

detail, but as most of the testimony came from white men, none of whom had seen the dance for themselves, I preserved the scientific attitude of skepticism. So far as could be ascertained, none of the intelligent people of the agency had thought the subject sufficiently worthy of serious consideration to learn whether the reports were true or false. On talking with the Indians I found them unanimous in their statements as to the visions, until I began to think there might be something in it.

The first clew to the explanation came from the statement of his own experience in the trance, given by Paul Boynton, a particularly bright Carlisle student, who acted as my interpreter. His brother had died some time before, and as Paul was anxious to see and talk with him, which the new doctrine taught was possible, he attended the next Ghost dance, and putting his hands upon the head of Sitting Bull, according to the regular formula, asked him to help him see his dead brother. Paul is of an inquiring disposition, and, besides his natural longing to meet his brother again, was actuated, as he himself said, by a desire to try "every Indian trick." He then told how Sitting Bull had hypnotized him with the eagle feather and the motion of his hands, until he fell unconscious and did really see his brother, but awoke just as he was about to speak to him, probably because one of the dancers had accidentally brushed against him as he lay on the ground. He embodied his experience in a song which was afterward sung in the dance. From his account it seemed almost certain that the secret was hypnotism. The explanation might have occurred to me sooner but for the fact that my previous Indian informants, after the manner of some other witnesses, had told only about their trance visions, forgetting to state how the visions were brought about.

This was in winter and the ground was covered deeply with snow, which stopped the dancing for several weeks. In the meantime I improved the opportunity by visiting the tipis every night to learn the songs and talk about the new religion. When the snow melted, the dances were renewed, and as by this time I had gained the confidence of the Indians I was invited to be present and thereafter on numerous occasions was able to watch the whole process by which the trances were produced. From the outside hardly anything can be seen of what goes on within the circle, but being a part of the circle myself I was able to see all that occurred inside, and by fixing attention on one subject at a time I was able to note all the stages of the phenomenon from the time the subject first attracted the notice of the medicine-man, through the staggering, the rigidity, the unconsciousness, and back again to wakefulness. On two occasions my partner in the dance, each time a woman, came under the influence and I was thus enabled to note the very first nervous tremor of her hand and mark it as it increased in violence until she broke away and staggered toward the medicine-man within the circle.

> Young women are usually the first to be affected, then older women, and lastly men. Sometimes, however, a man proves as sensitive as the