THE SARSI

THE Sarsi are a small Athapascan tribe that separated, before the historical period, from the Beaver Indians, who still are found in the upper reaches of Peace river. Traditions of the Beavers assign a feud over the killing of a dog as the cause of the separation; but the Sarsi content themselves with a mythologic explanation to the effect that as a large body of people were migrating southward across a frozen lake, the ice was suddenly shattered by a water-monster whose horn had been frozen in it, and those who had already crossed were the ancestors of the Sarsi.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century they ranged from the Saskatchewan to the Missouri and from the Rocky mountains far out on the plains; but their true habitat was the prairies south of Beaver hills and the adjacent foothills. Their former home, as Alexander Henry observed, was north of the Saskatchewan. They became so closely associated with the Blackfeet, Bloods, and Piegan that they were often considered a fourth member of that confederacy and adopted many of the material and religious customs of these Algonquians. Nevertheless they preserved their own language. They were alternately at peace and at war with the other inhabitants of the northern prairies, the Cree and the northern Assiniboin, and consistently hostile to all tribes beyond the limits of their own range. For the purpose of capturing horses small parties made forays into distant regions, attacking Crows, Kutenai, Flatheads, Shoshoni, Natsúwu (who, living west of the Montana Rockies and southwest of the Flatheads, were probably Shahaptians), and southern Assiniboin. They were friends of the Chipewyan, but not of the Sekani. In his youth a man still living in 1925 made an expedition on foot to "Black mountain" at the mouth of a northerly tributary of Milk river, and was absent four months. After horses became more plentiful he accomplished the same journey in less than a single month.

Alexander Henry gives the Sarsi a high rating as to courage, while deprecating some other characteristics:

The Sarcees, who all traded at this post [Fort Vermilion, on the north bank of the Saskatchewan, opposite the mouth of Vermilion river] in the winter of 1810-1811, were excellent beaver hunters while on the N. side of the Saskatchewan, but from intercourse with the Slaves [Blackfoot tribes] have become fully as lazy and indolent. A

quarrel which they had last summer with the Assiniboines has caused them to remain near the mountains for the present; the environs of the Beaver Hills are generally their station. These people have the reputation of being the bravest tribe in all the plains, who dare face ten times their own numbers; and of this I have had convincing proof during my residence in this country. They are more civilized and more closely attached to us than the Slaves, and have on several occasions offered to fight the others in our defense. None of their neighbors can injure them with impunity; death is instantly the consequence. Their manners and customs are nearly the same as those of all the other Meadow Indians. They are a hard people to deal with; the most arrant beggars known. A refusal makes them sullen and stubborn; for being, as they term themselves, our real friends, they imagine we should refuse them nothing. Most of them have a smattering of the Cree language, which they display in clamorous and discordant strains, without rule or reason. Their own language is so difficult to acquire that none of our people have ever learned it.[1]

According to Mackenzie the Sarsi had one hundred and twenty warriors in thirty-five tipis, and a decade later Henry said: "Of late years their numbers have much augmented; in the summer of 1809, when they were all in one camp, they formed 90 tents, containing about 150 men bearing arms."[2] By Sir John Franklin they were credited with one hundred and fifty tents, and he usually estimated about ten persons to a lodge. On the other hand, Old Sarsi is quite precise in his assertion that there were two hundred and twenty-three lodges after the second great epidemic of smallpox, which occurred in 1869. He thinks there were about eight hundred lodges prior to the epidemic of 1837-1838! John Whitney, the interpreter, says there were six hundred Sarsi in 1881, when the treaty with the Canadian government was signed, and avers that Father Doucette has told him there were three hundred and twenty Sarsi lodges when he first became acquainted with the tribe about the year 1875. They are now reduced to about two hundred persons, living on a reserve among the foothills along upper Bow river, near Calgary and adjoining the northern Assiniboin.

1 Coues, 737.

2 Coues, 535.

The Sarsi have the physical characteristics typical of the Athapascans: small features, medium stature, spare, lithe bodies. They appear to have great vitality. In a camp of harvest workers visited by the writer were Two Guns, age sixty-five; Star Child, otherwise His Tooth, sixty-nine; Runs In The Middle, sixty-seven; Otter, seventy-one; Crow Collar, seventy-four; Foxtail, a dwarf, seventy-two; Two Young Men, seventy-four; and Old Sarsi, ninety-eight. All worked actively shocking wheat at forty-five cents per acre. Old Sarsi rounded up his horses with a light, springing step. His face was less wrinkled than that of most of his juniors, and but for his white hair, which was abundant, and his shrunken muscles, he would have passed for a man of less than sixty.[3]

From their Blackfoot allies the Sarsi learned the art of decoying buffalo into a stockaded pound, *nassaghá,* and of stampeding them over abrupt declivities. The use of a pound was preceded by a night of ceremonial preparation, in which songs and fossils called "buffalo stones" played a leading part. Single hunters and small parties pursued the buffalo on swift horses trained to dash alongside one of the plunging animals and then veer off before the wounded beast could gore them. Mainly it was the cherished desire for such horses that led war-parties to undertake dangerous and arduous expeditions to the distant camps of their enemies. In the vicinity of tribal encampments pursuit of the buffalo was controlled by the Taskihlná, an organization of camp police, and severe punishment was inflicted upon one who attacked a

3 In his youth Old Sarsi twice tortured himself in the Sun dance, and he cut off a finger-joint in mourning for a deceased child. In 1901, at the age of seventy-four, he was doctoring a man who promised him his younger sister in payment. The cure was effected, and Old Sarsi at once discarded his wife and took the sixteen-year-old girl, who in 1925 still lived with him. She was held to have made an advantageous marriage because her husband was a medicine-man, a person of importance, whose fees for healing placed him in a position of comparative wealth. Sarsi's former wife, having borne five children by a prior marriage, presented him with no fewer than twenty-seven. Of her thirty-two children, only two reached marriageable age. His second wife bore ten children, one annually since her seventeenth year, and of these none survived childhood. Old Sarsi did not delude himself that these were his children, but the question of their paternity did not disturb his equanimity. His discarded wife, then aged fifty, was married six months later by Crazy Tom, eighteen years her junior, a union that has endured up to the present.

herd or a solitary animal on his own initiative.

In stalking deer and antelope the hunter bound a fillet about his head, thrust long green shoots of grass down under it, and held before his face a bunch of tall white sage, so that as he peered over a hillock only waving vegetation was visible to his prey. He crept slowly and carefully against the wind, taking advantage of the conformation of the land until he was within gunshot. After flaying and butchering his kill, he bundled the flesh and organs in the hide and either carried it on his back or dragged it on the ground. At his tipi neighbors and friends received portions of the meat, and the remainder was cooked for a feast, in the course of which he recounted his experience in the chase. Meat was never given to a chief, for he was supposed to be the best hunter of all and would have scorned the fruits of another's skill. Rather, his duty was to distribute bounty among the less capable.

When mosquitoes were very troublesome, a hunter would make a smudge of buffalo-dung and conceal himself near by, with a long stick to attend the fire, while his companion went forward to lie in ambush. A small band of deer or antelope, seeing the smoke, would run toward it, now advancing, now retreating, shaking their heads to rid themselves of the insects. Almost distracted, they had little thought of danger, and the stalker found no great difficulty in creeping within range.

The skin of a deer's head with the horns attached was dried and worn as a disguise by a hunter armed preferably with bow and arrows. If he used a gun he had his powder-horn on a thong about his neck, and kept two or three bullets in his mouth.

Ordinarily it was next to impossible to come upon a moose lying down; so keen were his ears that the slightest crackle of a stick aroused him, and he was off. But a careful hunter, favored by the roar of a heavy wind, sometimes succeeded in finding a moose at rest. The direction of the wind was tested by dropping dry grass. A fleeing moose charged ahead regardless of possible danger, and anyone near his course had a good chance of getting a shot; but it was useless to attempt ambushing him. When one was killed, a part of the meat was carried to the camp, and both men and women returned to the place for the remainder, which they brought in on travoix dragged by dogs. Moose-hides were used for robes, shirts, and dresses, but not for moccasins.

Elk were not so wary as moose. When approached they sometimes stood and stared at the hunter until he came close enough to shoot. No

disguise was used, but the hunter took advantage of cover to approach them, and then when necessary came into the open and moved rapidly and steadily. They were never hunted with horses, because they would turn and gore their pursuers. Animals of the deer kind were never driven into corrals.

