THE AMERICAN INDIAN
HIS LIFE AND CUSTOMS
The Coming of the White Man
**Indian Time**

**INDIANS** told the time of day by the sun; counted the days by sleeps; calculated the months by the moon (making thirteen); and scored the years by winters. The new year began in March. Different tribes had different names for the months. The Natchez names were:

"Deer moon—March
Strawberry moon—April
Little Corn moon—May
Watermelon moon—June
Peach moon—July
Mulberry moon—August
Great Corn moon—September
Turkey moon—October
Bison moon—November
Bear moon—December
Cold Meal moon—January
Chestnut moon—February
Nut moon (nuts broken to make bread at the close of winter, when supplies ran low)"
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The history of America does not begin with the landing of Columbus or with the coming of the Norsemen. There are chapters and chapters in the early history of America which are little known and little thought of, but which have a large share in the making of this nation. The Indians were living in America thousands of years before the coming of Columbus; from the most primitive stages of civilization, they had undergone a gradual process of evolution and development. Although still uncivilized and barbaric they were able to contribute certain elements of culture which have formed a part in the development of American life. To understand and appreciate these contributions, we must study the life and customs of the Indian, the First American.

The Indian has not always lived in America. Fifteen thousand years or more ago our country lay under a glacier. Slowly throughout thousands of years the ice receded, the earth warmed, vegetation grew. About ten thousand years ago, man for the first time entered the New World. He came from Asia, across Behring Strait; and, as others of his people came after him, he roamed and wandered to the south into what is now Canada, then on to the United States, and finding the country to the south warmer and more abundant in vegetation and game, he settled and multiplied until, within the course of hundreds of years, he had practically covered the two American Continents.

The Indian belonged to the Mongoloid race, from which the Chinese and Japanese had branched thousands of years earlier; but being separated from his original stock, and influenced by the climatic conditions of his new home, he soon developed habits and characteristics peculiarly his own. Unknown to England and Europe, he lived in his New World, until discovered by Columbus and his followers. It was by Columbus that the natives were called Indians; the great mariner thinking he had reached India, and little realizing that he had found a new people and a new
continent. By 1492 the Indians had so multiplied that, according to one estimation, about half a million of them lived within the bounds of the present United States. They formed several large divisions such as the Algonquins, Iroquois, Dakotas (Sioux), Appalachians, Shoshonis (Snakes), Athapasca's, Yumas, Pueblos. These large groups were divided into innumerable tribes and clans: some two thousand names of tribes are mentioned in North American literature.

Although the various tribes were practically sufficient unto themselves, each administering its own government, providing its own food, clothing, and shelter, possessing its own ceremonies and religious beliefs, speaking its own language, and consequently developing its own life, customs, and culture; yet all the Indians had many characteristics in common. All the Indians were superstitious, believing that animals as well as nature influenced their lives, and, like all primitive races, they accompanied their activities of food gathering, war, and worship with extravagant ceremonies. All the Indians lived in groups or villages rather than as isolated families. All had their chiefs, who obtained their positions by bravery rather than by heredity. There were no written laws, no written histories, no books. Although the tribes used a sign or picture writing to convey messages, the laws, beliefs, and old tales passed from one generation to another by the spoken word. In general the Indian men did the hunting, fishing and fighting; the women not only cooked the food and made the clothing, but they usually tilled the fields, made the houses and the household utensils. The Indians had no stores nor markets as we now have; neither did they possess horses, cows nor other domestic animals save the dog. In physical appearance the members of the various tribes resembled each other: they had straight black hair, reddish-brown skin, dark eyes, high cheek bones, thick lips, and broad faces. Although some groups were more savage than others, in the main they were all hospitable, generous, devoted; yet envious, cruel, and treacherous, almost beyond belief.

