

## THE DAKOTA INDIAN VICTORY-DANCE

By AARON McGAFFEY BEEDE

On Nov. 30, 1918, at the Indian Dance Hall near the Porcupine River, four miles northwest of Ft. Yates, North Dakota, there was celebrated the Victory-dance (postponed to this date on account of the influenza), in all essentials a duplicate of the dance of earlier days. It was the first time this dance has been held since the evening after the Little Big Horn battle of June 25, 1876.

When I arrived at 1 p. m., the tree had already been ceremonially cut and trimmed of limbs, peeled, and striped with black circles, and the dance had begun. A straight, healthy young cottonwood tree, representing a young warrior of the enemy, had been selected, and a young girl of good habits and well balanced mind and so in harmony with Wakantanka (who had decided the issues of the war) had struck the first blow with the axe. The tree had been felled by chosen men (old men in the case of the Victory-dance but young men in the case of the Sun-dance), trimmed and peeled and carried to the Dance Hall by the men, on levers extending under the tree and at right angles with it, as any men naturally carry a tree or timber. While carrying the tree the old men had chanted prayers in a low tone.<sup>1</sup> This tree, the vanquished enemy,

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[Ed. The above account of a Dakota Indian ceremonial dance was recorded by the Reverend Dr. Beede from personal observation on November 30, 1918, at Ft. Yates, North Dakota, and was prepared for publication by his daughter, Dr. Margaret Beede, of the University of North Dakota. While Reverend Beede was serving as missionary priest of the Episcopal church among the Dakota Indians at Cannon Ball and Ft. Yates, he kept a journal in which he recorded detailed observations on their customs, habits, religious beliefs and legends.]

<sup>1</sup> There is no fixed ritual for these prayers, but the substance of them is that Wakantanka, Who makes the nations of men grow up like a tree till each has accomplished its mission on the earth, then causes them to grow old like a tree and decay and fall or sends disaster to strike them as the lightning strikes a tree before it has accomplished its mission because a people becomes proud and haughty and disobedient, has seen fit to hurl down the enemy and give the victors victory. Therefore they are going to honor Him with this worship. I have seen this ceremony played secretly, and in such plays the prayer is quite as likely to be addressed to Holy Earth as to Wakantanka. And frequently the prayers take on such form, the Sioux idioms being capable of this, that one might think of no special Holy Being as addressed, but rather think of the pious old man as in a psychic state of self-effacement with a strong positive consciousness of living union with the entire world as a living conscious Deity. And this is the large sense in which old Sioux Indians think of Wakantanka, whatever be the

was carried to the appointed place top-ahead, similarly as a fallen enemy was brought into camp (if at all) head first; to bring him in feet first, as white men carry a casket, would mean ill-luck. At the appointed place an old man known for piety (whose name is not to be mentioned in connection with the act he does since it is done with self-effacement) puts circles of black, the ordinary Indian earth-black, on the tree, about 20 inches apart (the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger), each stripe being the breadth of a man's hand.<sup>2</sup>

When this tree had been thus striped (not before) a dead wolf was fastened to the tree near its top, with rawhide, so that when the tree was erected the wolf would be at right angles with the tree, horizontal with the earth, and there was attached to the left temple of the wolf a prominent tress of horsetail hair (this hair was not used in old times). Then the tree was lifted into a hole in the earth (simply to make it stand erect, there is no significance in the hole itself and no ceremonial in making of the hole),<sup>3</sup> and the dirt tamped hard about the base of the tree to make it stand firmly.<sup>4</sup> The tree was so erected that the wolf was on the north side of it with his face to the east.<sup>5</sup> On this occasion

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origin and meaning of the word. That is, just as they think of "ton" in each minutest object, action, and sound, so they also conceive a living world present in and with the world of every day living, into which (or into Whom, for it is sacred, conscious, intelligent holy World which is Deity not because of quantity but because of holy quality)—into which one may penetrate psychically or even may pass into and live therein essentially.