For their winter pelts coyotes, wolves, and foxes were caught in open country in deadfalls of appropriate size. The walls of upright posts had a single opening, across which a small log lay on the ground, while another was supported above it on a trigger stick. On each end of this fall log rested the end of another timber, which sloped to the ground outside the trap, like a rafter, giving additional weight. From the entrance the bait stick, a forked pole, extended into the trap a sufficient distance so that an animal reaching it with his jaws would have his chest or belly over the log on the ground. The base of the trigger stick was set on the rounded upper side of the bait stick, so that when an animal tried to remove the bait, the trigger was dislodged and the fall log descended between two pairs of guide posts and crushed the victim.

Each trapper had his own line of seven to ten falls, and all the trappers of a camp went to inspect their lines at the same time, early in the morning, so that none would be able to rob his neighbor. Coming close to the deadfalls, they ran swiftly to be the first to secure an animal, and such a one was hailed with approbation when they returned to camp. After removing an animal from the deadfall, the trapper carefully obliterated all evidence of its struggles, and with a long branch brushed out his own footprints as he withdrew from the spot.

Hunters sometimes concealed themselves in burrows in a snowbank, waiting for wolves to feast on the bones of a recently butchered buffalo.

For their highly prized skins, which were used to ornament the shirts and head-dresses of warriors, weasels were taken in noose snares set at the mouths of their burrows. Beaver were not trapped before the era of steel traps, but were shot with arrows, as were rabbits, prairie-chickens, and waterfowl. Pitfalls were unknown.

The capture of eagles involved long religious rites. When a man intended to hunt them,, he and the occupants of four or five other tipis, those who desired to obtain feathers to be made into head-dresses, moved apart from the rest of the band and camped in the region of the

proposed trap. During his hunt the people understood that if a bird perched on or near a tipi, they were not to name the bird but simply say, "A young man is sitting on such and such a tipi." To name the bird would have given the hunter bad luck. Rosehips were temporarily taboo, for they would have caused the eagles to scratch themselves and avoid the trap. Quiet in the camp was essential. Should a hunter, in spite of a violated taboo, try to catch eagles and fail, camp was struck immediately. The hunter practised continence, and ate and drank only before sunrise and after sunset. Eagle-hunters were middle-aged or elderly men of great patience.

On the top of a hill far from camp the eagle-hunter dug a hole extending east and west, and only a little larger than was necessary to admit him. He covered it with sticks and leaves, which were supported by three cross-pieces, and left a small aperture. The bottom he covered thickly with white sage. With rawhide he bound to a cross-piece of the roof the bait, a small animal, such as a wolf, with a piece of skin cut away from the ribs so as to expose the flesh. Before concealing himself in the pit he masticated incense leaves, spit on his hands, and rubbed them over his body. He entered the pit very early in the morning, and at once began to mutter wishes that eagles would come. Hawks, crows, and buzzards would come for the bait, but as soon as they alighted he would jab them with a sharpened stick. When an eagle came in sight, he knew it by the hurried departure of other birds. The eagle would wheel in great circles, high in the air, before descending, and never alighted directly on the bait, but paused at a short distance to observe if danger threatened. The hunter could hear the thump of its claws on the ground when it alighted. When the bird hopped upon the bait, the hunter waited while it tore at the meat, then very carefully and slowly put his hand through the hole, grasped both of its legs, pushed the branches aside, and drew it downward. All this was managed very deliberately, and the bird scarcely struggled. The hunter grasped its neck, placed it across his knee, and broke the neck, while saying, "I hope I shall catch a larger and better eagle than you!" Then with his foot he pushed the body into the end of the pit. Everything done in connection with catching eagles was deliberate and gentle. With good luck four or five were captured in a day. Seven were unusual, and ten about the maximum.

A bird called *iskánitáhl, or izáhltsitla,* which builds its nest in inac-

cessible crevices and is smaller than an eagle, is greatly feared because if caught it would drag the hunter away. Old Sarsi said that he had seen it carrying young deer. Asked how so small a bird could do that, he replied simply, "It has the power." In spite of the extraordinary power attributed to it, the bird appears to be the falcon, for it is described as the swiftest of all birds of prey. The bald eagle also is feared. When either of these alighted on the pit, the hunter pricked it with his stick.

Toward evening the eagle-hunter crept out, laid the bait in the pit, and covered the opening from which he had emerged. Then he went home carrying his catch, walking very slowly, praying, and thanking his "power" for success. Those who were already in his tipi remained, but no others could enter. At the back of the lodge in the place of honor he laid a bit of buffalo tongue and covered it with incense leaves of creeping cedar, and on this bed he deposited the birds in a row on their breasts with outstretched heads. In the beak of each one he placed a bit of pemmican (a mixture of pounded meat, fat, and dried berries). In front of them he made incense, and then covered them with a good piece of cloth or fur. Whatever buffalo-stones (*tsá-hanní,* stone buffalo) he might have he set in a row between the eagles and the incense fire. Then he took an eagle on his back, grasping its wings with his hands at his shoulders, and danced while four men whom he had engaged for this service sat in a row on the north side and shook buffalo-hide rattles obtained for a price from the custodian of the Water Bundle, and sang four songs. One of these ran: "Good Eagle and all your children, give me wealth and health. If I get you and your children, I shall have many horses." The other songs "belonged to the Water Bundle," and were supplied for the occasion with such words as these: "Sun, help me! Make these birds crazy and hungry, so that they will come down quickly and I shall catch many of them." The eagles lay in state during the night.

In the hunter's tipi the woman was the first to rise. She hurried to look at the buffalo-stones, which were set up on their "tails," and if any had fallen in the night she shook her husband and said, "So many buffalo-stones have fallen!" Then he was glad, for this meant that he would catch that many eagles during the day. But should any relative of the hunter be destined to die soon, the hunter would catch nothing for four days. Therefore when a man was unsuccessful four days, the family was greatly downcast.

If no taboo were violated, the eagle-hunt continued at least four days, and if many birds were caught the kill of each day was laid on top of those previously taken. Should luck be good, the hunt was carried on six days.

Each time he returned after the first night, the hunter stood outside at the back of the tipi and prayed. When he was heard there, everybody in the tipi departed except his wife, who at once placed incense of sweetgrass on the coals in front of the eagles, first raising the sweetgrass to the four directions and then making four circular movements above the embers. The man then came around on the north side to the door, faced about to the east, and stood at the door. The woman knelt with bowed head on the south side. White clay mixed with crumbled sweetgrass was smeared on her hair. With a long stick painted yellow she pushed the flap aside and the man came in. At the same time she said, "My children, I have the bed ready for you, and your food." He passed around in front of her, lifting the eagles one by one from his back over the left shoulder.[4] He made four circular movements with them in the incense, and then with four similar movements deposited them on the other birds. Any ruffled feathers he carefully and gently smoothed. The woman continued to sit in her place, reiterating, " My children, I have a good bed and good food for you." As before, the man put a bit of pemmican in each beak.

When an eagle-hunter had finished trapping, his wife cooked a large quantity of food the following morning, and all the people of every age were invited. The hunter sat in the place of honor in front of the incense fire; most of the other men were at his left and a few at his right. Mothers and children were mainly grouped near the door on the south side. The hunter sat quietly and prayed. The men at his left started an eagle song, and the others assisted while four men shook the rattles. In this way the first man sang four times, then those at his left in turn did likewise, while the same four men used the rattles. The songs were expressions of thanksgiving for success.

Then followed the feast, at the end of which the hunter, still sitting in his place, said, "Now we will skin the eagles." Each of the four rattle-shakers, in turn, stood up and recounted the brief history of a

4 All ceremonial movements follow the course of the sun.

battle in which he had participated and in which an enemy had been killed without loss to the Sarsi. Then to the first of these four the hunter said, "You will skin so many." He divided the entire number of birds among these four men, who stepped forward one by one and took up the indicated number of birds, returned to their seats, spread blankets, laid the eagles on them, and removed from their beaks the bits of pemmican, which they put back in the place where the eagles had been lying. They proceeded then to skin the birds, being very deliberate, and careful that no feather became dislodged from the skin or disordered in any way. The claws were left attached to the skin. Then each of the four, and the hunter himself, piled the bodies on five pieces of red strouding, and the hunter placed with them some object pertaining to his wife and each of his children, such as an earring, a bead, or failing these a lock of hair. He then said to the first man of the four, "I give you so many tail-feathers for helping me," and handed him that number. Thus he paid each of the four. An entire skin he laid aside, saying, "That is for the man who owns the rattles." Then the five went out, carrying the pieces of cloth wrapped about the bodies. They went to a hill, and each one tied his bundle, along with bunches of white sage, to a stick lashed crosswise to the tip of a pole, which he planted in the ground. While thus engaged the four men prayed and the hunter himself cried as one who mourns for dead children. As soon as they returned, no matter how late in the night it might be, the people broke camp and moved away to rejoin the main band, all as if they had just disposed of the dead bodies of their children. The hunter removed all the feathers and claws from the skins and carefully wrapped them in bundles, and the skins he bound in a cloth and exposed on a pole set on a hill. He then summoned the custodian of the Water Bundle, fed him, restored his rattles, and presented him with an eagle-skin, which was received with gratitude.

