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MAN-EATING MIAMI INDIANS

Horrible Ceremonies of This Tribe at Sacrificial Feasts.

CANNIBALISM IN NAME OF RELIGION

Reminiscence of a Family Which Was Authorized to Eat the Flesh of Prisoners Burned at the Stake.

Sixty years ago the author was a resident of Fort Wayne, Ind., near which place the remnant of the Miami tribe of Indians was living upon the reservation. Fort Wayne was the principal trading point and had been the seat of government, so to speak, of the Miami from time immemorial. Here also lived many Canadians, retired French traders and aged voyageurs, from whom the writer obtained a fund of information regarding that once powerful and influential confederation of Indians. One of the most interesting facts that I then investigated was the charge that prior to the beginning of the last century there existed a society of savages among the Miami known as the man-eaters—those that feasted on the bodies of prisoners of war burned at the stake, writes E. F. Colerick in the Indianapolis Press.

During the time that I resided in Fort Wayne I had seen frequently a very old, shriveled-up squaw, a repulsive-looking creature, who, it was said, was a descendant of the family of man-eaters. I remember one Sabbath afternoon in the month of September, 1836, of taking a stroll with my aged friend, John Baptiste Bruno, the old Indian trader, who was then in his eighty-sixth year hale and active. We had reached a beautiful spot—a small grove that skirted the bank of the St. Joseph river, about a mile above the town. Seated upon a log on the elevated bank of the stream he gave me a thrilling description of the terrible defeat of General Harmar at this very spot in 1791. It was an eye-witness description of that engagement, so sanguinary and disastrous in its results. While talking, of course with several Indians in it passed down the stream. On discovering Bruno the boat was headed for the shore and landed at our feet. I recognized at once the same disgusting old hag of a squaw as one of the party. After a short talk with Bruno the Indians turned into the stream again and passed on to the town.

Story Was True.

I then told my companion the oft-repeated story I had heard regarding this woman. He said that it was true; that he had known her for forty years; that she was the only daughter of White Skin, the last head of the family of man-eaters. "I knew her father," continued Bruno, "when I first came to this part of the country to trade with the Indians in 1770. White Skin at that time was said to be near 100 years old and no doubt it was true, yet he was an active, industrious man, possessed of a very retentive memory. The family, during the time that I knew them, consisted of the old man, an aged son and his daughter. They resided on the river, a few miles west of the Turtle village, the home of the great war chief of the Miami, Little Skin, the last of the family of man-eaters. The family, and about thirty-five miles northwest of Fort Wayne. They were known far and near as the man-eating family. They had no friends that I know of, with one exception, and that was Father Badden, a French missionary. He frequently visited them and helped them when they were in want. They lived very secluded lives. The Indians seemed to shun them.

for the merchandise. It was in this way that I found a ready sale for the goods that I brought to them. I generally went to their camp to make my purchases and often had to remain over night at their hut. But I seldom partook of any meals with them, for they were too filthy in their manner of living and were too fond of dog meat to suit me, although I had often from necessity eaten dog meat; but it was prepared in a different manner from the way they served it.

"I found the old man had no reluctance to talk with me about the man-eating charge. I had gained his entire confidence. Having heard so much about his terrible organization when I was a boy living in Montreal, Canada, I remember that I dreaded to have my father leave home to go among the Miami. He was a trader at this point before I was born. When he died I took his place and continued right along until a few years ago.

"My good friend Pierre Beaubien of Detroit had requested me, at the first opportunity I should have to obtain from White Skin a history of the man-eater order, and I did so. One night—a beautiful moonlight night—while seated on the grass in front of the bark hut, smoking our kinnikinnick, the old man gave me the entire history of a portion of his life connected with the Order of Man-Eaters. And this story I have written and told so often that I know it by heart, as the schoolboys say. I have had to repeat it to many of the great men of the land. Among the number were General Lewis Cass, General (or Governor) Harrison, also to the French savant and traveler, Count Volney, when he visited Vincennes.

White Skin's Recital.

"White Skin said: 'To eat human flesh is a religious rite conferred upon my forefathers many, many generations before, when the Minnieways (Miami) included most all of the Indians living on this side of the big river (the Mississippi), and by hereditary descent passed from family to family. On the death of my grandfather my father and his only brother became the sole representatives of this order, each having the right to perform the ceremonies at the human sacrifices.'

Description of a Feast.