<sup>2</sup> These circles of black, the same black as that applied to the victorious dancers and that which the warriors apply to themselves, indicate the conquest of the enemy has so encircled and entailed the enemy that surrender is complete. One may suspect an old, deeper signification, but this is what it means to old men now.

<sup>3</sup> There is significance in the loosening or mellowing of the Holy Earth for the hole.

<sup>4</sup> After being cut down it is still a *tree*, by Indian conception, though vanquished and prematurely dead. And in its decomposition, where it is left alone with resuscitating Nature, each immortal *ton* of this tree will live again, rising from the dead with true *ton*, by Indian idea. So they explain it.

<sup>5</sup> I am not able to learn that any excessive fasting is required of participants in this Victory dance, as is required of participants in the Sun-dance; the latter is never celebrated, of course, till the warriors return, though the former may be celebrated as soon as the people at home have reliable information of victory. Yet none of the participants should eat food on the day of this Victory-dance till evening twilight. And it should be remarked that the wolf is used as an emblem on the occasion of a Victory-dance only, and then only once; that is, the Victory-dance can be had once only and not repeated. This is the only occasion I know where the Western Dakota would use the wolf as an emblem. To depict the wolf on a "Wapaha" flag, or such emblem, would be abhorrent and sacrilegious, would bring ill-luck. The eagle (the same to the Western Dakota as the bear to Eastern Indians) or the peace-pipe might appropriately be on a flag or emblem (not both of them, one of them only), the eagle being rather more appropriate for an expeditionary flag only, and the peace-pipe for a "Wapaha" as a permanent symbol. This dead wolf near the top of the tree meant (to old Indians of the present generation) that the enemy have so erred that the holy Life in them has, temporarily at least, died, and therefore they are vanquished.

the U. S. flag and flagstaff were attached to the tree above the wolf (who was about five feet below the top of the tree).<sup>6</sup> The U. S. flag was placed thus by old Indians from considerations of the Life-fitness of things. Some young Indians, evidently thinking it might be distasteful to white men to have the U. S. flag thus associated with old-time Indian emblems, suggested placing the flag on a tall staff (as tall as or taller than the tree) by the side of the tree.<sup>7</sup> But old Indians, with firm Life-mentality sensing the fitness of things, could not assent to this. They said that the U. S. flag must be organically (*okiheyaw*) a part of the old Indian emblems since the white people coming to this island had become the successors of the old Indian governments, being more wise and efficient (*iokih*) on world-wide scale, as was shown by the success in the present war.<sup>8</sup>

It was unanimously decided that the appropriate place for the U. S. flag was on top of the before-mentioned Indian sacred emblem, with the staff of the U. S. flag lashed with rawhide (indicating organic attachment by organic growth) to the sacred tree of the Indians. But they desired the U. S. flag to float a trifle at least below the top of the sacred tree, though the younger men would have placed it waving above the top of the sacred tree.<sup>9</sup> This sense of Life-fitness was approved by the Indian women as

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<sup>6</sup> The old Indians told me that this extension above the wolf meant that over and above the wisdom and the activity of all human and earthly events, and even above the strong, lofty flight of the eagle and the quick, loftier flight of the kingbird, and over all the providences of Earth and Sky connected with the ordinary pursuits of animals and men and their wisdom and strength in attack and in defense, there is Holy Deity and Holy Destiny ruling forever.

<sup>7</sup> It was heart-painful to old Indians to have the U. S. flag floating higher than the top of the tree, not because they lacked devotion to the U. S. flag, but because this position of the flag seemed to make it superior to Holy Deity and Holy Destiny, Who rules actively in all the Earth and Sky and Waters forever.