The staple vegetal foods of the Sarsi were service-berries, parsnips, blueberries, and chokecherries. Various other edible berries and roots were indigenous, but less important.

In primitive times the best bows were made of elk-antler. An aged informant saw a weapon of this kind among the Blackfeet. It was short, recurved, and backed with sinew, and he thought it was made of a single piece. Ordinary bows were of service-berry, cherry, or birch. These too were recurved and reinforced, the sinew backing being ap-

plied with glue while the bow was bent in the reverse direction, and the surface of the wood being scarred to give a better bond. An ornamented bow was made by cementing a snake-skin over the sinew. Glue was the residue of a boiled mixture of buffalo testicles and fat from the hump. Branches of service-berry and cherry, straightened by bending in a perforated false vertebra of a buffalo, and smoothed by drawing them between two flat stones, were used for arrow-shafts. They were triply winged, and the feathers, preferably those of hawks and eagles, were secured with buffalo-sinew thread, which was covered with white clay or with roasted and powdered iron pyrites, to make it adhere. An arrow-shaft treated with a boiled mixture of beaver castor and fat, applied with a bit of deerskin and rubbed into the cells of the wood, became very highly polished and passed more easily through a buffalo. Arrow-points were flints roughly shaped by flaking with a heated stick, and finally they were rubbed with hot fat, which was supposed to impart hardness. Arrows were carried in beaver- or fox-fur quivers.

The primitive knife was a flake of flint, and the ax was a sharpened piece of moose-antler, bound to a wooden handle with sinew from the back of a buffalo's neck. Stone-pointed javelins are said to have been used in fighting. The war-club was of the type common to the plains, a roundish stone covered with shrunken rawhide, by which it was attached to a wooden handle. A thong loop secured the weapon to the wrist. When traders introduced steel tomahawks, the Sarsi began to make similar weapons of elk-antler.

The Sarsi hide-scraper had a slightly curved wooden handle and a blade of laminated stone, probably slate, ground to a blunt edge. Bone and antler scrapers are said to have been foreign to their usage.

Skins were sewn by perforating the edges with a pointed small bone from a buffalo's fore-leg and pushing through the holes the twisted end of a sinew thread, in the manner of a cobbler with his awl and waxed end. The principal use of skins was for clothing and tipi-covers, but they were indispensable in making numerous implements and such articles as storage-bags, baby-bags, and saddle-gear.

The tobacco-pipe had a stone bowl, which was ground to shape with a harder stone and reamed out with a steel instrument. The long wooden stem was bored with a heated wire. The oldest Sarsi traditionist thinks that before the arrival of commercial products there was

little smoking; but he has heard that his ancestors sometimes boiled a section of buffalo trachea, bent it slightly, and used it for a pipe.

Timbers were split by driving wooden wedges with a stone maul, and fire was generated by rubbing a stick on wood, not by twirling a drill.

An interesting bit of work is the horseman's whip, the handle of which is a tine of elk-antler with the spongy core removed and a transverse hole bored near each end, one for a wrist loop, the other for the reception of a wooden pin which passes through a perforation in the end of the leather lash.

The primitive dishes and pots of the Sarsi were made, unusual as it was for this region, by smearing clay on both sides of roughly woven forms of fibrous roots and baking them in a fire. A man born about 1827 never saw utensils of this kind, though they were then of such recent occurrence that in his boyhood reference to them was frequent and casual. In his boyhood the Sarsi used bark and wooden dishes, elk-antler spoons and ladles. Iron pots were becoming common, but war-parties then and long after cooked their food by lining a pit with a fresh hide and boiling water in it by means of hot stones. They also lined a pit with willows, laid buffalo tongues on them, covered the meat with willows, and set fire to the fuel. Fish were caught by sharpening the end of a brass-wire earring and attaching it to a hair from a horse's tail, and were baked by wrapping them in strips of green bark and burying them in a mass of embers. Eggs were cooked in the same manner.

Sarsi dwellings were skin-covered tipis. Spruce saplings were favored for poles, the number of which depended on the size of the structure. Fifteen buffalo-skins were required for a lodge of average size, and about six more formed the lining, which, pegged closely to the ground and attached at the upper edge to the poles five or six feet from the floor, served to deflect drafts upward through the vent at the peak.

Dome-shape sudatories were employed, and heat was supplied by pouring water on hot stones.

Men's leggings were breechless, had a wide, fringed flap at the outer seam, and were suspended from the same thong-belt that secured the breech-clout. The favored material was the upper part of a discarded tipi cover, because from long exposure to smoke it was more pliable than other leather. The breech-clout was a long strip drawn up

between the legs, the ends passing under the belt and dangling before and behind. In later days it became the custom to tear a Hudson's Bay blanket down the middle and wear half hanging from the belt in front and half behind, with nothing at all between the legs. This was done so that warriors who in stress had to abandon their blankets would still have a piece of bedding. Entering a battle or closing up on a herd of horses, they would tuck the cloth up under the belt for greater freedom of action. Moccasins were worn habitually, but shirts of the common Plains type were frequently dispensed with in hot weather. Fur robes, usually buffalo-hides, were thrown about the shoulders for warmth. Fur caps made of the skin of a buffalo's cheeks had flaps that covered the ears, while in summer some men wore rawhide sunshades, which encircled the head like a crownless hat. Snowshoes were used occasionally.

Women wore deerskin shifts, fringed at the bottom and along the seams, and provided with separate sleeves held in place by a cord passing behind the neck. The belt was a broad band of rawhide. Their leggings, attached to the moccasins, were tied at the top below the knee.

Sarsi men arrange the hair in a braid at each side and another in front thrown back over the crown; while women part it in the middle and usually let it hang in unkempt condition at the sides of the face.

The tribe was divided into bands, each of which, except during the summer ceremonial season, roamed apart from the others. The following are named: Kachíti-tsot!ínna,[5] Blood Sarsi, reputedly the descendants of a Blood man and a Sarsi woman. Tliu-wghúghu, Smoke Kill, whose tipis were ill-ventilated and murderously smoky. Mits!itaníts!itl!ána, His-robe Small. Natsíhltiná, "turning the head away and not wishing to do what others wish to do or are doing." Mágha-kukáhltsilná, His-lodge Cut-off (at the bottom). Cháchighá-mits!itáná, Three-year-old-buffalo His-robe. Mágha-gúchoghoná, His-lodge Large. Tsot!ínna-tiná, Sarsi Genuine.

Each band of course had its chief, and the tribal chief was he who by common consent was the greatest warrior and most efficient leader. Heredity was not considered.

There were no clans. Marriage within the band was discouraged,

5 *Na,* a collective affix indicating human beings.

because of the possibility that an unknown blood-relationship might exist. A man lived with his wife's people, not because the matriarchate was recognized, but because a marriageable daughter was an asset to be disposed of in return for the service of an active food-winner.

In the spring, when the buffalo were becoming fat, all the bands joined in one large camp for the purpose of pursuing the society activities, performing the Sun dance, and transferring sacred bundles and painted tipis. After these affairs had been attended to, each chief decided whither he would lead his people to hunt buffalo. Some would go first to the wooded country to provide new lodge-poles. By the middle of August the bands had separated and were roaming the country following the herds. At this season the heifers were calving, and only two- and three-year-old bulls were killed. In late autumn and in winter cows and heifers were killed, their flesh being better and their hides more easily tanned than those of bulls. Great quantities of pemmican were prepared and packed in raw-hide containers, and innumerable animal-tissue bags were filled with rendered tallow, for trading at the posts of the fur companies. When two bands happened to meet, there was much rejoicing, feasting, and exchange of presents. There were frequent changes of campsites during the winter, for it was necessary to keep close to the buffalo. If there were plenty of skins on hand to keep the women busy dressing them for the trade, a band might remain in a favorable situation in a creek bottom, where there was good shelter and fuel, for a month or two. It might camp for some time in the vicinity of a favorite place for running buffalo over a cut-bank. Such a locality was not the exclusive property of a band: any group held possession as long as it could profitably use it.

