lodge began a song of thanks, passing out as he sang. In the



THE HUN-GA.

song, which was sung twice, he introduced the name of the person making the gift, and at the close called out the name of the donor twice, that all the village might know of the act. This triple form of simultaneous thanks was observed after each gift of a horse made to the wa-wan party during the four days of the ceremony.

Then the pipes were raised, and the appropriate ceremonial songs sung. The rhythm of the music and the swaying of the pipes expressed the motion of the eagle rising and making ready for flight. Three of these songs were sung, after which the pipes were carried four times around the lodge, different songs being sung during each circling, and the words being in praise of peace and fellowship. After the fourth passage around the fire, the pipes were laid at rest with appropriate song, and with a downward fluttering movement of the eagle returning once more to her nest.

The usual form of asking for a song after the first request, and by so doing giving away a horse, was for one of the host's side to say to the leader, "My father, your sons wish to hear you sing." Another form by which a gift could be made was by a man stepping up to the tobacco-pouch and filling his pipe from it, whereupon the triple thanks were bestowed upon him. The feast, and the taking up the pipes twice, occupied the first evening. The second and third evenings were similarly spent.

During the day the men rested, although a kind of discipline was maintained. Upon the singing of a certain ritual song each morning the men were obliged to rise and enter upon their duties. They did all their own work, and had to render any service asked of them by a member of the tribe they were visiting. This custom afforded the small boy opportunity to play tricks and to tease; a little head would be pushed through the tent door, and a piping voice call, "Father, I want some wood," or, "Father, I want some water," and the man addressed must go and get the urchin the wood or the water. In accordance with Indian etiquette, the leader's party could not partake of the food they prepared for the host and his friends; they were also forbidden to smoke during the ceremony, although two of their number attended to the filling of the pipes for their host and his party.

On the fourth night the leader counted the horses received, and if the number was sufficient to divide among his party, he indicated that the ceremony could go forward to its conclusion. After the feast was partaken of, and the host had said, "Father, this is all you shall take home; now sway the pipes," the leader deputed two of his men to open the bundles of gifts, saying, as they were displayed, "Behold, sons, this is what I have brought you." After an exclamation of approval, the host designated two men to distribute the gifts among those who had presented horses. The most valuable articles were given to the noted men, but should these men wish to count the horses they had given away as wa-thin'ae-thae, they must not retain these gifts, but pass them on to some one not a relative, or to a poor person. The poor, therefore, often received a considerable portion of the gifts brought by the wa-wan party. The pipes and other ceremonial articles became the property of the host at the close of the ceremonies.

The time for final ceremonies having arrived, two athletic young men of the wa-wan party made themselves ready for the dance by removing all clothing but the breech-cloth. A red circle was painted on the breast and back, and the downy feather tied in the hair. The leader advanced to recount his gifts made to the pipes on other occasions, and began this ceremony by taking a pipe in his hand, and saying, "When a pipe like this was brought to me, I gave"—mentioning the number of horses; again he waved the pipe to indicate a new count, repeating the same formula, and mentioning his gift. After each enumeration, the drum was struck in token of applause. After counting twenty or more gifts, he gave the pipe he had been holding to one of the dancers, and taking the other pipe in his right hand, con-

tinued the count; at the conclusion he placed the second pipe in the hand of the other dancer. If the leader was a young man, he might need to call on his kindred to help him to count on the pipes; for while he must be able to out-count any one member of the wa-wan party, he

The ceremony of the fourth day began before sunrise, when the wa-wan party, without breaking their fast, proceeded to the lodge of the host, singing to the swaying of the pipes the ritual song of "Going for the Hun-ga." Hun-ga is the name given to the child se-



LEAVING THE EARTH LODGE.

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER.

and they would fall into disgrace if fifty gifts were not represented and publicly enumerated when giving the pipes to the dancers. This ceremony concluded, a man at the drum gave a prolonged signal-call, responded to by the rest of the drummers with the victory shout; then the ritual song for the final dance began. During the first part the dancers remained seated, waving the pipes over their heads to the tremolo of the gourds. At a sudden change in the song they leaped to their feet, and in rapid, light, and springing movements swung the pipes high over their heads, suggesting in a graceful, inspiring manner the flight of eagles.