Indian Traditions and Legends

According to their own tradition, Owayneo (the Creator) planted five handfuls of red seeds and from them grew the five
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Iroquois nations (Mohawks, Oneidas, Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas). Some western Indians believe that they descended from the coyote, or wolf; the Osages say that the first man came out of a shell; the Mandans maintained that they originally lived underground and climbed to earth on the roots of a grapevine; while the Chickasaws declared that they first lived in the West and traveled eastward with a pole as guide, each night planting the pole in the ground and next morning traveling in the direction which it leaned. But whatever their traditional origin, all the tribes honored what they believed to be their forbears—animals and nature.

Indian mythology says that before the Indians came, the animal fathers lived upon the earth. The hills, rivers, forests, sun, moon, stars, and winds were also here before the coming of the “two-legged walkers.” Whole Indian clans were thought to owe their origin to animals, and, consequently, they adopted the name of their creator. For instance, the Iroquois had clans named Beaver, Wolf, Turtle, Hawk, Heron, Deer, and Snipe. A figure of the animal served as the emblem, or totem, of the tribe, and its image was usually tattooed upon the Indian’s breast. Furthermore, the Red Men believed that not only birds, beasts, and reptiles heard and answered their prayers; but that lakes, rivers, and waterfalls were living spirits, who could hear the voice of man, and who, in answer to prayers and offerings, would influence his life for good or evil. East, West, North, and South were regarded as manitous, or spirits, with supernatural power; the Summer-Maker and Winter-Maker were actual characters to the Indians, who tried to keep the latter back by throwing firebrands into the air. To many tribes the Sun was a supreme spirit to whom they prayed and made sacrifices; many called for guidance upon the Moon, Stars, and the Seven Spirits of the Wind.

In his superstitious beliefs, the Indian regarded Thunder as a great black bird, which made roaring noises when he left his home on the mountain peak. The flapping of the wings of Thunder over a lake struck lightning from the water. Sometimes tribes claimed the power of fighting the thunder. When a storm threatened, “thunder-fighters would take their bows and arrows, their magic drum, and a sort of whistle, made out of the wing-bone of a war-eagle, and, thus equipped, would run out and

"Should you ask where Nawadaha Found these songs so wild and wayward, Found these legends and traditions, I should answer, I should tell you, 'In the birds'-nests of the forest, In the lodges of the beaver, In the hoof-prints of the bison, In the eyry of the eagle.'"
"Round about the Indian village
Spread the meadows and the corn-fields,
And beyond them stood the forest,
Stood the groves of singing pine-trees,
Green in Summer, white in Winter,
Ever sighing, ever singing."

fire at the rising cloud, whooping, yelling, whistling, and beating their drums, to frighten it away."
Other tribes said that lightning was the digging stick of the Great One Above, and that when the lightning flashed and the earth shook, someone had disobeyed his orders. In his savage worship the Indian sometimes made human sacrifices to these mythical spirits. Although all the North American Indians resembled each other in their worship of animals and nature, they differed greatly in their home life: the various tribes lived in the type of house and ate the kind of food that best fitted the climate and was most easily obtained.

Indian Villages and Houses

Generally each tribe of Indians lived in a single village; sometimes, however, clusters of small tribes, which had originally been independent but through conquest, plague, friendly removal, or union had lost their individuality, lived together under the name of the leading group. The majority of Indian villages consisted of groups of small houses, with each family having a house of its own; sometimes, however, a village had just a few houses, but with as many as one hundred families living in each house. The only other buildings in the village were the house where the men slept, the sweat-house, the council chamber, and the sacred medicine lodge.

Although we generally think of all Indians as living in a wigwam—the Algonquin name for low, oval houses covered with bark or brush—they had four distinct types of houses—those of stone, those of mud (adobe), those of wood, those of skins. Among the Indians who lived in stone dwellings were the Pueblos, who cut great holes, one above the other, in the side of rock cliffs. Each family occupied a single hole, or room, and reached it by means of a pathway or stairs cut in the rock. Some Indians of the Northwest had stone houses; that is, the walls were of stone, while the roofs were usually of whalebone covered with bear skin.