In the summer encampment all the lodges were pitched in a great circle, each band in a group but without any prescribed position in the circle. In the centre, surrounded by the tipis of his married children, was the lodge of the principal chief. He frequently walked or rode about inside the circle, uttering loud exhortations to good conduct. When the season of society activities came, the lodges of the societies were pitched westward of the centre, with the tipis of the chiefs behind them, while the centre itself was occupied by the lodge of the woman who was to sponsor the Sun dance.

War-parties seldom operated in winter. Not only was the weather a deterrent, but footprints were too easily followed in the snow. Since

in this northern latitude the spring was uncertain and snow might be expected at any time, late summer and fall were the favorite time for warlike adventures. At that season, too, game was easily killed and berries were ripe. Travelling by night and hiding by day, warriors could pass undetected over wide stretches of country infested with hostile bands of buffalo-hunters. Nevertheless there was always the risk of finding themselves in a country deserted by buffalo and with no enemy camp accessible where they might provide themselves with horses; for warriors were almost invariably afoot, the prime purpose of the expedition being the acquisition of mounts. If they experienced this misfortune, they might pursue their way farther and farther in the false hope that surely the next night would bring better luck. Having passed a region devoid of game, they feared to turn back without supplies, and so perforce went forward. In this fashion they might travel much farther and remain absent much longer than they had intended, and at home their relatives would begin to mourn them as dead.

Before going to war a man prayed to the sun and vowed that if successful he would sever a finger at the Sun dance, or would have his wife or sister sponsor that ceremony, or that he would purchase a certain painted tipi.

On his first expedition a man was addressed by a feminine name, usually that of his grandmother, and this disgrace impelled him to reckless deeds of valor in order to win a new and honored name. At the scalp-dance following the return of a successful foray, each "new warrior" (that is, one who had performed one of the recognized deeds, such as killing an enemy, taking a scalp, or capturing a horse or a gun), apparelled in beaded leggings and a shirt ornamented with weasel-skins and strands of enemy hair, mounted a horse and was led to the centre of the encampment, where, surrounded by an admiring throng dressed for the dance, he received from the chief his new name. This was generally that of an honored uncle, either maternal or paternal. In the ensuing dance the drummers and singers stood in a row and danced with warlike gestures, while opposite them women held aloft poles from which the scalps dangled. It was the privilege of the aged to visit the tipis of new warriors and appropriate any articles they desired.

Sarsi childbirth customs were explained by the narration of the personal experience of a middle-aged woman, who, convinced of the investigator's serious purpose, spoke with a clear-eyed frankness tem-

pered by genuine modesty.

During my pregnancy there were many kinds of food I could not eat, because it would not stay down; but at first nobody told me not to eat certain kinds. There was a boy I used to hate; whenever I saw him, it turned me sick. We never eat sweets in pregnancy, lest the baby become too fat and make delivery difficult. I was told not to kill any animals. I ate no buffalo intestines, lest the child be born with the navel-cord running out of its mouth. To eat the manyplies, they said, would bring me a child with water running from its mouth; the heart and the spleen would make black marks on my face; the large intestine would make the rectum protrude during delivery. While a woman is pregnant her husband must not snare any animal, lest the child strangle in birth, nor strike any animal on the head, lest it have an enlarged skull.

In the middle of the night I felt the pains, and tried to eat but could not. I told my husband to sleep alone. It felt like something cutting across my back. I called my husband, but he did not wake. I bit his toe, and he got up. His mother was with us, but she was weak and sick. I sat up. Another old woman kept pressing on my back. I was on hands and knees, bending forward. They put up a little tipi outside the log house, and made a fire in it. Just as I got there, the delivery started. I caught a lodge-pole with one hand and pressed my side with the other. By that time my mother came, and she and the old woman took the baby. My sister got a bowl of warm water and washed it. They tied the navel-cord in two places close together with a deerskin thong and cut it between the two places. A small section of dry gut was turned with the fatty inner side out, and bound against the umbilicus. They told my husband not to smoke. They crushed a dry buffalo-chip with a stone, laid a heated stone on the powder in order to kill any worms that might be in it. The powder was spread on a cloth, so that when the baby was wrapped its buttocks lay on the powder, which absorbed its urine. They laid the baby with its back to the fire so that the warmth would drive the "dirty stuff" [frothy saliva] from its mouth. My husband rubbed the bowl of his pipe on its closed eyes, to give it good eyesight. Our children do not open their eyes for three or four days. [In a recent case the Government physician poured a liquid into the eyes of a newborn child. It opened them at once, to the great astonishment of the spectators.] They wrapped a wide belt tightly about me, and pressed my hips to put the bones back in place. They gave me nothing

to drink. On the tenth day I stretched my legs and sat up. While recovering we lie with the legs close together. In turning over the woman helped me.

The placenta was wrapped in a cloth and buried in the burrow of a badger or other animal. Some people burn it. Each morning the baby was taken from its bag, washed, and powdered with pulverized charcoal wherever its skin was creased, so as to avoid chafing. After two or three days charcoal powder mixed with tallow was applied to the umbilicus, and the stump of the navel-cord was placed in a little beaded bag, which was attached to the baby-bag or to the child's back. After the child outgrew the bag and its first pair of moccasins, these articles with the navel-cord bag I took to the stream and cast into the water with a prayer for long life and health for my child. The navel-cord bag for a boy is made in a shape suggestive of a snake. A woman walking about and coming upon a snake thinks that she is going to have a child and it will be a boy.

Many children are not weaned until they walk. Once I had one nursing on each side. [That is, a child was born while she was still nursing its predecessor. There is no rule against sexual relations during the nursing period.]

After childbirth the general rule is to lie four days without moving and six more before rising.

The grandfather of Tázikatanihlta had a supernatural experience in which he helped a shellfish deliver its young, and from it he received power to assist in parturition.

My grandfather gave a shell of this kind to each of my two sisters, and to me and my brother. My sisters wanted no children, and have never had any. I had no preference, and never had children. My brother wanted just one son, and that is what he got. So each of us had his wish by the power of the charm. My grandfather said that if a woman in child-birth was in need of help, no other woman being available, I would be able to help her. This proved to be true. Twice I have tried it, though this is not a man's business, and each time the woman came through without trouble. Inside the charms my grandfather scratched a figure. A painted deerskin thong passed through a hole in the edge of the shell, and thus it hung on the breast.

When a woman calls on me for help, I mix alder bast with hot water in a pail, and give her a drink. If the child is not soon born, I put red

paint on her forehead and rub the paint back on her hair. Then I raise her blanket and shake it sharply above her abdomen, as if shaking out the child, and before long the infant is delivered. I do not use pressure on the abdomen. I give the child a name at once.

Infants are known by such nicknames as Round Face, Little Mischief, One Tooth. At the age of five or six years a formal name is bestowed in the following manner:

My grandfather was called to our tipi. He said: "Yes, I have seen something. I am going to give this child, my grandchild, a name. May he have long life, good health, and wealth. This is what I saw. I was fasting. I heard something moaning. I looked and saw a large mussel. It was creeping, through the water toward me. It said, 'Only humans can help in trouble' I took it up and it said, 'Press my sides.' I pressed them, and a small mussel dropped out. The large one said: 'My son, that is my child. Take it and keep it. Now press my ribs together again.' I pressed its sides, and its shell closed. It said: 'My son, you have helped me. Now I am going to help you. Take this mussel, this my child. I give you power to help women in childbirth. When a woman is in pain, you will press her as you did me, and she will deliver her child without trouble. When you see a shell like mine, take it and make a charm [*nihltíyí,* protector].' I put the mussel back into the water."

My grandfather painted me red from the waist up, and with the ends of his fingers he scratched the paint off across my forehead and down each, cheek. He then hung his shell about my neck and said:

"Now, if what you told me is false, it will all be false; but if what you told me is true, all will be true. If this, my grandchild, is ever called upon to help a woman, help him. Now I will give you a name, my grandchild. All the Sarsi know that there was a great battle at Buffalo lake and that there I captured a gun in the midst of the enemy. Therefore I name you Tázikataníhlta, so that you will have long life and health."

