

ing I went thither with Couguet, and witnessed one dance throughout. The ground inside the enclosure had been carefully cleared of grass, sticks, and roots, and covered, several inches deep, with a clean, white sand. A screen had been constructed on the side opposite the entrance, by sticking small cottonwoods and cedars deep into the ground, so as to preserve them fresh as long as possible. A space was left, two or three feet wide, between it and the enclosing wall, in which the dancers prepared themselves for the dance, and in front of which was the medicine. This consisted of an image, lying on the ground, but so concealed from view, in the screen, as to render its form indistinguishable; above it was a large fan, made of eagle quills, with the quill part lengthened out nearly a foot, by inserting a stick into it, and securing it there. These were held in a spread form by means of a willow rod, or wire, bent in a circular form; above this was a mass of feathers, concealing an image, on each side of which were several shields, highly decorated with feathers and paint. Various other paraphernalia of heathen worship were suspended in the screen, among these shields or over them, impossible for me to describe so as to be comprehended. A mound had also been thrown up around the central post of the building, two feet high, and perhaps five feet in diameter.

The musicians, who, if I mistake not, are the war chiefs, were squatted on the ground, in true heathen style, to the left, and near the entrance, having Indian

drums and rattles. The music was sounding when we entered.

Presently the dancers came from behind the screen; their faces, arms, and the upper part of their bodies were painted white; a soft, white buckskin skirt, secured about the loins, descended nearly to the ankles, while the breech-cloth, — blue on this occasion, — hanging to the ground, outside the skirt, both in front and behind, completed the dress. They faced the medicine — shall I say idols? for it was conducted with all the solemnity of worship, — jumping up and down in true time with the beating of the drums, while a bone whistle in their mouths, through which the breath escaped as they jumped about, and the singing of the women, completed the music. The dancers continued to face the medicine, with arms stretched upwards and towards it, — their eyes as it were riveted to it. They were apparently oblivious to all surroundings, except the music and what was before them.

After some time, a middle-aged man, painted as the others, but wearing a buffalo robe, issued from behind the screen, facing the entrance, but having his eyes fixed upon the sun, upon which he stood gazing, without winking or moving a muscle, for some time, then began slowly to incline his head from side to side, as if to avoid some obstruction in his view of it, swaying his body slightly, then, stepping slowly from side to side — forward — backward — increasing his motions, both in rapidity and extent, until, in appearance nearly frantic,