

THE PIPE DANCE CEREMONY

This dance is very old and the practice was used by the old chiefs and the elder male members of the tribe.

The ceremony is performed for chieftainship or to see a child who is unfortunate in health or coming out of childhood.

The parents of a child see their little one who is not in the best of health and want her to grow up just like the other children and grow to womanhood or manhood and have children and grandchildren so that the tribe will carry on in life.

The first thing they do is to go to the party whom they wish to do this honor on their child and sit and smoke the pipe of his own in their presence. He tells him the purpose of the visit, for his belief in him and to take pity on his family and asks for his help for the child.

Now, today things are different. They usually send a relative or a friend with a sack of bull durham and money tied with the smoke and matches and the explanation. Now the preparation begins when it is accepted.

The parents of the child summons his relatives and friends and tells them what he had done to help his child in her happiness of life and asks his relatives and friends to help him in paying for the coming pipe dance leader in gifts. They have about six months to gather their food, prepare a campsite or a modern place for the ceremony.

The gifts are composed of horses, blankets, guns, copper kettles, robes of animals, war bonnets, otter hide for ornaments, buggy, harness, and money and even teepees.

When the time comes they usually camp where there is plenty of water, hay, corn is hauled in for the animals, plenty of dry wood is hauled in for the four days of dancing, a beef is killed and there is plenty of good eating for all.

The leader talks to the young child and tells her how to sit as a woman, her feet sideways and not to sit like a man, cross legged. If its a girl the pipe dance party dresses her in the finest of clothing, moccasins which are beaded even to the soles, when she walks she has to step on a blanket and is transported from her teepee to the round house or any kind of a