Marriage was usually arranged in a series of conferences instituted by the family of the prospective bride. When the two interested families had come to an agreement, the girl's mother made a pair of moccasins and sent her with them and a quantity of food to the man's tipi. He ate, while the girl sat near the door, and then gave her the dish and a present, such as a blanket, a gun, a garment for her father or mother. At intervals this was repeated for a period that might be as long as two

years, during which the girl's relatives prepared a tipi and all necessary furnishings and clothing, including moccasins for each close relative of the bridegroom. On the appointed day they pitched the new tipi, the bride entered, and the young man was called to his new home. The girl carried her family's gifts to the tipi of her husband's parents, and received blankets and a horse or two, which she brought back to her father. Finally, the young man's relatives visited his new tipi with presents of clothing for the young people. From that time the two families were "like one people," frequently exchanging presents. When the young man's father died, each person who had helped to pay for the bride received an appropriate part of the possessions he left, such as a horse, while the remainder belonged to his widow.

A man having good luck in acquiring horses was expected to be generous in giving part of them to his wife's brothers and her father. He was in duty bound to divide his game with the occupants of his father-in-law's tipi. Father-in-law and brothers-in-law, after receiving gifts from a man, would try to outdo him in generosity.

In time of stress the duty of providing for the family devolved more upon the son-in-law than upon the sons. He endured the greatest hardships for his father-in-law, encouraged by the thought that when his own daughter was married he would receive the same consideration from her husband. In return for his efforts, his mother-in-law kept a new pair of moccasins on hand for him, and prepared special dishes which her daughter carried to her own tipi. With the exception to be noted, in no circumstances may a man remain in the presence of his mother-in-law. Should either by chance enter a tipi where the other is, he or she departs precipitately, and must then give the other a horse or a present of equal value in order to requite the shame of the encounter. It is the duty of those in a tipi to warn an approaching individual that the mother-in-law or the son-in-law is present, in order to avoid these costly meetings. In explanation of this taboo the informant said: "The daughter is the flesh of her mother. A woman in the presence of her son-in-law feels ashamed that while her own husband possesses her body, here is another man who also possesses her body in the flesh of her daughter." Another Sarsi, a woman, independently offered the same explanation, which thus appears to be a tribal conception.[6] The

6 Harmon (page 295) refers to this explanation of the taboo in a passage

only time when two persons in this relationship may remain in the same tipi is when the son-in-law's wife or child is dying. Both then sit with covered and averted faces, addressing each other, when necessary, as son and mother. This special occasion past, they exchange presents.

The taboo does not extend to father-in-law and daughter-in-law.

If a woman does not love her husband, it is easily known. She will sit with her head turned away. When she gives him food, she puts it in the wrong place, with averted face. When he wishes to caress her, she resists. In the course of time the man, thoroughly exasperated, seizes her roughly and casts her out of the lodge. Usually he grasps her front hair and cuts it off, so that people seeing her shorn forelock will say, "Oh, she has been cast out!" Or he may secretly ask four, five, or as many as ten of his society friends, men of his own age, to assemble in a certain place, where he gives his wife over to their use. That is her punishment. She then returns to her father's tipi. It will be difficult for her to obtain another husband, except a worthless fellow, and usually she must wait a long time before she can remarry. A man's feeling when a woman treats him without affection is that she must have a secret lover.

A woman detected in adultery used to be mutilated by the loss of her nose, and was sent away. A Blackfoot treated his wife in this fashion as recently as 1915. Having paid a good price for his wife, a man felt cheated when she gave herself freely to another, and his emotional condition was not improved by knowledge of the fact that he could recover nothing of the property invested in a woman now discarded.

A wife learning that her husband has been guilty of adultery may let it pass because she loves him; or she may retaliate by doing likewise, or tax him with his fault and leave him. If she takes the step of giving herself to another man, and the husband learns of it and censures her, she admits it and calls his attention to his own dereliction. In this event he may say, "Go to him!" She goes and tells her lover what

relating to the Cree, Chippewa, Chipewyan, et at.: "All the Indians on the east side of the rocky mountains, think it very indecent for a father or mother in law, to speak to, or look in the face of a son or daughter in law; and they never do either unless they are very much intoxicated. The reason which they give for this custom, when questioned on the subject is, the peculiar intercourse which this person has had with their child."

has occurred, and he, knowing what is expected, gives her a horse, which she brings to her husband. Thereafter this man becomes a sort of second husband. He has the privilege of coming at any time to her tipi and receiving her favors with the husband's consent. On each such occasion he gives the husband a present of nominal value. All this is with the knowledge and consent of his own wife and the woman's brothers. Should the husband and wife let the matter pass, each one committing adultery secretly, and the woman's parents learn about it, they usually kill her, for she has disgraced her family by freely giving herself to a man.

A newly married man who discovers that his wife's breasts are developed beats her severely, thinking that she must have been indiscreet. Girls therefore usually marry at an early age.

Some men had as many as five wives, not necessarily sisters; but the second wife was generally the younger sister of the first. All wives occupied the same lodge.

A deceased man's brother generally married his widow, but was not compelled to do so, nor could he take the woman against her will. A widower was apt to look to his deceased wife's family for her successor. Many men refrained from marriage for years, because they were active in roaming the country for horses and had no time for family ties.

When in spite of the efforts of medicine-men and promises to give the Sun dance and to join a society, a sick man died, the relatives came in and took away all knives and guns from his parents, so that they would not kill nor mutilate themselves. The men painted the face of the corpse, arranged its hair, and put good clothing on it. Before the body was disposed of, the parents would secure some cutting implements, such as arrow-points, and scarify the legs and wrists, and cut off their hair. Sometimes they severed a joint of the little finger. Men not relatives of the deceased wrapped the body in a skin and lashed it on a travois attached to a horse. One led the animal, the parents followed, and the rest of the relatives came behind. A platform of sticks was constructed in a tree, and the body was laid on it. But for a man of means his painted tipi was pitched, all his clothing and weapons were hung in it, and the body was deposited in the position of honor. If before death a man had not bequeathed a certain favorite horse, it was led to the tree or the tipi and there killed. If it was bequeathed, its tail and mane

were cut. If a dying man was visited by a good friend, he would promise a certain horse or valued weapon, and such bequests were always honored by the surviving relatives. After returning from the funeral, the father called in those who had tried to comfort him by clothing his dead son, and said to each: "Go and catch such and such a horse. It is yours." At the same time people would flock into the lodge, and each person would take one article that struck his fancy, leaving the tipi stripped of all its contents. The horses however were not subject to these claims, but remained the property of the widow. Sometimes when a wealthy man died his sons drove his horses into a bend of the stream or other favorable place and shot many of them.

Mourners wore neither leggings nor moccasins. For a long time they would spend entire days on hilltops crying. After a few months the parents might adopt their dead son's best friend. If he was good to them, they treated him exactly as if he were their son. If not, they would let him go. Very seldom would an adopted son appropriate the dead man's widow. Sometimes a dying man would ask his wife to marry his friend so that his son would have a father. This wish was not to be disregarded. For a long time people refrained from uttering the name of a dead person in the presence of his relatives, but no payment was demanded of one who by chance was guilty of such bad taste. Those who had handled the corpse exposed themselves to the smoke of incense, and received payment for their services. After the period of mourning, which might be from six months to a year, each person was visited by one of the same sex, who announced that the time of mourning was over and proceeded to dress him or her in good clothing. For this he received a horse or an article commensurate with the means of the mourner.

After a corpse was removed from a dwelling, some of the people went about striking the ground and the structure here and there, driving away the ghost. The spirit of a dead person, it is thought, goes instantly eastward to Tsá-tsihl-cho, Stone Coarse Big, that is, Big Gravel hills, where the disembodied live in small tipis, cohabiting promiscuously regardless of relationship. Some spirits however remain roaming the country in which they lived as humans, and it is to guard against such that the tipis are struck with whips. Sometimes a man feels himself "possessed of a ghost," which greatly depresses him. The presence of a ghost is usually made known by a whistling sound. Feeling certain

that wandering ghosts are a reality, an informant said that this is his reason for not believing the Christian religion, which tells him that all spirits go to heaven. As for his reason for believing that Big Gravel hills are the home of spirits, he said:

I was very sick. For seven days I lay on my back without food. My bones were sore, the skin was almost worn off them. They told me afterward that on that seventh day my eyes were open but I could not see. My body was there, but I went walking out. I walked without touching the ground. After a time I came to four men butchering a deer. They did not look at me. An old man whom I recognized came and stood beside me, but did not look at me. He wore an old blanket and a pair of unfastened moccasins. Without looking at me he said: " See that bundle of meat. Pick it up." I thought, - "How can I lift it?" He seemed to know my thought, for he got a piece of gut and tied the bundle with it, and said, "Put it on your back." I put the gut rope about my shoulders and carried the bundle homeward. As I came near the camp the dogs began to bark. A woman passed me on her way to the spring. She did not see me. I followed to get a drink. But when I stopped, the spring was full of worms, so I turned away and followed the woman. All at once I was lying in the tipi. Sweat was running from me. I was very thirsty. They gave me a little water, and before long I asked for food. Those four men butchering a deer were on their way to Big Gravel hills. As soon as I was able to walk, I went to the old man's tipi and told him I had seen him on the way to Big Gravel hills. He said: "You are still dead. Your head is not right." He thought perhaps my spirit was still wandering. I went home. A few days later I heard that he was sick. He soon died.