The adobe, or mud houses of the Zuni Indians were built in tiers, one house above the other like the stone houses of the Pueblos. Those in the lower Mississippi region were of clay walls reinforced with an interlacing of twigs; those of Florida were dome-shaped, plastered with mud; and those of the Siouan tribes were earth-lodges.
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—circular holes dug in the ground and roofed with brush and grass.

The Yumas, Athapascas, and Indians of the Gulf States lived in houses made entirely of wood and brush. Generally their dwellings were oblong or square, with frame of light poles, and outside covering of bark, grass, straw, or leaves.

The tepee, used by the Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Crow, and other Plains tribes, is the most typical Indian shelter. It consists of long, slim poles placed to form a cone with their tops coming together; sometimes the poles were covered with bark or mats, but more often with the skins of wild animals. No Indian houses had floors, save the bare earth, neither had they chimneys nor windows. Practically all the dwellings were decorated with carvings, drawings, or paintings of crescent moon, thunder-birds, snakes, or whatever animals were symbols of the tribes. The medicine lodge had two poles in front—the poles were cut and painted with symbolic pictures, and topped with an effigy, much like a scarecrow, as an offering to the spirits.

Indian Furniture and Household Utensils

The Indians had no tables, chairs, nor stoves. Their only furnishings were beds, which were seats of matting covered with bear skin. These seats extended round the walls of the house and were about two feet from the ground. In winter even these beds were not used; the entire household slept on the floor about the fire. The Indian had no chests or cupboards; from poles near the top of the houses hung clothing, weapons, and skins, as well as meats, corn, and other food. The soot from the fires made a thick, dirty, black covering for the walls and contents of the house; the smoke was so dense as to be unbearable to the white man and caused considerable blindness among the Indians. The household utensils, pots, buckets, and bowls were all made by hand, of stone, clay, bark, or skins, according as these materials were available. Gourds and bison horns served as drinking cups; spoons were made from wood or elkhorns. The utensils were decorated with pictures of birds, reptiles, animals, or other symbolic designs with paints obtained from minerals or the juices of plants.

For their fishing, hunting, and planting the Indians used implements of wood, skin, or stone. From wood the tribes which lived

"Very spacious was the wigwam,
Made of deer-skins dressed
and whitened,
With the Gods of the Dacotahs
Drawn and painted on its curtains."
“Made his arrow-heads of sand-stone,
Arrow-heads of chalcedony,
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper,
Smoothed and sharpened at the edges,
Hard and polished, keen and costly.”

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by fishing made fish clubbers, fish spears, sealing shafts, whaling harpoons, and raft-like boats; from the fibers of wood they wove nets; from bones they made hooks. From wood the tribes which lived by hunting made their bows, arrows, and canoes. The latter were made either by hollowing out a single log, or by covering a frame of poles with bark. From animal skins the hunters made strips of sinew for their bows and fashioned snowshoes with which they could travel as far as forty miles a day, overtaking deer and moose; from bone, flint, or stone they made arrow heads, mauls, hammers, axes or tomahawks. From wood, shell, or stone the tribes which lived by planting made their simple digging stick or hoe. Knives were common to all the Indians and were made of stone. The art of striking fire, by the friction of pieces of flint or sticks of hard wood, the method of dressing animal skins with the brains, the process of making calabash rattles from gourds, and drums from skins were practiced by most of the tribes.

