

the other hand drove Hume to speak of "that little perturbation of the brain which we call thought." In France, as a reaction, came, among many, La Mettrie, with his clever and vivacious work on "Man a Machine," in which an attempt was made to explain the workings of the human mind on principles similar to those involved in the mechanism of clock-work. And in Germany, where transcendentalism soared to its loftiest heights, materialism fell the lowest, so that Hartmann can calmly say that "Man is what he eats."

But these positions have been extremes. Between them there have been the many who recognize that materialism cannot be ignored, and that the mind and body must be studied together that either may be perfectly known. And where formerly the teaching of philosophy began with the abstract consideration of the mental "faculties," or powers, the basis is now laid in a knowledge of those physiological conditions which render all knowledge possible, and which furnish the material of all we know.

Some writer has well characterized the later tendencies in this direction in the statement, that while the problems which presented themselves to Hartley and Priestly, to Berkeley and Hume, are the same which present themselves to Bain and Calderwood, to Darwin and Spencer, yet they present themselves to the latter in the light of an advanced physiology.

The President, on behalf of Rev. John McLean, B.A., Fort McLeod, Alberta, N.W.T., read the following paper on

THE MORTUARY CUSTOMS OF THE BLACKFEET INDIANS.

The Blackfoot Confederacy comprises three tribes, Bloods, Piegans and Blackfeet proper. Though now separated by means of different reservations, their customs and language are the same, the latter having a few dialectic differences. By studying the mortuary customs of one tribe, we learn those belonging to the confederacy, but in order to secure uniformity, our studies must have reference to the time preceding the overpowering influences of the civilization of the white man.

Three modes of burial have been practised by these Indians: platform or tree burial, lodge or house mode, and underground.

In the tree mode of burial a large tree of suitable proportions and location is selected, and the body is placed in one of its crotches, safely lodged from the depredations of wild animals, the covering of the corpse protecting it from the ravages of carnivorous birds.

On the plains the platform method is adopted through scarcity of timber, and even when in the vicinity of the timber patches that line the rivers, many prefer platforms to trees, this preference arising, no doubt, from long usage.

The platform method consists of four posts firmly placed in the ground, at a sufficient distance from each other to make a suitable platform upon the top as a receptacle for the corpse. The posts are from eight to twelve feet high. The body being properly prepared for burial is laid on this platform, and beside it the prized treasures of the deceased, together with the gifts of friends.

When a chief or notable warrior dies, a lodge is placed on an eminence or secluded spot, and the influential leader of his people is honoured with this conspicuous style of burial. As the buffalo-skin lodges are no longer in existence, many of the people are erecting small log buildings over the remains of their relatives, and these are used indiscriminately for young and old, male and female. Since the advent of religious teachers, the underground mode of burial is being resorted to, and although this detracts from the fascinations of Indian life for the students of American antiquities, it is preferable for the advancement of the red race. Button Chief, a famous Blood Indian chief, although adhering strongly to the principles of Christianity, said to his friends before his death: "Bury me not in the ground like a white man, I am an Indian. Lay me down as an Indian warrior, and there let me rest."

As soon as a person dies, the females in attendance upon the relatives begin to wail bitterly, and such is the grief of the female portion of friends and relatives that it is very difficult to obtain the body for burial. One or two blankets spread on the ground form the Indian's bed, and just as the deceased lies there, is he prepared for burial. Having been properly arranged, two or three blankets are used as a covering, which, being strongly tied or sewn together, constitute the Indian's coffin. Within the past few years, wooden coffins are being used, although the majority of the people adhere to the Indian mode of arranging the body in death. Well do I remem-

ber when nothing but buffalo robes were used for this purpose, and buffalo-skin lodges were extensively employed for Indian burial. When all the arrangements are completed, the corpse is placed on a *travaille*, the mourners proceed to the grave without any order of procession, the men, women, and children groaning deeply on account of their sorrow. The near relatives cry aloud plaintively, the burden of their funeral wail being the calling upon the deceased by name to return to his home and friends.