The earth is believed to be a disc surrounded by water. The conception of an ocean is actual knowledge derived from the traders. The sun does not pass over the earth, for if it did it would always follow the same path. Since it goes overhead in midsummer and far to the south in winter, it follows that the flat earth moves by revolving in a horizontal plane. This revolution consumes an entire year, since at a given season the sun rises and sets at the same places with reference to the distant mountains. Why the moon sometimes shows only a part of its face is not known, but it must be that something solid comes between us and the moon, because if there were only clouds intervening some of the light would filter through. "We have never studied about that. If

we had, perhaps we could find the reason."

The stars are much farther away than the sun, but no explanation of them is offered. Rain comes from the clouds. It starts as snow, and as it falls becomes rain; for it has been observed that on high mountains the precipitation is in the form of snow, while below it is rain. There is no explanation of the formation of clouds. The ancient belief about thunder and lightning was the familiar one of a great bird uttering its cries and flashing its eyes. The present informant does not believe that. He thinks that no bird could send a noise and a flash of its eyes such a distance. The phenomenon must be the result of two objects striking together, something in the nature of striking fire from flint and pyrites.

Sarsi medicine-men derived their power through the medium of dreams. The power is significantly called *naghá-nastaí* ("that-which I-dreamed"). Such dream experiences never came to a man while sleeping at home. They sometimes, but not usually, were received by individuals in trouble but not actually seeking supernatural help. Mostly the power was deliberately sought in a place suspected of being the abode of a spirit: a high hill, an overhanging bank above a dark pool, a remarkable rock, a lonely lake. Four days and nights were the rule, but not all endured that long. Some however stood the ordeal seven days and nights. During this period the suppliant ate and drank little or nothing. No fire was built at night. If a spirit visited him, he kept the nature of the revelation a secret until such time as the power was to be used. This power might be for the purpose of curing disease or of having success in war or of giving long life to the possessor.

Ághakuwilé ("doctoring") is the term applied to any medicine-man regardless of his particular method. *Ch!at!ít!á* ("miracle performer") is one who uses roots and herbs taken internally. *Hakúhl-tot!í* ("sucker") employs the method of sucking out the foreign object that causes, or is, disease. In many cases the same man uses both roots and sucking, and hence may be known by any one of the three terms. *Mí-mihla-kúlíní* ("his dream possesses") is a man who dreams a painted tipi. He is not a healer.

Many medicine-men, becoming old, transferred their power to their sons by instruction.

Various roots and herbs are used for healing, but only by the shamans; and the manner of using them and the diseases for which they are effective are learned in the vision from which comes their power.

These are used for ordinary sickness. When a root doctor is summoned, he supplies the remedy, tells how to use it, offers a prayer, and departs. At such times there is little singing. A mother would not think of giving a sick child an herb remedy of her own choice.

Crow Collar narrated his own experience as an illustration of the manner of obtaining and employing curative power.

Before I was married my father gave me a long steel dagger with a handle made of the bone of a bear's fore-leg. At the end of the handle were some eagle tail-feathers, two long bear-teeth, two bear-ears, and some small bells. Two strings of otter-fur hung from the handle. With the knife were a necklace of bear-claws and a belt of bear-skin. I still have the knife and the necklace. My father was going to give me his power. He painted me yellow from head to foot and put red paint on my forehead, green below my eyes, a black mark like a bear's tooth on each cheek. He engaged two men to beat drums. He told me to get on my knees in the doorway. He told me not to jump. The knife was thrust into the ground at the back of the tipi. "My son, if you jump, worms will devour you. Spread your hands ready." He then threw the knife straight at my chest. The drums were beating. Before the knife reached my chest, I clapped my hands together and caught it. My father said: "Now, my son, four nights do not sleep in the tipi. Sleep outside anywhere you like. I have pity on you because you are my son. Through me you shall have power." Four nights I slept on the prairie. On the fourth night he [Bear] came walking up to me. When my father gave me the knife he taught me the four songs. Bear now sang the first of these songs. He gave me his two small fingers to tie at my wrists. "My son, this is the way you will doctor sick people." He put his mouth to the ground. When he raised his head, he had a small crawfish. That is how I am a medicine-man. "The way I did this, my son, you do the same. This way you will take out sickness." Bear was right, because I have many times cured sickness this way. The last time was two years ago. I still have the power.

When they come for me, they generally pay me first. Two years ago the brother of Two Guns came to me and after dismounting said: "My brother Two Guns is very sick. This horse I am riding I give to you. Come and cure my brother." I had my horse picketed. The camp was a little distance away, too far to walk; so I rode there. I went to his tipi. The horse they had given me was tethered outside. I felt the

sick man's body and told him there was nothing wrong with his body. I asked, "Have you drunk anything?" I have the power to see what is outside, but not what is inside. He answered, "Yes, I drank some medicine." Two Guns' wife filled a pipe and placed it behind the fire. 1 told them to set a small dish beside me. Two Guns lay at my side. I sang two songs. I put a hollow bone cylinder against his body and sucked, and spit some yellow medicine into the dish. I did this three times, and the third time I got the real poison from his body. I struck my chest a few times to drive the sickness out by magic, and then spit it out. It made me sick, and I could do nothing more. I told them I had the poison and it was making me sick. I struck my chest and vomited. I took the pipe and prayed to my dream which Bear had given me: "You told me you would give me power to cure sickness. Now give this sick man health. To you I smoke this pipe." I lighted and smoked it.

In my dream Bear told me about four kinds of medicine. One for sickness of the heart, one for sickness of the kidneys or the lungs, one for headache or loss of appetite, one for stomach cramp and constipation. All were roots. The first one is the root of bearberry, the third is a yellow-flowering plant growing in sloughs and having a sticky centre in the flower. I am not afraid to tell you this, because I know you cannot take my power. It is mine.

Tipis symbolically painted in a manner prescribed in a dream are held in high regard, because no ill luck comes to those who live in them and because they bring a good price when transferred. Each painted tipi has an individual name referring to its decoration and to the "flag" hanging from its peak. A native readily identifies such a tipi by its name.

The following narrations are typical of the dream experiences in which painted tipis are acquired.

North of Calgary is an elevation called Nose hill. Near by are several lakes called Rolling lakes from the rough, rocky character of the country. It was winter. I was a grown man, sliding down [that is past twenty-five, at which age a man gave up participation in youthful amusements]. I was on the hill looking around and saw my father come out of his tipi with a gun on his shoulder. I went down to my grandfather's and changed my moccasins. I dressed well and took my knife. I followed my father's tracks. I went some little distance, and then heard the gun. A little farther I came upon buffalo-tracks. I saw

drops of blood and followed them up to a slough, and there I saw a buffalo on its back. I did not see my father. I began to butcher it. The head was pointing east. I cut a piece of fat from the breast, sat down on the head, and started to eat. I heard another shot. It was growing late. I heard a wind coming, and soon it began to snow hard. I lay down in the shelter of the buffalo. It became dark. All night it snowed. My father did not know I had followed him. In the middle of the night I lost my senses. The buffalo spoke: " My son, I have pity for you. I will give you my tipi. You see this gray hair on my head? I will give you that also. Here is my tail; I give you that. Now see the tipi I give you." The tipi faced eastward. There was a buffalo painted on the left and one on the right. "My son, do not fear to make this tipi. I am the one who with six others came out of the mountains. Pray to me; I am jealous; do not pray to any other." The tipi had a calf-skin hanging from its peak. I looked at the tipi again, and it was covered with buffalo. "Do not give this tipi away to other tribes. Keep it among your own people. All evil will fail to touch you so long as you live in this tipi." That is how I got a painted tipi. I made one just like that when the time came, a few years ago.[7] I have now had it nearly four years, and when the fourth year has passed I shall have to transfer it to someone. The Buffalo gave me four songs to go with the tipi.