<sup>8</sup> Blue Thunder said, "We know that the white people could not be a great success in the world but for the countless bags of corn that are raised. Where did they learn to raise this corn? From Indians. And all the kinds of beans that I see, except the small white beans, which are good for horses only, the white people got from Indians. And no white people ever had potatoes till they were found in this island. And turkeys, which are the sacred food for all white people in this island, were created in this island only. And tobacco was created in this island. The white people have become a great people in this island and in all the world because they were wise enough not to throw away the native plants and foods that were made by Holy Mother Earth especially for this island, though they brought some good things, such as wheat, with them when they came to us. The white people have built this great nation on good ground prepared by Indians before the white people came, and this nation cannot be considered separate from the old Indian customs and bravery and food-raising."

<sup>9</sup> Talking with old Indians today, Dec. 6, I see the reasons for these things more clearly than I did at the time. No victorious people should assume, as Indians think, to exalt themselves above the fallen foe to the exclusion of Holy Deity and Holy Destiny. So the U. S. flag should have been above the wolf, waving from the sacred tree, but not entirely above the top of the sacred tree.

well as by the men. And the women said that Indians and white people were not two peoples side by side "like peaceable farmers and Kaiserites" (*Woju wicasa wakwala na Kaiser-ta-oyate-ko*), but were one people fighting together for women and children, and so the U. S. flag must be attached to the Indian sacred tree, and must wave up higher than the Indian tree (meaning the part of the sacred tree below the wolf) since white men by their superior wisdom had enabled the united Indians and white people to win this war for *freedom of all peoples (hecen oyate oyasin iglu-yuhapi ece)*.<sup>10</sup>

No sacred fire was lighted and no peace pipe was used since this must, by Indian custom, be deferred till the soldiers return, when (theoretically at least) the Sundance will be held, and each soldier and each person who stayed at home during the war will pay his Sundance vows made in connection with prayers for victory.

At noon (*wicokaya*) the dancing of the Victory-dance began. The singers with the heavy drum were in the center. Dancers were dressed in old-style costumes (not necessary to describe the costumes since they do not differ from costumes used in the Sundance and various other dances); each participant had in his hand a tomahawk or hatchet (some of them crudely extemporized for the occasion). Each participant and each person of maturity present had his chin painted with the same black earth-paint mixt with fat that had been used in painting the sacred tree. Many participants and attendants had parts of the face painted with this black paint; the only necessary thing is to apply to the chin of each person, male and female, a touch of this paint which, at a little distance, makes the chin look as if it had a little short black beard on it. As a matter of politeness the officials to apply the paint did not apply it to the chins of white people present unless aware

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<sup>10</sup> And these Dakota Indians on this occasion definitely adopted (not yet adopted by all the Dakota, though they hope a definite emblem may be agreed upon by all Sioux and all Red men in the country) an Indian flag, which is not to be a flag in the strict sense of the word since, as they said, our nation can have but one flag and the U. S. flag is the national flag, but the Indian emblem (*wowapetokeca*) is to signify that the Indians were in this island before the white people came, and united with the white people, and gave them a start toward greatness by contributing all they had from the beginning and by freely helping all that was possible in this last war. And they thought that, on appropriate occasions, such an emblem of Red men might consistently wave on the staff of the U. S. flag below the U. S. flag, smaller in dimensions than the U. S. flag. The point was raised whether or not this might lead other races, such as Norwegians and French and English, to want their own flag to be attached to the U. S. flagstaff, and it was decided that the case of Indians was different from these other peoples' since the Indians were here in this island before any white people came, and the Indian civilization and food-raising were the beginning of this great nation now able to down the Kaiserites and give freedom to all the world.

that the painting would be acceptable. There were 47 persons in full Indian costume, about as many more in partial Indian costume, and nearly all wore some sort of emblem signifying identity as an Indian, the touch of paint on the chin alone being sufficient to indicate participation in the Victory-dance, whether the painted person actually danced or not.