During this dance the pipes could be challenged by one of the host's party stepping up to the dancer, stopping him, and taking the pipe, saying, "Father, when a pipe like this was brought to me, I gave"—so many horses; "when it was brought to"—such and such a man, indicating him—"I gave"—so many horses. "If you can exceed that number, take up your pipe again." The pipe was then laid on the ground, where the dancing had been interrupted, and there it had to lie until redeemed by the leader or his party, who must exceed the count of the challenger. Sometimes both pipes were thus arrested, amid much laughter and many jokes.

lected by the host for this honor. It was decked in new garments brought by the wa-wan party, its face painted red, a band of black drawn across the forehead and down each cheek and on the bridge of the nose; white down of the eagle was put on its head, and one of the downy feathers fastened in its hair. All this was done by a man whose bravery in battle had been well attested, while the party chanted the ritual songs appropriate to each particular act. When the child was ready, it was carried to the lodge, where it was held in the arms of the leader, who took his seat behind the pipes. These were now taken up and presented to the dancers, with the counting ceremony already described. After this was done the wa-wan party, including the leader and the Hun-ga, repaired outside the lodge. The leader took his seat near the entrance with the child still in his arms, and the ceremonies were concluded in the open air.

During challenging of the pipes and the dancing, the horses that had been presented to the leader by the host and his friends were led up one by one by children dressed for the occasion, who received thanks from the Hun-ga, the leader guiding the small hands in their ceremonial movements. The better part of the day was thus occupied, to the great weariness of the Hun-ga, who was consoled by such dainties as the leader could command.

AMONG the peculiarities of the fellowship pipes is the absence of the bowl, thus indicating their typical character. It is also noteworthy that all the articles used in their construction are connected with myths and symbols of the sun, earth, thunder, and fire, bringing together many emblems used in ancient religious rites over a wide area of country and among Indians of diverse linguistic stock.

Literally, there are no ancient or original pipes, but through the ritual the fashion of them has been kept intact for generations. They are said to be "older than the flat-stemmed, red-stone official tribal pipes," and the Indians state, in proof of this assertion, that the latter can be "used by the chiefs alone," while these (the wa-wan pipes) "are for all the people." This statement is particularly interesting when it is remembered that the chiefs derive their authority from the people, who are the primary power. "So great is the affection and respect we feel for these pipes," said an Omaha, "that were we to see them imitated in corn-husk we would show them honor." This is a strong testimony to their symbolic character. The stem is of ash, the opening through it is made with fire, and must be perfect; if in former days a man had presented one of these pipes, and the breath could not pass freely through it, the sacrilege would have cost him his life. Seven spans of the thumb and forefinger constitute the standard of length for the stem. Seven red streamers—four of painted buckskin, and three of dyed hair, the latter tied on by cord made of the white hair from the breast of the rabbit—are fastened along the stem, which is painted green. Near the mouthpiece is placed the head of the large woodpecker, the bill opened and turned back upon the head, exposing the inner side, which is painted green. A bunch of owl-feathers is bound on near the middle of the stem, and the bowl-end is covered with the head, neck, and breast of the mallard duck, the four buckskin streamers holding it in place. Last of all, the fan-shaped arrangement of eagle-feathers depends from the stem, the buckskin thong which holds them being tipped with downy feathers of the eagle.

The number seven is repeated in many ways: seven kinds of articles are used in making the pipes; there are seven ceremonial movements, and seven parts in the ceremony. The number occurs so often that it seems as though its use could not have been accidental. The green paint on the stem is symbolic of the verdant, fruitful earth and the clear sky. The red streamers tell of the rising sun sending its beams up to the zenith. The rabbit and woodpecker are connected with myths of the sun. The owl and the duck are related to the destructive and conserving forces in nature.