I was just growing up. The band was moving camp along Cut Knife creek [north of Battleford in Saskatchewan]. This creek was so called from a Sarsi chief of that name, who was killed there. I had no moccasins and no leggings. I was walking behind the band. I was very poor. A yellow weasel met me. He went down into a hole. We used to carry a hank of sinew for trapping weasels. I set a snare over the hole. While waiting for the weasel to come out, I lost myself [became unconscious]. I was taken into Weasel's tipi. It was painted with three rows of yellow circles representing the sun and the stars. He said: " My son, this tipi I give you. This is the song that goes with it. My name is Weasel Bear."

About two years ago I painted this tipi for the first time and gave [sold] it to a Stony [northern Assiniboin] Indian. Weasel Bear gave me

7 All visions, whether for healing power, war power, or a painted tipi, remained unfulfilled by the dreamer until many years had elapsed.

no medicine to cure sickness.

Another time, after I had been going to war, the camp was moving. I was walking along a bank. I saw many snakes. I sat down apart from them to rest. While I was sleeping I lost myself. A little boy came to me. Half of his hair was cut close. He said, "My father asks you to come down." He repeated it, but I did not go down. The boy went away. Then a little girl came. She touched my foot and said; "My father asks you to come down." I found myself in a tipi. One-side was red, the other yellow. On the red side was painted a large blue eagle; on the yellow side were many stars. Snake said: " I have pity for you, my son. I give you this tipi. I give you this song." When the song was finished, a chum of mine came and shook me. This nearly spoiled everything. I got no more songs from Snake. He did not tell me how to cure sickness. I have not yet made this tipi, but I shall do so when the time comes. Then if anyone wants it, I shall give it up, because Snake gave me no instructions to keep it.

About thirty years ago I lost a horse that I was keeping for old times' sake. I thought he was mired somewhere, so I went down along the creek looking for him. I followed the creek and saw a beaver-dam. A man stood there. I came up to him. He told me to wait. Then I lost myself. I heard someone singing in the beaver-dam. There were two songs. An old man with matted hair came out, followed by a woman. The man had a digging-stick wrapped in a skin, and the woman had a bundle. A girl came behind them and had a beaver-skin draped over her right shoulder. They went around the way the sun goes. The man stood next to me, then the woman, then the girl, on the north side of me. He said: "My son, look toward that slough. We are going into the tipi. This tipi I will give you." He took me into his tipi under the dam. The woman laid the bundle at the back opposite the door. "Four days I will mark for you. What has happened here you must not reveal during these four days." He gave me two songs. Two days passed and this woman of mine asked me, "Why are you so without life?" I told her what had happened to me. Then I was sorry I had told her. I went back to the dam. The man appeared to me again. He said: "I will give you only this tipi which you saw, and nothing else. I was going to give you something more, but you have not listened to me. My name is Chief Beaver. I have another house on Bow river." I got nothing except the tipi. It was all yellow and had a dark beaver on each side at the back,

and another pair on the sides near the door. If I had not told my wife too soon, I should have received the Water Bundle. I have not yet made this tipi. Some time I will paint it.

The following narrative describes the ceremony of transferring a painted tipi and a name.

My father's sister had painted a tipi like the one my grandfather had. The original, made like a dream of my grandfather, had been given to my father and was abandoned when he died. My brother-in-law [father's sister's husband] called in some men to do the singing, and then sent for me. I had not been told that the tipi was to be given to me. When I came to the painted tipi, he told me to sit at the back. Then I knew what was going to be done. He said: "This is your father's tipi. That is why I called you." At the back of the lodge where I sat were a blanket, a pair of moccasins, and a pipe. I said: "Good. I will give you two horses." I had been present when my Grandfather pitched the original of this lodge. He had said, "If my dream is true, a prairie-chicken will perch on the poles." As soon as the tipi was set up, a prairie-chicken alighted on the peak. So I was glad to be able to buy the tipi.

My brother-in-law took my hand and picked up a small ax. He spit out some incense which he was chewing, and made four motions of putting the ax in my hand. With the fourth motion he gave it to me and guided my hand in cutting away the turf to make the place for burning incense. He started then to paint me, and my aunt painted my wife. In this case the face was made yellow, with a red stripe across the mouth and another across the eyes. In other cases the painting would be different, referring to the decoration of the tipi itself. 'Then my brother-in-law announced: "Now I am giving this tipi to Tázika-taní-hlta ['in-midst gun he-captures'].[8] At the same time I am giving him the name of his father, Ihlácha-mis-sallá ['eagle-tall-feather with necklace']." After this was finished, he guided my hand with four ceremonial motions, and placed a pair of sticks in it. With these he made four motions, and with the fourth he lifted a coal from the fire and set it on the hearth. On it he dropped some incense leaves. His wife then guided my wife through the same acts. All this was at night.

8 This individual is now usually known by an abbreviation of his original name, Tázika.

During the day my brother-in-law had gone to the custodian of the Water Bundle with a blanket, or some other gift, and asked for the rattles. The custodian made incense, ceremonially held the bag of eight rattles in the smoke, and then roughly thrust it at my brother-in-law, who took it to the painted tipi.

After incense had been offered, my brother-in-law took a rattle and each of the seven men to his left took another, and they began to sing the four songs belonging to the tipi. I listened, and sang as best I could, learning the songs. When these were finished, the rattles were passed one seat to the left, and the man at my brother-in-law's left sang the four songs of his own tipi, the others helping the best they could. Thus the rattles went around the circle to the left, and four songs were sung for every man present. Most of the men were, or had been, owners of painted tipis, but a few old men who had never owned one were there. Such a man had to engage another to sing four songs for him. The singing was repeated on the next three nights.

Around this tipi near the bottom was a row of connected semicircles in red, and above each semicircle was a red prairie-chicken, as if perched on a hill. There were ten on each half of the tipi. Near the top were four red rings encircling the lodge, one above another. Above these on the north side were five small red circles representing Sohtáshichachí ["star bunch-sitting-on-something," the Pleiades], and on the south side seven circles representing Sohchisch!ití ["star bunch," Ursa Major]. From each ventilating flap hung a buffalo-tail [the distinguishing "flag"], and a third was inside at the top of the doorway. Small bells were attached to the tails. I kept this tipi two years and then sold it for two horses, just what I had paid for it. It has since been sold to a Blackfoot.

Among the Sarsi are three priesthoods having custody of the sacred bundles known respectively as Tu-wúhl ("water bundle"), Mist!ó-kas, or Mist!otí-kas ("pipe alone"), and Mist!otí-dihlkashí ("pipe black"). They are in all respects like the priesthoods of the Blackfoot tribes, from whom doubtless the cults were derived.

The Water Bundle contains the skins of various aquatic beasts and birds, a buffalo-tail with small bells attached, a buffalo-rib used for stirring berry soup, seven deer-bladders, a quantity of tobacco seed, and *ts!a*. The last-named article is a bark cup covered with a dried buffalo scrotum. The edge is a wooden hoop sewed to the bark with

rawhide cord. Fastened here and there to the inner surface are several crow-feathers, to each of which is attached a beaver toe-nail. All these objects are wrapped in a buffalo-hide, on the outside of which, secured by a rawhide rope, are two black-stone pipes and a digging-stick.

Occasionally a group of men will come to the custodian of the bundle, and each gives him a large piece of tobacco, asking that he place it inside a certain skin. Only one piece is put in a given skin. The custodian then sings the song for the opening of the bundle and the songs pertaining to the animals with the skins of which the tobacco has been placed. At the conclusion of each song he removes the twist of tobacco from that skin, cuts it in halves, gives one piece to the man who brought it, and keeps the other for himself. The ceremonial planting of tobacco, in which the Water Bundle plays a leading part, has not been done for many years, and all informants declined to discuss it.

In former times it is said they opened the bundle at each new moon, and beginning with the first winter moon one of the seven deer-bladders was turned with the orifice pointing in the opposite direction, by which means they kept account of the seven winter moons.