"White Skin prided himself upon the fact that he represented a family that had such great distinction conferred upon it. When I was about 20 years old," he said, "I attended a great feast of the order, held on the east bank of the St. Joseph river, near Fort Wayne." Bruno pointed to a plateau of ten or fifteen acres, just east of where we were seated, as the spot where these human sacrifices took place. "We were notified the day before to be at the place of sacrifice by the following afternoon. We reached the grounds about moonlight. The faces of the entire family were painted black—even the naposee on its mother's back. A crowd of several hundred Indians already had assembled, anxiously awaiting for the ceremonies to begin.

high a squaw approached with a flambeau in her hand to ignite the fagots. The doomed man snatched the flambeau from her hand and set fire to his own funeral pile. At this act of bravery the vast crowd sent up shouts of admiration. When dead the body was laid upon the burning coals until it was well cooked. After a prolonged ceremony my father cut off a piece of the flesh for each member of the family, presenting it to us on a sharpened stick, while we sat in a circle around the smoldering embers. After the family was all helped, my father, in a loud voice, asked if there was any person present who wished to participate in the feast. Several men and squaws came forward and seated themselves in the circle. They were then told to help themselves. While the feasting was going on a deep silence prevailed, and just as the sun went down behind the trees it was announced that the ceremonies were ended, when a yell went up that shook the earth, and the carcass was left to the dogs to eat.

White Skin conducts a Feast.

"On again filling our pipes, White Skin stated that his father and brother were both murdered while asleep in their camp on their return from one of these human sacrifices held near the mouth of the Washash river. Then he became head of the order."

From General Cass' Opinion.

"Yes, once only, and that was over twenty years ago, and then was the last time I ever tasted human flesh. My father's brother, a very old man, who was also a head of the order, living on the Calumet river, died the same summer my father was killed. His blanket fell upon the shoulders of his only child, a daughter, an old, decrepit woman. Soon after his death a prisoner was to be sacrificed; she sent a messenger to invite me and my family to come and assist her with the ceremonies. We got ready and returned with the messenger. On reaching the village I found the old woman very sick in her wigwam, unable to take part in the exercise, and I had to do it all myself. The prisoner was a young white man, and I was glad of it, for I disliked to eat the flesh of my own race, but had no objection to eating our then greatest enemy—the white man. There were not many Indians in attendance; they were on their big hunt. Everything passed off with much satisfaction. About the usual number of invited guests participated in the feast with me. At the request of the old woman I took her a piece of the flesh, which she ate with an apparent relish. She died the next day. This left me the sole representative of the great Order of Man-Eaters. But never since that day has there been a sacrifice of life at which human flesh was eaten, conducted by the Society of Man-Eaters."

French Missionary's Story.

Louis Hennepin, a French missionary, one of the first to visit the region of the Illinois and Washash rivers, in a letter written to a friend, a Catholic priest residing in Quebec, dated November, 1684, says: "When on my way, in the month of June last, to the Ouabache (Wabash) river I came upon a large assembly of savages (Tightwees) engaged in burning a prisoner at the stake—an Indian belonging to a tribe with whom they were at war. When I arrived upon the scene the fierce flames were already wrapped about the victim, then in the throes of death. The savages danced around the fire and in a state of frenzy brandished their war clubs, accompanied with demoniacal shouts and contortions. In sorrow and disgust I withdrew a short distance to wait until the excite-

ment should subside, that I might expostulate with the savages against this horrible custom. On returning to the place of execution my senses were appalled upon beholding a number of the savage men, women and children seated in a circle around the smoldering fire, engaged in devouring the remains of the dead savage. While this horrid feast was going on a perfect silence prevailed—the savages seemed awe-stricken. I turned from the sickening sight and on my knees brought our Heavenly Father to assist me to open the eyes of these poor, benighted creatures to the enormity of the heinous crime, that it might never again be repeated."

"The missionary Brebeuf, belonging to a mission of the shores of Lake Huron, was sent to the Miami village, at the head of the Miami (Manitou) river, and by the performance of kindly offices secured the confidence and affections of the Indians of that locality. From a report of his missionary work performed in this section, filed in the archives of Montreal, Canada, the following statement is taken: "The Tightwees are very cruel in the treatment of their prisoners of war. They generally burn them at the stake and frequently feast on the cooked flesh of the unfortunate victims. Those who engage in eating human flesh belong to a select number of the tribe, known as the man-eaters. So fond do they become of the taste of human flesh that no doubt they secretly commit murder in order to satisfy this dreadful desire."

From General Cass' Opinion.