The movement of the dance was from right to left around the singers (as in all Indian dances), though not in single file as many dances must be by Indian custom. But in the Victory-dance the participants individually reversed the direction of the general movement of the dance from right to left (which would be ill-luck in other kinds of dances) and plunged from left to right brandishing tomahawk or hatchet or other war-implement; or they even plunged outside of the circle for a short distance, and immediately returned to the circular group of the dancers. This irregular movement indicated the chaotic clash in battle and also that war is a chaotic and not a normal condition in human society, as Indians explain it. Yet in all those irregular and individual movements and plunges and rushes (as if pursuing an enemy) one felt and saw the easy conformity to time and rhythm and harmony which is remarkable in all Indian performances. And in this Victory-dance neither the movement of the dancers nor their singing, nor the singing of the official singers with the drum, for that matter, leaned upon the music of the drum in any way, as white people habitually lean upon the piano or bagpipe, or whatnot in their singing and dancing.<sup>11</sup> The files of men in this Victory-dance

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<sup>11</sup> This statement applies to all Indian performances I have ever witnessed or participated in; i. e., the singers and performers *do not in any way lean upon or follow the drum* or any other musical instrument used. And while this is true of all Indians I know personally, it is markedly true of the Western Dakota. In training Indian singers in white men's music the most difficult thing is to train them to lean upon and follow with an organ or a piano, which is unnecessary if all the choir or chorus and organist are Indians, as they usually were when I was rector of St. James Church; for with an all-Indian outfit these things will adjust themselves in beautiful harmony distinctively Indian. But when it comes to choir or chorus of mixt Indians and white people, such as I have sometimes had, the white people habitually lean upon the organ (or piano) as the Indians do not; and Indians have to be trained (a most difficult task) to do the same to get tolerable rhythm and time and harmony. With the Indians the drum, important as it is, and other music, helpful as it is, are harmonious "freelance," while the dancers and singers are dependent upon harmony arising from their own sense of interdependence, which is not a stiff harmony, as among white people, but a beautiful, agreeable (to me), easy, psychic harmony in which there can not be even a "star-performer" or a "star-singer"; but it is a community-matter, the most democratic thing I ever met, and to me the most charming thing I know among men. And some other white men, among them Dr. Baker, of Rolla, N. D. (now deceased), realized these things I state here as I realize them and here state them, showing that it is not a mere notion of my own. Indians themselves realize this difference between Indian musical performances and dances and similar performances and dances by white

were sometimes two or three and sometimes five or six deep; there is no rule regarding it in the Victory-dance since it depends upon the number in the dance at any given time. In the Victory-dance (as here celebrated and as I have seen it played) the inside file of dancers is near the drum and singers, not more than 5 or 6 feet distant, nearer than in most Indian dances, and this, they say, is the Indian custom in the Victory-dance, to indicate especially near dependence upon *Taku Wakan oyasin* (all the Holy Powers) in war.

At Cannon Ball, as I learned from careful inquiry of Indians, the celebration of the Victory-dance (at the same time as the Fort Yates celebration) was similar to the one at Ft. Yates, essentially the same, though planned and executed by different old men and with no consultation between the two different groups, save that the discussion regarding flags did not occur at Cannon Ball. But one important thing did occur. They killed and coup-counted the Kaiser in effigy. This was because a report started by someone on Friday that the Kaiser had been killed went broadcast over the county and over Corson County, S. D., among all Indians, as reports often fly quickly among Indians. One would hear from almost any Indian's lips, *Kaiser ktepi* (the Kaiser is killed). So at Cannon Ball, not far from the Cannon Ball River, where the celebration was held, the Indians made an effigy of the Kaiser (as was sometimes done in old times when a leader of the enemy had fallen and his actual body was not brought to the camp of the victors). This effigy was erected immediately after the sacred tree was set up, and before dancing. Warriors crept stealthily toward the effigy and shot it till it fell. And when it had fallen four children previously selected for the purpose went to it and counted coups.<sup>12</sup> And after the children had counted 4 coups, then 4 men previously selected counted coups. The first one so to count rode the horse that Albert Grass, nephew of Chief John Grass, deceased, rode away on when he went to the war, not to return. And when this coup was counted the Indians sang, "The horse came home with-

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people; they say, "The white man's way is arbitrary, the Indian's way like Nature" (*Wasicun ta wicohan iyetokencin ece, Lakota Cicage tokencin ece*).

