

the little cemetery at the agency were the fresh graves of the slain soldiers, and only a few miles away was the Wounded Knee battlefield and the trench where the bodies of nearly three hundred of their people had been thrown. To my questions the answer almost invariably was, "The dance was our religion, but the government sent soldiers to kill us on account of it. We will not talk any more about it." Another reason for their unwillingness was the fact that most of the interpreters were from the eastern or Santee portion of the tribe, and looked with contempt on the beliefs and customs of their more primitive western brethren, between whom and themselves there was in consequence but little friendly feeling. On one occasion, while endeavoring to break

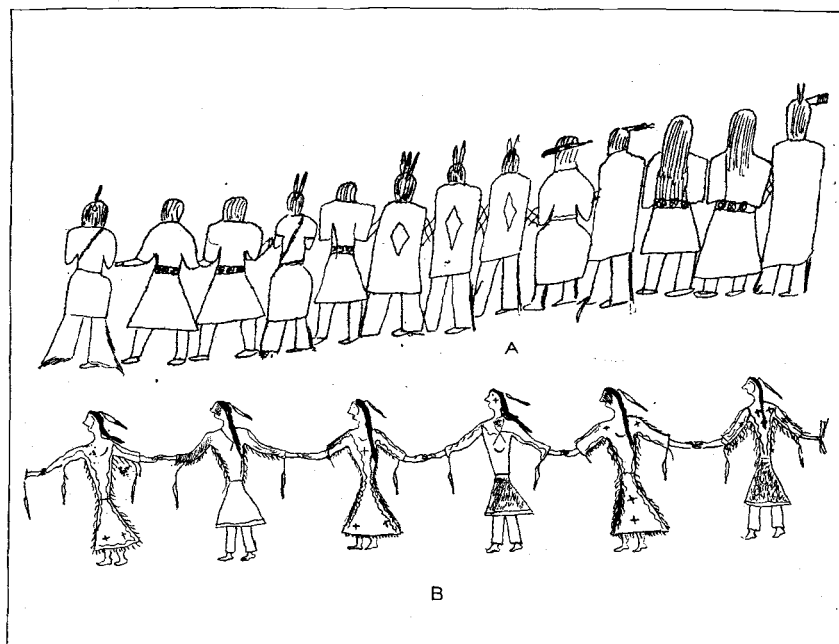


FIG. 102.—Native drawings of Ghost dance—A, Comanche; B, Sioux

the ice with one of the initiates of the dance, I told him how willingly the Arapaho had given me information and even invited me to join in the dance. "Then," said he, "don't you find that the religion of the Ghost dance is better than the religion of the churches?" I could not well say yes, and hesitated a moment to frame an answer. He noticed it at once and said very deliberately, "Well, then, if you have not learned that you have not learned anything about it," and refused to continue the conversation.

The Sioux ghost songs are all in the dialect of the Teton, who took the most active interest in the dance, which was hardly known among the bands east of the Missouri. The vocalic character of the language,