In former years horses were killed at the graves of warriors, that their spirits might follow their masters to the hunting grounds beyond; now the religious conservative spirit must yield to poverty and other influences, and the mourners are contented with cutting a part of the hair from the forelock, mane and tail of the favourite horses, and depositing it in the grave. The female relations cut their hair short, lacerate their legs and cut off a finger. The female attendants take the bereaved females, place the hand on a block of wood, lay a knife upon the finger, and with one blow from a deer's horn scraper or other instrument sever it by the first joint. The front parts of both legs from the foot to the knee are then cut with a knife until the blood trickles down and covers the front parts of the legs. No bandages are put on these, nature evidently aiding when art is discarded. A small piece of wood is placed in the palm of the hand having the severed finger, and this serves to keep it in position, after which ashes are sprinkled upon it. Sometimes the relations will visit the homes of their friends, and amid their wailing will go around the lodge kissing the females who weep with them. For several weeks after the funeral, the women go out to the grave at sunset, and again at sunrise, and continue their wailing. Should any persons die while the Indians are travelling and be buried a long distance from home, in after years when passing the grave the female relations will spend some time mourning their loss. The Indians move their camp when anyone dies. After erecting log buildings they kept up this custom and tore down their houses, rebuilding them in some other part of the reserve. Living as they have done for some time in lodges, they still move their lodges when their friends die. This arises from their dread of spirits. This custom has decided physical benefits, as it secures pure air, mental relaxation and exercise. These mourning customs exhibit many pleasant traits of character, and though not at all inviting to persons of

refinement, they are none the less interesting and worthy of study, if we would understand the social customs and native religion of these people. We learn something concerning the *native religious belief* of the Blackfeet from a proper study of their mortuary customs.

Their home of the spirits is the sand hills. A dying Indian will say: "*Nitakitupo sputsikwi*—I am going to die," literally "I am going to the sand hills;" and the bereaved will tell their friends: "*sputsikwi etupo*—He is gone to the sand hills." They believe in the communion of spirits with each other. Their *animistic* ideas are very crude. Spirits dwell in trees, rapids, peculiar stones, and many other strange things in nature. Dreams in which friends appear are the visits of the souls of the departed. These ideas are also transferred to the gifts of friends to the dead. In the grave are placed pieces of bread, meat, newspapers, relics of the deceased, furs, blankets, &c.

Several visits have I made to *dead lodges*, which revealed to me these ideas of object-souls. Entering a lodge that had been opened, I found the corpse lying as in life, wrapped in a buffalo robe. Beside the bed were placed a tin cup, pipe and tobacco, and some pieces of buffalo meat. There were also in the lodge a trunk for travelling with, bow and arrows, an old gun, and numerous Indian trinkets. Introducing this subject among the Indians, I asked why they placed those things for the dead. "For their use," they replied. "Yes, but I have gone months and years after they were placed there, and they still remained." "My friend, you do not understand the Indian's way of thinking. These are spirits, and they live on the souls of these things; we are material, and we live on the matter of these things. When one of our friends dies, we place our gifts beside his body; the spirit of our friend returns, and he brings with him his friends from the spirit-world, and there they feast together. They take with them the souls of these things for their use." The friends of the dead take their own clothes, finger rings, and ornaments and present them as gifts to the dead. In one grave I found buried a saddle, some excellent furs, and many trinkets. In others I have seen placed utensils of all descriptions, and the hair of prized animals. Remonstrating with them at different times for placing these things there and suffering in consequence themselves, they have replied to my question as to why they did not keep them: "What shall we do with them?" "Take them home." "We dare

not, they are not ours, they are *his*, and we cannot steal from him."

They are very superstitious and are afraid of the dead. In crossing dangerous streams in a boat or vehicle of which they know little, they will sing or pray. Passing the graves of their friends they will do the same. Several times have the Indians entreated me not to go home in the darkness, lest the spirits should follow me. Generally the people are restrained by fear and reverence from molesting the treasures of the dead. The pious heathen touches not these things, being sacred to the spirits, and those who are sceptical and immoral are afraid of the consequences of such a daring deed. Seldom do we hear of graves being robbed by the Indians themselves. Many adhere rigidly to their native customs, and follow the traditions of their native religion, yet gradually, and almost imperceptibly, we can notice the change that is taking place. Already when studying American antiquities have we to refer to the past few years to obtain facts to illustrate any Indian subject we may wish to discuss. It is well that this is so, if we hope for the development of the red race. Yet it is our duty to study these things with enthusiasm, for the years are not far distant when the transformation of life will be such as to hinder the lovers of science from obtaining facts illustrative of native customs among the Indians.

THIRD MEETING.

Third Meeting, 20th November, 1886, the President in the Chair.

The Committee on Ways and Means reported, recommending that a canvass be made of the leading merchants and other citizens in this city for subscriptions at an early day, with the view of raising a sum of not less than \$10,000, to defray the cost of the necessary additions to the present building, and for increasing the general efficiency and usefulness of the Institute, which report was, on motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mr. Macdougall, received and adopted.

On motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mr. Bain, it was resolved: That the Committee appointed on the 6th November be further empowered to devise ways and means for increasing the efficiency of the Institute, and have power to add to their number.