

THE OJIBWAS.

Their Customs and Traditions.

AS HANDED DOWN FOR CENTURIES
FROM FATHER TO SON.

By the Sages.

Also from the Grand Sachem and Medicine
Seer of the White Earth Ojibwas.

For sometime past we have omitted to publish the Way-nah-bozho legend, and while we have not been able to secure all of the legend, we intend, in a short time, to publish as much of it as we have and may be able to secure. In the mean time we will furnish our readers with a few of the old tribal customs of the Chippewas as still practiced among some branches of the tribe, one of which is the me-da-we-win or grand medicine.

It is well known that among some of the aboriginal tribes of North America there exists an order which has been by many considered as being similar to freemasonry. Not being familiar with either of these orders we are unable to say in what manner the similarity exists, neither have we learned definitely the grounds advanced for such a proposition. We have been informed that freemasonry is a secret order, and from a meagre knowledge acquired by us thus far regarding the order existing among the Indians, and which is known as the Meda-we-win or Grand Medicine, we cannot form any just conclusion that a marked similarity exists. The apparent willingness of the medicine priests and patriarchs of the tribe to give us such information as we desired, regarding the origin and rites of the Meda-we-win, assured us that in some respects at least it could not be, strictly speaking, considered a secret order.

In this number of the TOMAHAWK we will commence a treatise on the origin, rites, etc., of the Meda-we-win, as given to us several years since by some of the old priests of the order.

TRADITIONAL STATEMENT OF THE ORIGIN OF THE GRAND MEDICINE.

At the beginning of the big Earth there existed on it only four persons, two men and two women, who had not the power to think, or to discriminate between right and wrong; the Great Spirit finally gave them the power to see, think and to learn the duties which have been imposed upon mankind. When they had acquired a knowledge of these duties the population of the Earth began to increase, and it soon became quite numerous. It was at this time that the Great Spirit observed that his grand children, the Unish-in-ah-bayg (spontaneous men or Indians) were in deep distress, and He frequently saw them crying, and some of their numbers were being laid away in trees after being wrapped up in mats, and it became apparent to Him that this deep distress and sorrow was caused by disease and death, which threatened to annihilate them unless He made some provision looking to their salvation.

After considering for some time as to what would be best for the Indians, the Great Spirit called four of the leading spirits from the different layers of the Earth to consult with them. After He had imparted to these Spirits His plans, He was at a loss in what manner to convey them to the Indians on the big Earth, as his message was of too much importance to convey it to them in their dreams, it was finally decided that

the services of the spirit of the Sun should be called for this purpose, and a message to the effect was sent him in which he was directed to come on the big Earth and to be conceived and born of a certain woman. In the course of time the child was born, and it was a boy. After their child had become several years of age he accompanied a hunting expedition: during this trip a child died in a village near by, and its parents who were reluctant about laying its body away, resolved to take it back to their village. The Sun spirit was playing around a fire when his supposed father approached him, and the child looking up said: "My father, I pity my people," the latter replied saying, "My son, we all pity them," the child spoke again saying, "My father, I shall give the child who is dead a new life." His father rebuked him for saying this but the boy insisted that he would, if his directions were followed bring the child to life. "My father" he said, "you call all the old ann wise men of the tribe, after you have erected a large lodge of sufficient size to accommodate them, and place the body of the dead child in the centre of the lodge. But you must be sure to build the lodge so that the entrance will be facing the East. After you have done as I have directed, all the men that will be inside of the lodge must smoke their pipes." Having given these directions the boy disappeared from the village, but his directions were followed implicitly. And while the wise men were sitting in the large lodge, strange noises were heard in an Easterly direction, and the wise men looking that way saw a large bear approaching and when it had reached the entrance of the lodge it assumed the form of a boy, and behold it was the boy who had directed the big lodge to be built. Upon entering the lodge he ran around to the left side of the lodge exclaiming "whe, whe, whe, whe," at every step. In his hands he held a Meda-wah-yaun (medicine sack), and when he had made a complete circle of the lodge he stopped and making a motion towards the body of the dead child with the Meda-wah-yaun which he held in his hands, he exclaimed, "whay, ho, ho, ho!" The child's body quivered and after this had been repeated the fourth time the dead child came to life. The boy then took the child and placed it in his own father's arms saying, "My father, give this child to its parents," and this his father done. Then the boy said: "My friends, I am not one of you, I am the Sun Spirit, I was sent to teach you how to attain a new life when you are about to lose yours. This man is not my father, I am a spirit and can take any form I wish, I came on Earth to teach you what I was sent among you for." And he explained the Meda-we-win and gave them new life, after which he disappeared. This is how, my ancestor told me, the Meda-we-win was handed to the Indians.

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LOST! LOST!!

LOST—One white mare, its mane is less than 4 black and weighs about 1000 pounds. Also one bay horse with small white spot on forehead, when walks it has a little stiffness on the legs, and when fat weighs about 1200. This team was lost during the 14th of June celebration, 1903. Any one knowing the whereabouts of these horses will please notify this office, or for a liberal reward to

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