Indian Clothing
The clothing of the Indians varied from the breech or loin cloth of the Southern tribes (a few Indians went entirely naked), to the Southwestern tribes which wore blankets, to the New England groups which dressed in cloth and skin, and the Northwestern clans which dressed entirely with skins. Some of the tribes went barefoot most of the time; all of them had moccasins. Originally cotton was used only by the Southwestern groups; other tribes wove willow and cedar bark fiber, sagebrush and basswood bark, cornhusk fiber, Indian hemp, sinew and pemmenaw grass fiber. The women twisted or spun the fibers by rolling them under the palm upon the thigh. Bark was broken up with corrugated beaters of whalebone, or loosened into fibrous masses with half-moon shredders. It is said that cedar bark “wool” was of the softness and fineness of our down or cotton. Blankets were woven from fibers, buffalo and moose hair, and twisted strips of rabbit fur. Upon these simple garments were embroidered elaborate designs with beads of many shapes and colors, porcupine quills, and feathers. For the chiefs and warriors great cloaks and headdresses were made of feather mosaics. A few tribes, particularly those of the Southwestern and Pacific coast region, developed some artistic designs
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in textiles and beadwork; but most of the Indian apparel was coarse, crude and gaudy in materials, designs, and colors. Savage that he was, the Indian preferred showiness to artistry, although in the arts of basketry and pottery most of the tribes revealed real artistic qualities. For ceremonies, councils, or on the warpath the Indian supplemented his clothing with feathers of turkey or eagle, the tails of fox or bear, the beaks of birds, and claws of wild birds or beasts. From great holes cut in the lobes of his ears, he often hung earrings of beads, stones, bird beaks, or animal claws. Upon his body he painted, cut, or burned pictures of the animals which were his guiding spirits; or, if he were a brave warrior, he would cut double slits in the flesh over his chest and hang from them souvenirs of his sacred animal. These amulets were fish spines, fragments of snakes, spiders, crabs, rats, and the like—worn to win the favor of the animal spirits and consequently to insure success on the hunt or in battle. The greater share of this savage decorating was done by the men, the children wearing little or no clothing, the women dressing themselves in simple blanket or skirt with moccasins and sometimes leggings of rawhide, generally limiting their “jewelry” to earrings, bracelets, and necklaces, made from beads, metals, bones, and teeth. Thus, whether to protect himself from the weather, to satisfy his pride, or to seek the favor of his sacred animals, the Indian dressed and adorned himself with such materials as nature provided close at hand. So it was with his food; he ate whatever of animal or vegetable life he found nearby.

Indian Food

The Indians who originally inhabited the territory now composing the United States could be divided, in respect to their food, into four groups: those who lived on game, particularly buffalo; those who lived on fish, particularly salmon; those who lived on wild seeds, particularly acorns; and those who lived on cultivated food, particularly maize or corn. At that time “seething masses of bison” roamed the great treeless plains of the Middle West. Tribes, known as Buffalo Indians, included the Dakotas or Sioux and some of the Shoshonis or Snakes. Having no horses nor gunpowder, they would round up a herd of bison by making a great circle of fire about them, and shoot them at close range with bow and arrow.
Unmolested roved the hunters,
Built the birch canoe for sailing,
Caught the fish in lake and river,
Shot the deer and trapped the beaver;
Unmolested worked the women,
Made their sugar from the maple,
Gathered wild rice in the meadows.

In New England the Indians hunted the deer and moose. The squaws cooked the meat by dropping it into buckets of water heated with red-hot stones. Some of the meat was hung up, thoroughly dried, then pounded fine with stone hammers, packed in bags of animal skin sealed with melted fat, and put away for winter use. The dried and finely pounded meat of the buffalo was called pemmican. The Sioux, Cheyennes, and other prairie tribes gathered wild cherries, dried and pounded pits and all, and mixed with the winter meat. The Dakotas considered dog-meat a great delicacy to be served to visitors. Other tribes such as the fierce, savage Comanches, ate buffalo meat raw, and drank the warm blood.

The Athapascas, or Indians of the Northwest, were the great fishers. When the salmon left the sea and ascended the rivers to spawn, whole Indian tribes gathered on the banks of the streams and with dip nets, weirs, traps and harpoons, caught salmon in quantities sufficient to supply meat all year. The fish for winter use, like the buffalo meat, was smoked or dried, pounded fine, and packed in buckets, generally of reed or bark. Some of the fishing tribes ate certain wild berries, uncooked clover, and the inner bark of hemlock; the latter they made into a kind of bread.

