



The Twenty-One Precepts of the Ottawa Indians

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wish. Visit a third cemetery, and tie a third bit of dirt into a third corner of that blessed handkerchief, with a third and last wish. Return home, roll the handkerchief into a compact little ball, and toss it upon the top of an armoier, or on the cornice of a high window, or, perhaps, on the tester of the bed. Any high place that is likely to be undisturbed, save by spiders, will answer.

"Then, and not until then, must you speak. The charm is broken if a single audible sound escapes during this rite. When it is remembered that you are most likely to meet your dearest friend and foe among the crowds that pass to and from the cemeteries, attending their own and viewing others' decorations, it will be seen that it is not an easy matter to keep absolutely quiet; but those wishes will come true before twelve moons have shed their rays upon you, and many and fearsome are the tales told by the old creole negresses of the 'granted wishes' that in many cases proved to be indeed 'scourges that sting.'"

BURYING DOGS IN CENTRAL AFRICA. — The "New Orleans Picayune," as cited in a Northern newspaper of June 6, 1891, contained a piece of superstition in regard to burying dogs. The letter says: "The king of Bihe made a great disturbance because Mr. Arnot, a Scotch missionary, buried in the ground a dog which he had been obliged to kill. The chief sent word that this was a crime, and that the missionary must take up the body and throw it into the river. After this he must kill a chicken and sprinkle its blood upon the ground where the dog had been buried. Now, it was not deemed best to anger the king by refusing to do as he had commanded, so Mr. Arnot took up the body of the dog and threw it into the river and paid a fine. All they can pay with is cotton cloth, and of this Mr. Arnot had to pay forty yards. But he did not sprinkle the blood of the chicken on the ground, because that would look too much like doing homage to 'the spirits.' However, there was an old native who felt that this must be done in order to avert evil consequences, so he killed the chicken and went through the ceremony."

THE TWENTY-ONE PRECEPTS OF THE OTTAWA INDIANS. — A correspondent communicates the following curious extract from a small pamphlet written by A. J. Blackbird, Mack-a-te-be-nessy, son of the Ottawa chief Mack-a-de-pe-nessy.

The twenty-one Precepts or Moral Commandments of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, by which they were governed in their primitive state, before they came in contact with white races in their country: —

- 1st. Thou shalt fear the Great Creator, who is the over ruler of all things.
- 2d. Thou shalt not commit any crime, either by night or by day, or in a covered place; for the Great Spirit is looking upon thee always, and thy crime shall be manifest in time, thou knowest not when, which shall be to thy disgrace and shame.
- 3d. Look up to the skies often, by day and by night, and see the sun, moon, and stars which shineth in the firmament, and think that the Great Spirit is looking upon thee continually.

4th. Thou shalt not mimic or mock the thunders of the cloud, for they were specially created to water the earth, and to keep down all the evil monsters that are under the earth, which would eat up and devour the inhabitants of the earth if they were set at liberty.

5th. Thou shalt not mimic nor mock any mountains or rivers, or any prominent formation of the earth, for it is the habitation of some deity or spirit of the earth, and thy life shall be continually in hazard if thou shouldst provoke the anger of these deities.

6th. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land.

7th. Honor the gray-headed persons, that thy head may also be like unto theirs.

8th. Thou shalt not mimic or ridicule the cripple, the lame, or deformed, for thou shalt be crippled like unto them if thou shouldst provoke the Great Spirit.

9th. Hold thy peace, and answer not back, when thy father or thy mother or any aged person should chastise thee for thy wrong.

10th. Thou shalt never tell a falsehood to thy parents, nor to thy neighbors, but be always upright in thy words and in thy dealings with thy neighbors.

11th. Thou shalt not steal anything from thy neighbor, nor covet anything that is his.

12th. Thou shalt always feed the hungry and the stranger.

13th. Thou shalt keep away from licentiousness and all other lascivious habits, nor utter indecent language before thy neighbor and the stranger.

14th. Thou shalt not commit murder while thou art in dispute with thy neighbor, unless it be whilst on the warpath.

15th. Thou shalt chastise thy children with the rod whilst they are in thy power.

16th. Thou shalt disfigure thy face with charcoal, and fast at least ten days or more of each year whilst thou art yet young, or before thou reachest twenty, that thou mayest dream of thy future destiny.

17th. Thou shalt immerse thy body into the lake or the river at least ten days in succession in the early part of the spring of the year, that thy body may be strong and swift of foot to chase the game and on the warpath.

18th. At certain times, with thy wife or thy daughter, thou shalt clean out the fire-place and make thyself a new fire with thy fire-sticks, for the sake of thy self and for the sake of thy children's health.

19th. Thou shalt not eat with thy wife and daughters at such time, of food cooked on a new fire, but they shall be provided with a separate kettle and cook their victuals therein with an old fire out of their wigwam, until the time is passed ; then thou shalt eat with them.

20th. Thou shalt not be lazy, nor be a vagabond of the earth, to be hated by all men.

21st. Thou shalt be brave and not fear any death.

If thou shouldst observe all these Commandments, when thou diest thy spirit shall go straightway to that happy land where all the good spirits are, and shall there continually dance to the beating of the drum of Tchi-baw-

yaw-booz, the head spirit in the spirit land. But if thou shouldst not observe them, thy spirit shall be a vagabond of the earth always, and go hungry, and will never be able to find this road, Tcht-bay-kou, in which all the good spirits travel.

Mary E. Chamberlain.

MUSKEGON, MICH.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

THE CEREMONIAL CIRCUIT. — I have read with interest Dr. Fewkes' article on "The Ceremonial Circuit among the Village Indians of North-eastern Arizona," in vol. v. No. 16, and wish to offer a slight contribution to the subject of "the ceremonial circuit," — a subject which has long engaged my attention.

In the first place, I would say that I regard the terms dextral and sinistral, used in describing the circuits, as of doubtful propriety and likely to prove ambiguous. The same circuit may be dextral from one point of view and sinistral from another. For instance, the Navajo devotee always moves, when on sacred errand bent, in the direction of the sun's apparent course. This leads him, when he turns on his own axis, as in returning to the medicine-lodge after depositing a sacrifice, to face about to the right; but when he enters the medicine-lodge or any sacred inclosure he cannot be said to proceed to the right. As he enters at the east, he finds before him two roads passing round the fire, — one to the left, the other to the right, — and meeting on the opposite side of the fire. It is the left-hand road that he takes in order to make the required circuit.

Fortunately we have no need to employ an ambiguous term in designating the circuit made by the Navajo. We have for this an excellent word of good Saxon origin, — the word is *sunwise*. If we have a word to designate procession in the opposite direction I am not aware of it, and if no such word is to be found in the dictionaries, it is a significant fact.

In all the many Indian dances — and I might reckon them by hundreds — which I witnessed before I came to New Mexico, I remember seeing only the sunwise circuit. In Catlin's "Illustrations," etc., "of the North American Indians," there are a dozen pictures of Indian dances in which the ceremonial circuit is unmistakably shown, and in all these the circuit is sunwise. I have read — but am not now in a position to quote my authorities — that in pagan ceremonies still surviving among the peasantry of Europe, as in the rites practised at holy wells, the sunwise circuit is observed. I think it would be found, too, on investigation, that in ceremonies practised behind guarded doors by the most cultured men of our own day and nation, processions move in this circuit, whenever any formal circuit is observed. For many years I was of the opinion that this was the only ceremonial circuit.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the sunwise circuit originated in sun worship. But if this be so, how did a circuit in the opposite direction origi-