<sup>12</sup> A young Indian lady asked me on Monday, Dec. 2, what that meant, and said that she never heard of such a thing before among Indians, also that old Indians did not reply when she asked what it meant. But by Indian custom, children might count coups on an enemy who fell in the act of attacking the home or home village, before the warriors did the regular coup-counting. And this coup-counting by the children indicated, according to the old Indian's understanding of the matter, that the war of the "Kaiserites," *Kaiser-ta-oyate* (Prussians, whom Indians distinguish from Germans) was essentially a war of savagery for the destruction of home and civilization in the entire world.

out the rider."<sup>13</sup> Then the horse was given away for charity, as were all horses on which men rode to count coups, in accordance with Indian custom. I hear, but have not yet carefully inquired of Indians, that at Bull Head, S. D., several Prussians, besides the Kaiser, were killed in effigy and coups counted upon each one so killed. But I have not heard that the coup-counting by children occurred anywhere except at Cannon Ball. Both at Cannon Ball and at Bull Head they had the ceremony of women carrying representations of scalps; that is, scalps previously in the possession of the tribe, since the specific scalps of the *Kaiser-ta-oyate* would, supposedly, not appear till the soldiers actually returned. At the Fort Yates celebration I told them that the report *Kaiser ktepi* was false, that the Allies had not yet decided what to do with the Kaiser; so they omitted the coup-counting upon the Kaiser and on some of his followers. And the Scalp-promenade by the women was omitted, on my suggestion, since, as I said, and they agreed to it, "Scalping is a relic of barbarism, and is no part of the old traditional Dakota customs. This war we have fought is to put down all kinds of barbarism, so we ought to omit from the ceremonies the Scalp-promenade, which is not essential to the Victory-dance."

The movements of the Victory-dance at Ft. Yates were interspersed with speeches by Indians, a speech by Mr. Carignan, and a speech by the writer. As one speaker expressed it, during his speech, "Let the Kaiserites put away forever their barbarity such as we Indians never heard of before and discard their dishonesty in connection with treaties, and then their nation shall have its old place by the campfire of the nations, and for the sake of *humanity (wicacantki-yapi)* we will give them food to keep them from starving till they can procure food for themselves, according to the old Indian custom."

During the dance, in periods of rest and general conversation, I heard old Indians discussing what ought to be done with the Kaiser. One old Indian suggested that both his hands be cut off for a punishment; another, that he and all male descendants and near relatives be emasculated, so that we would have in the world no more of the kind.<sup>14</sup> One Indian with a twinkle in his eye, who

<sup>13</sup> A song similar to the Arikara song used after the Little Big Horn battle, "The spotted horse came home without the rider," referring to a horse that actually did so come home from the battle. It is an old song. A record of this Arikara song is in the Museum.

<sup>14</sup> Old Indians have told me that this punishment was sometimes given to the very wicked captured enemies in old times and was regarded as very severe punishment; but some students of the Indians doubt the accuracy of the statement. I think it did

had tried his best to do farming without success, suggested that the proper way to punish him would be to give him an allotment of land like an Indian's, some trees from which to build a log house, a team of horses and harness and wagon, and a few cattle and agricultural implements, as are given to an old Indian; then have the Indian agent say to him, "Now you lazy bad man, you farm and make your living by farming, rain or no rain; and if you do not make your own living don't come to the Agency whining when you have no food in your stomach and no money, but stay here on your farm and grow fat till you starve." This method of punishing the Kaiser by putting him on an Indian reservation with all the restrictions and handicaps of reservation living seemed to meet with the approval of most of the old Indians. They said, "Never let him become a Patent-in-fee man but keep him a Trust-patent man strictly under the authority of an Indian agent, just as it used to be some years ago before the larger liberty was allowed Indians; that would be the best and most appropriate punishment for his wicked deeds." And they meant this with full seriousness.