Indian hunters and fishers were anxious to appease the animals they killed or caught. They sometimes made long apologies to wounded bears; and treated the bones of beavers with tenderness, carefully keeping them from dogs, lest the spirit of the dead beaver be offended. Each evening, in the fishing camp, some leader would address the fish, urging them to be caught and promising that great respect would be shown their bones. This solemn ceremony took place after the evening meal; the entire party, except the speaker, lay motionless on their backs about the fire. The Algonquins and Hurons are said to have appeased their fishing nets and urged them to catch many fish by a solemn ceremony in which they married them each year to young girls of the tribe.

The tribes of California which lived upon wild seeds had for their chief food the acorn. The squaws took the raw acorns, pounded them into flour, and made bread. Wild seeds, roots, herbs, and grasses were eaten by the Californian tribes; while in the dry regions of Nevada, Utah, and Idaho, where a sufficient quantity of
wild vegetable food was not to be found, many kinds of insects were eaten. The Algonquins, Iroquois, and Muskokis were among the great corn growers. The Indian women did all the tilling, planting, and harvesting. It was their duty too, to pound the corn into meal, or to dry or parch it for the winter supply.

The raising of maize, as the Indians called corn, represents one of the important contributions of the Indians to our life of today. Corn, first grown by the Indian and unknown to England and Europe until after America was discovered, has become one of the most important of the world’s foods. To the Indian planters we also owe the pumpkin, squash, and potato. When Columbus saw the natives eating potatoes, he did not know what the “roots” were. Likewise the Indian was the first to grow tobacco; from him the rest of the world learned to smoke. The making of maple sugar is another Indian accomplishment; practically every essential detail of the process now in use was developed by the Indian before 1492.

No group of Indians lived upon a single item of food. Each had some variety; that is, the hunters found wild herbs and roots, the fishers had some wild berries, the corn growers hunted small game and caught some fish. One article all the Indians had—oil. It was extracted from bison, whale, and wild nuts. It is interesting here to note the absence of milk from the diet of the early tribes. The history of European countries at an early stage of civilization reveals the importance of flocks and herds and pastures, but until the coming of the European, milk animals were not used on this continent. This lack in animal food has been attributed as one of the principal causes of retarded civilization among the early Indians.

Indian Ceremonies

The Indian was very fond of celebrating. All their food-gathering activities were accompanied with elaborate ceremonies and dances. Before the women planted the corn, or the men went to fish or hunt, the tribe came together to sing and dance and call upon their good spirits to accompany them. At harvest time, or when quantities of fish or buffalo meat were brought into the village, the whole clan joined in the feast and celebration. Dancers, decorated with feathers and paint, would whirl, twist, chant, and yell to the

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"And the maize-field grew and ripened,
Till it stood in all the splendor
Of its garments green and yellow,
Of its tassels and its plumage,
And the maize ears full and shining
Gleamed from bursting sheaths of verdure."
to give food to the people. In the time of famine, drought, excessive rain or cold, tribes held ceremonies and made sacrifices, occasionally of human beings, to appease the wrath of the spirits who had brought about the evil condition.

Not only food-gathering, but every event in the life of the Indian, such as taking a name, marriage, war, illness, death, and burial, were occasions of tribal ceremony. These weird savage ceremonies were generally tedious and long-drawn-out; often they were hideous and cruel, demanding extreme self-torture, and ending with the dancers exhausted, wounded, and bleeding. Famous dances, perpetuated to this day, include the sword-swallowing dance, the Pueblo arrow dance, and the Hopi snake dance.