The eagle is the fierce bird of battle, and allied to thunder and fire. The downy feathers floating from the ends of the thongs indicate the falling away of the immature when the eagle in its power and strength rises from its nest to go forth on its mission of war or peace. The pipe having the seven white eagle-feathers is spoken of as the masculine, and the dark-feathered pipe as the feminine. The crocheted stick upon which they rest is colored red for the east. Upon the gourds and tobacco-pouch is painted in green a circle with four equidistant lines starting from it; the circle symbolizing the horizon-line, the space within the sky, the fires standing for the four quarters or winds. The gourds are spoken of as the eggs, and when not used are slipped under the eagle-feathers when the pipes are at ceremonial rest. The braided sweet-grass attached to the pouch lends its savor when the giver of a horse lights with it his pipe, filled from the tobacco in the pouch. The downy feather tied in the hair of the pipe-bearers and dancers links them to the eagle and its symbols.

The ritual of the pipes and the meaning of the ceremonies are given the host over the head of the little child called Hun-ga. This word means "the ancient one, the one who goes before, the leader." It is the name of the gens having charge of the two sacred tents containing the sacred pole and the white buffalo-skin, and it is also the designation of one half of the tribal circle. The word has a meaning that refers to the earliest time or knowledge, and the child is chosen to represent innocence and docility; its head is covered with down like the young eagle; the brilliant red paint on its face denotes the rays of the rising sun; the black lines indicate the shadows or experiences of life, which finally end in death. This symbolic painting is put on the face of a dead member of the Hun-ga gens, and is indicative of the entrance of the man into another life.

Along the stem of the pipe a straight groove is cut, and the incision colored red. This is explained over the head of the Hun-ga as follows: "My son, you have bestowed on me many gifts, but they will soon be gone. That which I am about to give to you will remain with you forever, if you will to keep it. The words which I am about to give you are worth more than many gifts; if you hold to them your way in life shall be as the groove in this pipe-stem, which signifies the straight path toward peace and happiness."

The tie formed by the pipes brings amity and help as between father and son. It is a tie that unites men and their families who have no kinship bond; and while it is not tribal in its direct effect, it weaves members of different communities together, and produces re-

sults that become tribal in their influence. The pipes are prized by ambitious men, as they afford opportunities for making gifts which can be counted as *wa-thin'ae-thae*; while the poor and unfortunate hold them in high regard, as through them they are often fed, clothed, and rendered comfortable.

In the passing away of old customs the younger generations are losing the knowledge of the details of these ceremonies. But few know even that there is a ritual belonging to these pipes, and it is doubtful if there lives an Omaha to-day who has received it fully. While the esoteric portion of the ceremonies is thus lost, there yet remains a general understanding of the symbolism, and this, with the beauty of the songs, lingers with reverent affection in the memory of those who have shared in the *wa-wan*.

Eight years ago some of the leading Omahas agreed to exhibit to me the ceremonies connected with these pipes, and to place a set of them in my keeping. The act was so unusual that a word of explanation seems to be demanded.

While living with the tribe, and studying their life and history, I grew to know the fervor with which the people loved their land, and to see that over each fireside hung a shadow that would not lift—the fear of compulsory removal to the Indian Territory, such as their kindred, the Ponkas, had suffered a few years before. The sorrow and the helplessness of the people moved me deeply; closing my scientific note-books, I passed months in gathering statistics of the work they had done on their little homes and farms, and, armed with these, entered Washington to plead their cause. As a result, an act of Congress gave them patents to their lands in severalty, and for the two years following I was busy carrying out the provisions of that act. This work done, and the great gift of peace and security being with the people, the leaders opened to me the meaning and beauty of these pipes, and permitted me to carry them forth on a new mission, and one that may help to interpret the Indian to the white man, and to reveal a kinship in aspirations, beneath strangely differing external conditions—a kinship often unrecognized, indeed hardly guessed at, by either race through the medium of superstition, prejudice, and cruelty.

"The fierce birds on the pipes and the wildcat never lose their prey, but these animals here give their unflinching power to bring good feelings, and gifts for the poor. The pipes can subdue the anger of the worst man and make him at peace with his enemy," said an Omaha one day. His friend, who stood looking at the pipes, as they hung on the walls of my room, remarked:

"My grandfather knew the ritual; he would take the pipes and pray by them, and his prayers were always heard. This is hard to believe, but it is true. Some of the songs in the ritual ask for fair weather, and when sung the sun shines. This too is strange, but it is true. When we see the streamers on the pipes we think of the dawn; the day is coming, light and peace are coming, and with them good hearts, and gifts, and help to the poor."