The mythic account of the origin of the Water Bundle follows:

A man went hunting buffalo on horseback in the time of my great grandfather's great grandfather's great grandfather.[9] Far in the north there is a large lake. He saw there herds of buffalo running. They were headed for a large hill. He went around to intercept them. The buffalo came close to him. He was looking carefully to see which was the fattest. He fired his flint-lock. It fell, and the others ran away. He went to butcher the animal. It was a very hot day, and he threw off his clothes. He tied up his hair. He turned the animal on its back with the head under the carcass. He drew his knife. He whetted it. He slit the skin down the breast and inside the legs. He flayed it. He cut off the legs and laid them aside. He cut off the fleshy parts and spread them in the sun. He laid the hind-quarters in a separate place. He cut all the meat from the bones, ready to be taken to camp. With a shin-bone he was knocking off the ribs, getting them ready to carry home. He separated all the bones into short lengths. He began to cut the hide into long strips for a

9 Ten generations go back to a time long antedating the horse era; but the informant insists the story is right on both points.

pack-rope. The meat he wrapped in the rest of the hide. Just as he was ready to pack the horse he looked up and observed a small cloud. He was stooping to tie the bundle when something moved between his legs. He saw a monster from the lake. A horn was in the centre of its head. It coiled about his feet. Its head was between his legs. It spoke to him: "Son, see me. You are living on this earth and I am living on this earth. My word is strong. The reason I want you to protect me is this: See that cloud in the sky. That which pursues me fears human beings." The man heard a clap of thunder. He saw three Thunders [Cha] sitting opposite him. One was black, one was blue, one was white. "My son," they said, "move aside. We want to eat it." The water monster said: "No, my son. I will give you something, power for you and your children. Do not listen to them, my son. They will go away, and you will never see them again. My son, if you do not do what I ask, some day you will step over water." He meant that the man would die while stepping across a pool of water. The Thunders said, "No, my son, we will give you something better if you will move aside." The man spoke then for the first time: "No I pity this animal. Take my meat instead." The Thunders looked up, and lightning flashed from their eyes. They disappeared, and the meat also was nowhere to be seen. The water creature was saved. "My son, you shall see what I give you. This will last a long time. Do not give it to any other tribe. There are many other things belonging with it. All the animals that live in the water, and all things that fly, make a bundle of them." He gave the man a bark cup covered with the scrotum of a buffalo, and sang all the songs, one by one, for the things that were to be in the bundle. "Now, my son, lead me to the lake." The man led the creature to the lake. "Now, my son, look at me." It went into the lake, and a great column of water was thrown into the air. The man went home with the charm. He at once made the four rawhide rattles he had been told about, and he killed one of each kind of water animal and bird that he could find, and prepared their skins, and some skins he bought from those who could find them. The bundle known as Mist!ókas, or Mist!otíkas, was formerly called Chámist!otí ("thunder pipe"). A stone pipe and a quantity of cloth are enclosed in a skin wrapping, and associated with the bundle are four drums of buffalo-hide stretched over wooden rings. When the first thunder is heard in spring, the drums are struck and a dance is arranged, the sponsor being some man who has promised to act in

this capacity in order that a sick relative may recover. He dances with the pipe, and pays the custodian of the bundle. The singers are those who happen to know the songs, and doubtless are principally former custodians. Control of the bundle passes at rather frequent intervals, the price being fifteen to twenty horses. An informant can recall ten changes of ownership. The pipe is said to have been obtained by Tsás-si-hayíh-la ("crow has-(for)pennant," referring to a crow-skin dangling from the peak of a painted tipi) and his friend Dit!ánni-ditlishi ("eagle spotted") from a factor whose fort at Hudson bay they visited.

The Black Pipe bundle, said to have been acquired from the Blackfeet, is used in the same way as the Thunder Pipe. In both cases the prayers are to Thunder and Sun.

The principal religious ceremony of the Sarsi was the Sun dance, which they called Tsistátl!uwú.[10]

The ceremony was held only as the fulfilment of a vow by a virtuous wife that she would "make Sun dance" if a sick relative recovered. Adopted as a result of Sarsi affiliation with the Blackfeet, its similarity to the Plains ceremony is evidenced by the following account of a certain individual's first participation.

When I made my first war-party and captured a horse, I was sixteen or seventeen. This was the year the first smallpox came.[11] I had promised the Sun that if I returned unharmed I would take part in the Sun dance. Big Bear made a dance that summer north of Red Deer river at a place called Kicking hill, from a fight between two enemies who met there without weapons and pummelled each other. The people camped in a circle, and young men dug the holes for the posts of the sun-lodge, and others went for the timbers. There were many Cree and Blackfeet and Bloods camping there. The central post was selected by a noted warrior, who sought it out in the manner of a scout. After marking the tree, he came home like a scout and kicked a pile of dry dung, and the young men scrambled to obtain a bit of this dung. Suc-

10 *Tsis,* hill*; ta*, sit, established*; tl!u*, herb medicine*; wu*, probably a collective affix.

11 If the event referred to is the great epidemic that swept through the northwest in 1837-1838, the narrator, Old Sarsi, must have been about five years older than the ninety-eight years he claimed.

cess in this meant good luck in stealing a horse. The scout made his report, and led the young men on horses to the tree. There he recited the account of four of his great deeds, and said, "This young, man who is going to cut this tree, may he do the same things!" The riders tied their ropes to the tree and dragged it to the camp and piled a fagot under the top so that it resembled a man lying on a pillow. The pole was raised with shears made of tipi-poles, and as it rose men and women came flocking out of the tipis, singing. Some of them tied children's moccasins to the pole so that the children would have long life.[12] After the framework was up, young men and women on horses brought in bundles of willows, with which they thatched it. The warriors of all the societies came and recited their brave deeds.

A Blackfoot was going to make me brave. He put rings of white sage about my wrists, ankles, and head. He painted me yellow from head to foot. I lay down. He said, "If you are going to be an old man, this rope will not break out of your flesh." He raised the skin and flesh on my breast, thrust a knife under it, pushed a bit of wood through the slit and looped the end of a rawhide rope under the ends of the stick. When this was done, he fixed another stick in the same way on the other breast. Then I got up and clasped the pole and bowed my head on my arms and prayed to the Sun. I went back to my place and the Blackfoot pulled on the rope to see if it would break out. Then he tied the other end to the top of the pole, and I started to dance, pulling back; but it would not break the flesh. After a long time an old woman got behind me, put her arms around in neck, and pulled back. Still it did not break. All this time I was looking at the sun. I was beginning to faint. Finally I fell. They got another old man, who stood beside me and told his war record. Then they cut the flesh and pulled out the sticks. I was too weak to walk, and was carried out. I was the only one dancing at that time. After they carried me out, different warriors, one after another, stood up and told their records and gave away property, and a feast ended the day.

At night a fire was built, each warrior putting on a single stick and recounting a deed. The dancing lasted all night. Young men who did

12 Children's moccasins were never carelessly thrown away, but were always disposed as offerings.

not wish to participate took their lovers on horses and circled about the camp, singing during the night.

The ceremony continued three days more, with boasting of war deeds by the members of different societies. Any warrior who had promised to do so would stand within a small circle outlined on the ground and dance as long as possible, looking at the sun and sounding his bone whistle.

The dance was started by a woman as a pledge for the recovery of a sick husband or male relative. She must be able to stand up publicly and truthfully say that she had never committed adultery. If she lied about this, the sick person would die.

Along with other phases of Plains culture the Sarsi acquired certain societies, the functions of which were partly social, partly religious, partly military. The following groups are named:

Ts!í'hiná, Mosquitoes.

Tawó'[13]

Tl!ikuwá, Dogs

Nákulchuusná, Preventers

Táskihlná, Black-painted-ones

Tl!ítaqóhlchita, Dogs Reckless

Each society had one, two, or four leaders, who wore distinctive regalia. Membership was obtained by purchase, and was evidenced by acquisition of the dispossessed member's accoutrement. Having sold his membership, a man proceeded to join another society. No fixed sequence was observed, hence Sarsi societies are not properly described as age-societies; but for most men the Mosquitoes were the first step. Annually in spring or summer each society pitched its lodge inside the circle and engaged in dancing, a notable feature of which consisted in rushing forth to harass the spectators in a manner suggestive of the name of the society.

All the societies except Mosquitoes and Tawó' had pseudo-military duties. They preserved order in large encampments, especially at the Sun dance, and had the right to destroy the tipis and clothing of those who resisted or disobeyed them at such times. The Reckless Dogs were pledged never to retreat from an enemy while a companion

13 A small yellow bird found in sloughs.

was in danger.

Sarsi mythologists of course recite many tales familiar to Plains culture, such as The Girl Who Married a Star, Blood-clot Boy, Scarface, the creation of the earth from a bit of mud brought up from the depths of the water, and a long cycle of the amusing and sometimes indescribable adventures of the trickster, whom the Sarsi variously call Halítsa-tsinná ("old-man not-respected"), Chutighá ("liar"), and Nihlká-kulakyí ("earth maker"). Other myths, if not unique, at least contain elements less widely employed. Such are the tales of His Grandmother Reared Him, His Brother Chopped the Tree Down with Him in the Water, and Snake Sleeping.

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