**Indian Children**

According to Indian belief, babies born in the house brought ill luck to the entire family, consequently babies were usually born in a brush shelter some distance back of the family dwelling. Just as soon as babies were born, they were taken to the bank of a river, and even in the winter-time they were plunged into the water that they might be strong and have courage. After the bath, the babies were wrapped with linings of cedar or other bark and securely fastened to a cradle board. Here they stayed for many, many months. As long as the babies remained in the cradle boards the mothers carried them about on their backs, stood them up against the wall, or hung them from trees while they did their cooking, weaving, and planting. That they might be more handsome in the eyes of their tribesmen, some babies had cedar bark pads tied to their foreheads to flatten them, and similar pads bound to the lower part of their legs to make the calves bulge. All Indians cut the lobes of the babies’ ears; some tribes pierced the septum of the nose, strung them with sinew and hung from them beads or stones.

As Indian children grew older they wore few or no clothes. Each morning, the year round, they took a plunge in the river.
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They had no soap or towels; but they often rubbed themselves with a hemlock branch. To keep from chapping, they covered their bodies with oil, tallow, or red paint. Children were not required to help with the work of the household or village; so they amused themselves with throwing spears, which they made themselves, swinging bats, throwing beaver teeth or plum stones in a kind of dice game, and running all sorts of races; in the winter they "coasted the hills on toboggans made of buffalo ribs, or just stood upon the dry skin, holding up the end." Indian parents never punished their children, except in extreme cases. Even then the children were punished merely by throwing a bowl of cold water over their heads. If the children were bad, their "uncles" would be called upon to whip them, or old women in the village would proceed to bewitch them.

Indians seldom called each other by name: they spoke to and of each other as my friend, cousin, brother, uncle, grandmother, etc. Surnames were unknown. Children were first named after some brave relative, or to commemorate a feat of great heroism on the part of a parent. Throughout his life, an Indian might have five or six names, changing the old name for a new one as he performed feats of daring and courage, or as he saw visions or dreamed strange dreams.

Indian Chiefs

When about fourteen, each Indian boy blackened his face; retired to a lonely place; if possible he sought a place on the top of a hill or mountain, and stayed there many days until a vision came to him. The vision usually came when the boy was close unto death with hunger, and it generally took the form of "a beast, a bird, a fish, a serpent... an eagle or a bear is the vision of a destined warrior; a wolf, of a successful hunter; while a serpent foreshadows a future medicine man." Immediately after the vision appeared to him the Indian youth sought to gain the favor and guidance of his dream animal by tattooing himself, usually on the breast, with designs of whatever beast had appeared in his vision. If he were to be a warrior the youth would practice severe self-torture, such as going three or four days without food save a piece of willow bark to chew; or gashing his arms, back, and breast with a long knife.

If he proved himself sufficiently courageous, daring, and digni-
fied, almost any Indian boy might become a chief. By means of a series of secret societies, into which young men were initiated as they proved themselves worthy, the undesirable were eliminated and the candidates for office of chief selected.

If, as sometimes happened, the chiefs were chosen by hereditary method, they must show their ability to rule, or they were passed over in favor of the natural leaders. The line of descent was through the mother's family, rather than through the father's. Chiefs often believed themselves born of a great spirit. Claiming his origin from the sun, a chief would take the name, The Sun. Each morning he would rise to greet the sun, howl at it three times, then prostrate himself on the ground, beseeching it to grant him power and guidance. "The death of The Sun was sometimes followed by that of one hundred persons, who considered it a great honor to be sacrificed at that time."

The chiefs presided over the councils. The councilors sat on the ground in a circle about the fire, smoking long pipes in silence. One after another they would rise and make slow, dignified speeches: when the proposition under discussion was to be voted upon, a great pipe was passed round the circle; those smoking it signified that they voted yes; those refusing it, thereby voted no. The Indian had no written constitutions or records: usually laws were recorded by embroidered designs on wampum belts; some tribes kept bundles of sticks, signs, emblems, and crude pictures to remind them of certain statutes. Every message to another tribe or people was accompanied by a wampum belt.