There were frequent pauses in the dancing. That is, there was a dance and then a pause till another dance started (similar to all Indian dancing). During the pause (and sometimes during the dancing) individuals were taking offerings for the "United War Work Campaign" and the Red Cross. None of these offerings were properly the payment of any vow made in connection with the war, or in any other connection, since such vows were paid at a Sundance and not at a Victory-dance.<sup>15</sup> Some few offerings were made

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occur occasionally among the Dakota in old times; many old men have assured me of this fact, among them old Red Hail (*Wasu luta*), a man well posted in old Indian customs.

<sup>15</sup> And yet old Indians do, to some extent, associate in their minds the Red Cross with the Sundance, for 3 reasons, among others: (a) it has to do with the care and recovery of sick and wounded people; (b) its emblem is a cross, suggesting the cross on the Sundance tree and the cross on the earth at the trunk of this sacred tree (on the Victory-dance tree the wolf extended at full length is identically similar to the cross-piece on the Sundance tree); (c) the cross-emblem of the Red Cross, which every old Indian has and considers precious and sacred, is red, and red is the color used in striping perpendicularly from the position of the rather short and stubbed cross-piece down the trunk of the tree. This color red is an *earth*-color, as all sacred colors *must* be. It is made from yellow ochre which is baked slowly in a hole in the ground. I know the process. The fat by which it is mixt and applied must be from some wild animal (not from a tame animal or a non-native animal). And I am certain that the Sundance sacred tree is brought to camp top-ahead, the same as the Victory-dance tree is brought, though some writers carelessly state the contrary. It would mean ill-luck and would be contrary to sacred ideas to bring to camp either the Victory-dance tree or the Sundance tree trunk-ahead, similarly as it would be the same evil to bring into camp a fallen enemy feet-first, instead of head-first. If he was brought into camp feet-first it would mean that he would again arise upon his feet, himself, or in the persons of his people, to reopen the war. The tree represents an enemy. Cutting and severing it from Holy Earth means that the enemy, for his haughtiness or other



at this Victory-dance in the nature of paying a vow, but that was because of the Red Cross symbols present which strongly suggest the Sundance.<sup>16</sup> The amount of money raised, in offerings, for the "United War Work Campaign" and the Red Cross and all war work at the Ft. Yates Victory-dance was \$263.40, besides two horses and a colt (to be sold) additional. And at Cannon Ball the amount was \$216, besides the four horses used in counting coups and two other horses, as I learn, additional. The "United War Work Campaign" is regarded by Indians as similar in nature to Red Cross work. The Red Cross is the center of Indian eager emotion and firm resolve in all war work, other than the actual campaigning, of soldiers, and this is because of the association of the Red Cross with the Sundance, or at least with the basic Sundance ideas.

The fact that women are the chief personnel in the Red Cross work does not disturb the minds of old Indians, since, as they see the pictures of these women, they suppose them to be virgins, and so associate them with the four virgins who go with the four young men to cut and bring the Sundance tree.<sup>17</sup>

Many speeches were made by Indians on this occasion; all of them had the *ton* of reverence and recognition of *Wakantanka* as the source of Victory, also as requiring mercy to a fallen foe. J. M. Carignan, Sr., an old-timer well known to Indians, and, as his

wickedness, was cut and severed from Holy Earth and from the strengthening powers of Holy Earth, and so fell in war. Therefore the trunk of the tree must be the discarded end, or tail-end, in the procession to camp.

<sup>16</sup> I have known several instances during the war where a Sundance vow made had been paid to the Red Cross—horses given, and in one case land given, in several cases money given and the *Red Cross worn* upon the breast instead of the old-time cutting of the ligaments of the breast.