Said another man: "My father knew all these things; I know but little, but I think about what I know. I know the green circle and the four lines are for all the earth and the four winds that fill the sky; peace and good will fill the earth and the sky by these pipes. All things bear their part; the birds, the animals, the trees, the earth, and men share in them; the pipes are of God."

The occasion on which I saw the ceremonies exemplified was that of my first meeting with the people out of my room, where a painful and dangerous illness had kept me for many months. The feast I had prepared for that night would serve about one hundred; but as I watched the crowds pouring into the great earth lodge, my housewifely spirit took alarm; I felt sure the food could not be made to go around. Turning to the former head chief at my side, I asked if the entrance could not be closed to prevent the disaster that was pending. "No," he replied; "they can come: the pipes are free to all. Do not fear for the food; the servers will understand." So I rested in faith, for nothing short of a miracle, I was sure, could provide enough for the two hundred and more men, women, and children who gathered to witness the ceremonies.

Soon I heard faintly the song of approach; it grew more and more distinct, and at last came with full choral volume as the bearers moved slowly through the long passage into the lodge, where the blazing fire in the center caught the colors of the waving pipes as the men swayed them to the rhythm of the music. Round the fire they came to the back of the lodge, where, facing the entrance and the east, the songs for laying down were sung to the circling movements of the pipes as of the eagle descending. From the first sound of the music until the pipes were laid at rest, silence fell on the assembly; a decorous pause followed the close of the ritual songs, and then the merry chatter was resumed.

Half a dozen women gathered at the fire, but no one entered the space between it and the pipes, and preparation for the feast began. As the occasion was informal, women did the cooking. The picturesqueness of the scene was full of charm; the leaping flames of the wood-fire glistened on the ornaments, and sent

dancing shadows all about the lodge, bringing into relief the rich hues of the faces, the glossy hair, sparkling eyes, and white teeth that laughter revealed. Happiness pervaded the place as women rolled out the dough on boards resting partly on the lap, partly on the ground; children chased in and out about their elders, while the pots bubbled on the fire, the piles of round cakes of fried bread grew taller and taller, and the coffee sent out savory puffs of steam. By and by the food was ready, then two or three of the men made grave speeches referring to the affection felt toward the pipes, but "sadness lay at their hearts because of the informality of the present ceremonies, which they had consented to perform for good reasons, and in no spirit of disrespect." The wood was piled on the fire, and the flames leaped high, lighting up the black ribbed dome of the lodge until it shone like polished ebony. Then the pipe-bearers arose, and exemplified with ritual songs the raising of the pipes and their movement around the lodge, facing the people, and waving over them the blessing of peace and fellowship as they sat closely grouped against the wall. The firelight revealed the brilliant hues, the wing-like shadows followed like a phantom bird, the men and women caught up the refrain, and a wave of song enveloped the pipes as they passed in joyful solemnity about the lodge.

When the pipes were laid at rest, an Indian friend, who, having lost a promising son, had been in retirement for two years, took this occasion, as a delicate tribute of friendship to me,

to lay aside his mourning and to return to the festivities of his friends. Stepping into the space between the pipes and the fire, he said:

"Shall the pipes of our fathers pass unheeded about the fire, and our hearts lie cold!"

Then in a few words he gave a horse to a man who had recently met with a sorrow like his own great grief, and presented a number of articles of clothing and food to poor and aged people.

A former chief arose, and in a stirring speech thanked the giver, bidding him welcome once more among the people; then with praises of the pipes he exhorted the young men to lead lives honorable in peace and industry. Meanwhile an old man had passed out of the lodge, and we heard his voice ringing through the night air as he sang the generous deed of my friend.

Then another man advanced in front of the pipes, leading his four-year-old son. The man and boy were both in the dress of the white man. He had long been living and working on his farm, in every way committed to our mode of life, which added to the pathos of his act.

"The pipes," he said, "were the care of my fathers. My son is born into their rights. Now we do not often see them." Tears filled his eyes, and with breaking voice he added, "I want my boy to touch the pipes of my fathers." And, taking a little stick that the child held in his hand, the father threw it into my lap. It was the gift of a pony, which I at once presented to the pipes, that its value might be used to feed the hungry.

Alice C. Fletcher.