The chiefs were "no richer than others; they were often poorer, spending their substance in largesses and bribes to strengthen their influence. They hunted and fished for subsistence; they were as foul, greasy, and unsavory as the rest; yet in them, withal, was often seen a native dignity of bearing, which ochre and bear's grease could not hide, and which comported well with their strong, symmetrical, and sometimes majestic proportions." Although great respect was shown the chiefs, and the old men, the Indians on the whole were democratic. They honored the noble and prosperous and denounced the base and poor; "yet while there was food in the village, the meanest and poorest need not suffer want. He had but to enter the nearest house, and seat himself by the fire, when, with-
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out a word on either side, food was placed before him by the women.”

Indian Medicine Men

If, after his vision, an Indian youth decided that he was destined to be a medicine man, he went through a period of purifying himself by emetics, by headwashing, by bleeding, and by visiting the sweat-house until he was nearly prostrate from heat and perspiration. They were said to obtain their power from a superhuman source, and by these processes of self-cleansing they made themselves fit to receive the sacred power, and worthy to hold the exalted office. To cure sickness the medicine man, or shaman, would sit on his crossed legs, sway back and forth to the rhythm of weird songs, and shake his calabash rattle over the victim’s head—thus would the evil spirits be driven away; again, he would open his mouth wide for some minutes that his spirit might leave his chest and search for the sickening ghosts; on other occasions he sought to suck out the disease through a tube placed on the sick person’s forehead. If a ceremony were held to chase off the spirits of sickness, the medicine man would blow on the dancers that they might receive power. Some medicine men would cover the patient’s body with bison, sheep, elk, or deer grease, then blacken him with ashes or charcoal, and carry him to the sweat-house, which would be heated almost to a burning temperature. Whatever the treatment, food was generally placed beside the sick, to tempt the disease spirits to come out of the body. If a medicine man failed to cure a patient, he was in disgrace.

Indian Burial

Should an Indian child die, it was wrapped in bark and placed under a sapling in the woods; the natives thought that as long as the tree lived the spirit of the child lived, too, under its protection. On the fourth day after an Indian man died, the shaman struck the corpse on the chest that he might send the dead to the village of the spirits, and at the same time drive away all the evil spirits in the vicinity. Great feasts and dances, that occasionally lasted for days, were held for the dead. Sometimes the departed was buried beneath the hut where he lived, and the house burned down that the spirit of death might be destroyed. Usually the Indians buried their dead in underground graves, placing them in a sitting posture

“There a magic drink they gave him,
Roots of power and herbs of healing,
Beat their drums, and shook their rattles,
Chanted singly and in chorus.”
"Thus the Birch Canoe was builded,
And the forest's life was in it,
All the mystery and its magic,
All the lightness of the birch-tree,
All the toughness of the cedar,
All the larch's supple sinews."

or six deep, and formed what has been termed "burial mounds."
For a long time, often for years after an Indian died, his relatives
and tribesmen never mentioned his name, for fear that they might
call back his spirit.

Conclusion

Thus runs the story of the life and customs of the American
Indian as he was in the days of Columbus. No attention has been
paid to his methods of warfare and his contests with the White Man;
they will be treated in a separate booklet to follow.

With all his courage, picturesqueness, and fancy, the Indian was
a primitive man, a savage,—weird, mystical, envious, ignorant, and
cruel—who, in the progress of civilization and the upward trend of
mankind, must give way to more highly civilized peoples, a more
cultured race.

Yet we must not forget the part the Indian has played in the
development of American life. To him we owe the cultivation of
various foods, which have become staple American products; from
him we gain much that is vital and rich in our history and literature.
The canoe and the snowshoe are survivals of the Indian. Recently
we have recognized the wholesome and rugged qualities of the out-
of-door life of the Indian and have adopted it as an educative force
in the training of the child of today, as is evidenced in the Girl and
Boy Scout Movement. In his free, out-of-door life, the First
American attained great physical vigor, dauntless courage, and a
quick intelligence. In the same manner can these be obtained by
the American of today.