<sup>17</sup> The head one of these four virgins cuts down the tree theoretically, though it is sufficient for her to strike the first blow and then let the Master of Ceremonies or one of the young men fell the tree. The tree, in either dance, must not touch the earth after it is felled till it is erected in the appointed hole in the earth; grass or something detached from the earth must be the bed on which the tree, the fallen enemy, lies till it is erected. And, in either dance, once the tree is felled it becomes sacred, so that should a person violate its sacred character by stepping over it or in any other way, the lightning will kill him or some severe calamity will befall him. And the same is true of a fallen or captured enemy, little as this is understood by white men; that is, if an enemy falls, his victors may do one of two things: (a) they may scalp him (a thing quite modern among Western Dakota, and never exactly fitting their ideas) and count coups on him and *leave him where he fell* for the Universal Nature-powers (Living Conscious Being) to dispose of; or (b) they may bring him to camp and have a Victory-dance in his presence (dead or alive) and then give him *sacred funeral rites* (if he is dead). The body of a fallen foe is in a special way associated immediately with sacred Nature, and so sacrilege toward the body of a fallen foe, much as the victors may triumph over it, is sacrilege, and is certain to be punished by Nature. (Compare the Scripture, Proverbs 24:17-18, remembering that this is an old proverb, and examining the "to" meaning of the Hebrew word translated "rejoice," also the word for "joy," having reference to elation harmonious with Universal Deity.)

former partner in business says of him, "more like an Indian than like a white man," spoke, by special invitation to do so. He recounted that Indians in Sioux County had purchased about \$100,000 of Liberty Securities, and given more than \$2000 to Red Cross work and kindred work; and that, as he was informed, no able-bodied Indian had in any way tried to evade becoming a soldier, but that all had been eager to do their part in defending helpless women and children and in preserving civilization. He said, "Had it not been for Indians, Sioux County instead of going over the top in all demands upon her, would have been low down on the list."

At the beginning of the celebration the writer, by invitation and by previous arrangement, spoke along the lines of "Wakan-tanka's Help in This War," and at the close of the speech, by previous arrangement, there was a silence for 3 or 4 minutes (till the drum-tap) while each "from the bottom of his heart out-gives thanks to *Wakantanka (Iyohi cantemahel eciyatanhan Wakantanka wopila qu kta)*.<sup>18</sup> There were three other periods of such silence preceded by short speeches by Indians *for those who were not present at this previous part of the ceremony*.<sup>19</sup> To be selected for the short speech just before the moment for silent thanks is indication that Indians have faith in the honest piety of the person to speak, though the Indian standard of piety is somewhat heroic: that is, a person's being known to have fought viciously or even used strong words when assailed and pressed hard would have nothing to do with the estimate of piety, by Indian standards, even if they did not entirely justify the vicious fighting or the strong words.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Such periods of silence for individual prayer during a Victory-dance are in the old-time custom.

<sup>19</sup> The thing once done could not be repeated by the same persons, though they would pray *ad libitum* while newcomers were definitely giving thanks. It is characteristic of all Indian religious exercises that a thing once done must not be repeated by the same persons, till a new occasion arises, for religion, being by Indian conception universal in nature, is also finality.

<sup>20</sup> Piety to an Indian is fundamentally an honest Life-attitude toward the Living world and humanity which must be unselfish and full of self-obliteration or even self-abandonment. And the *crucial test* by which it is judged is not the capability of a person for harmony with and sympathy with Universal Living Nature, which does not *compete (kici econ)* with a person in his choices, aims, and purposes; but it is rather *honesty toward and forgiving sympathy with and kindhearted desire for persons who do compete with one, as Nature does not*. And it must be devoid of "dishonest slander" (*aiapi owotonmasni*). So the fact that a white man might, on rare occasions and under great provocation, swear unrestrainedly or fight viciously would not preclude him from being considered truly pious by Indians, although Indians have special dislike for profanity and consider it a sin to fight, except when one *must* do it and cannot reasonably avoid it. A white man or an Indian may have many recognized sins (of which he sorrowfully repents) and yet be esteemed by Indians sufficiently pious to make the speech before the Thanks-pause in a Victory-dance. Wealth or poverty, prominence or obscurity, efficiency or inefficiency (in worldly concerns) has little to do with

Besides the old Victory-dance songs (which are, I suppose, recorded) there were several original songs composed for the occasion — three by old men and one by old women.