And we have the following statements from General Lewis Cass regarding this matter. He no doubt, was more conversant with the history and traditions of the Indian tribes of the northwest than any person living in his time. In the great oration delivered by him at Fort Wayne, Ind., July 4, 1845, on the occasion of the opening of the Washash and Erie canal, he said: "For many years during the frontier history of this place and region the line of your canal was a bloody warpath, which has seen many a deed of horror. And this peaceful town has had its Molech, and the records of human depravity furnish no more terrible examples of cruelty than were offered at his shrine. The Miami Indians, our predecessors in the occupation of this district, had a terrible institution, whose origin and object have been lost in the darkness of aboriginal history, but which was continued to a late period, and whose orgies were held upon the very spot where we are now assembled. It was called the Man-Eating society and it was the duty of its associates to eat such prisoners as were preserved and delivered to them for that purpose. The members of this society belonging to a particular family and the dreadful inheritance descended to all the children, male and female. The duties imposed could not be avoided and the sanction of religion was added to the obligations of immemorial usage. The feast was a solemn ceremony, at which the whole tribe was collected, all actors of spectators. The miserable victim was bound to a stake and burned at a slow fire, with all the refinements of cruelty which savage ingenuity could invent. There was a traditional ritual which regulated with revolting precision the whole course of procedure at these ceremonies. Latterly the authority

and obligations of the institution had declined and I presume it has now wholly disappeared. But I have seen and conversed with the head of the family, the chief of the society, whose name was 'White Skin,' with what feeling of disgust I need not attempt to describe. I well knew an intelligent Canadian who was present at one of the last sacrifices made by this horrible institution. The victim was a young American captured in Kentucky and taken to the clerk's desk, eyeing the bystanders up and down the lobby. Presently, as Rube was standing some distance from the desk, pensively rolling his quid and gazing through the skylight, a smartly dressed man walked briskly through the door and up to the clerk's desk, eyeing the bystanders critically as he passed. Seizing a pen he rapidly wrote on the register 'William J. Smith, Hushpuckanna, Miss.' As he was writing Rube had once more advanced toward the desk and, seeing the form at the counter, he strode eagerly forward, peered into the face of the newcomer and slapping him on the back exclaimed, 'By gosh, if it ain't Bill Smith at last!'

BILL SMITH CAME TO TIME.

Two Sharpers Get the Better of a Third in a Confidence Game.

The shrewdest confidence man that ever perambulated down the Nile was in Memphis last week, reports the Memphis Appeal, and did some smooth business of the bunco variety, according to Patrolman Pat Moran, that makes the clumsy Memphis method pale into insignificance. Officer Moran refuses to give names, but he says that the victim in the case was a king-bee Memphis con man, who thinks he is more than "two or three" and who happened to be out looking for haysheeds.

The Memphis shark turned pale as Rube claimed the wager, but it had to go.

Later the Memphis shark got a little note advising him that Rube thanked him for the little donation and advised him to try the trick on some of his fellow sharks and play for even.

THE EVER-GROWING SLEEVE.

Those for Easter Gowns Will Be Positively Prodigious.

The very big sleeves that prevailed four or five years ago have been restored to supremacy once more by the simple device of turning themselves upside down. The balloons of dress goods, that used to fill feminine shoulders monstrously and fill the caricaturist with joy, now swell and puff and ripple and tuck, with a perfectly amazing prodigality of decorative material about the region of the waist and forearm only. Up at the shoulder all is close and smooth as a man's coat sleeve; and, from an artistic standpoint, this exaggerated revival of the 1860 method of clothing the arm is a vast improvement on the ridiculous leg

of mutton shapes that were once our weakness.

The charm of the pear-shaped pattern on which we now cut our sleeves lies in the infinite decorative variations they permit. Nowadays every spirited dressmaker is a sort of virtuoso in sleeves and earns fame among her patrons by inventing a special bell and wrist pouch for every gown she curms out. Because the spring and summer gowns need not be crushed and bunched inside protecting wraps all limit as to the size of the bags and flounces about the wrist have been removed, and around about Easter, when the new frocks get their first airing, some sleeves of positively prodigious size will be seen.

Just to show what the tendency is like a group of three very characteristic sleeves is given. One is made all of silk muslin, in a perfect cascade of overlapping ruffles that bell out below the elbow and admit a bag of soft cotton to hang softly about the hand. Another is a study in velvet strapped crepe de chine puffs that emerge from an embroidered taffeta sleeve, and the third is especially designed to show a pretty hand and is a verbatim copy from a gown worn by the Empress Eugenie.

Now the woman who looks upon such sleeves with envious eyes, and cannot afford a dressmaker of genius sufficient to cope with such charming intricacies, can help herself to a good shop and buy, all beautifully complete, as sweet a pair of ready-made sleeves as her church, or calling, or at-home gown need boast. They need only be stitched into the armholes of the fancy bodice or dress waist, from which she has ripped the old ones, to appear exactly as if they had always been an ornamental part of the toilet they decorate.

Second Flood at St. Joseph.

ST. JOSEPH, Mich., March 27.—For the second time this spring the factory district between this city and Benton harbor is flooded. The river, which is higher than for many years, continues to rise, and apprehension is felt regarding the safety of the bridges.

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