A flag, or more properly an emblem, distinctively Indian has been mentioned. Thomas Frosted said to the Indians regarding this matter, in part:

“I unfurl before you this emblem of our race which you have made, and adopted here today. It is a flag, and yet it is not a flag in the sense that the U. S. flag is a flag; for, as you know, a nation has but one flag, and the minds and the hearts of all the people of a nation are devoted to the nation’s one flag similarly as they are devoted to the sun, the great benefactor of all people on the earth.

“You see that the main part of this flag is red, which does not mean that red is superior to the blue and the white in the flag in the smaller part, but it means that the Red men were the first people here on this island. The color red signifies the earth and all that grows out of the earth—the people, the food which is provided by Nature for people, and the food which people learn to cultivate for themselves. The color blue signifies the sky above the Earth with all its unmeasured boundaries, its everlasting power, and its kindly wishes for the Earth and all that is on the Earth. The color white signifies that by the action of the Earth and the Sky there comes a future world for all beings great or small. So the groundwork of this flag being red does not signify any superiority of the color red over the colors blue and white, but it signifies merely that the Red men were the first people in this island, as you all know.

“From the land on the east side of the Great Water the white people came here to this island. The Red men freely gave them the cultivated plants and foods that they already had in possession for their own sustenance, food-plants well adapted to the soil and climate of this island. And with wisdom superior to ours in cultivating foods the white people have made the food-plants that the Red men gave them the chief factor in providing food for a great and powerful nation.

“And now, as we are all aware, the white race have become the

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the Indian estimate of piety. And, although Western Sioux, taught it by Sitting Bull, the first enforcer of “teetotalism” in the Northwest, abhor drunkenness or even drinking at all, yet they recognize that a man may fall into the sin of drunkenness (which especially tends to ruin all that is holy in a person) and yet may be truly a pious person. I knew one (only) such case of a man occasionally getting drunk being esteemed by Indians a pious man. The test being as above described (and I have observed carefully for years), other things are, by Indian ideas, secondary, important as they may be.

ruling race in this island. Often we have wondered why it was that the Red men, being first here, did not become the ruling race instead of the white people. I think it is because we Red men had lost our education, and became hunters merely without the growing education in the cultivation of food-plants which, as we all know, our ancestors possessed. And for this reason we were not as capable of becoming the rulers in this island and making laws for a great nation as the white people were. I do not think the Red men could have become capable of sending an army of two million soldiers, equipped with the new-made invincible guns and with boats capable of sailing on the water and of going under the water and of navigating in the Sky, across the Great Water to fight down the Kaiserites in their attempt to take this island and enslave both the Red men and the white men. Yet as white men come to understand the Red men, they are more inclined to give them credit for their help in making this great nation by freely supplying the white men who came with the many things necessary to the growth of a great nation.

“In this great war we have given our young men for soldiers. We have done all possible for us to do for the Red Cross and for other things which are intended to help the soldiers upon the battle-places and bring them home again in health and safety. We have been as desirous to help white soldiers as to help our own young men in the army. We have done this to defend both ourselves and white men against the Kaiserites. We have done it from a sense of patriotism and duty; and we hope the white men, the ruling class, will give us credit for it. We note there are two stars on this flag, one representing the white men and one the Red men. And this does not mean the joining of these two peoples in this great war merely; it is intended to mean the union of these two races in one great nation with determination fixed and strong hearts pledged that each people on the earth, great or small, shall be free from the clutch of the Kaiserites and shall possess their homes in safety.”

I have heard Mr. Frosted speak many times. He is an able and well-informed Indian, 53 years old, with no schooling, but with an alert, inquiring mind. This speech of his surpassed all previously given by him.

At evening twilight, according to old custom in the Victory-dance, they had a free feast. And then the dancing, with speaking or free conversation intermitting, lasted till midnight, according to the old custom.

