

Almost every member of each tribe understands the languages of the other tribes, yet he speaks his own most fluently; so it is not an uncommon thing to hear a dialogue carried on in two languages, one person, for instance, questioning in Mandan, and the other answering back in Grosventre, and *vice versa*. Many of them understand the Dakota tongue, and use it as a means of intercommunication, and all understand the sign-language. So, after all, they have no trouble in making themselves understood by one another. These Indians must have excellent memories and "good capacity for study"; for it is not uncommon to find persons among them, some even under twenty years of age, who can speak fluently four or five different languages.

§14. ARTS.—Besides their agriculture and architecture, which have been already alluded to, they had the knowledge of many other useful arts, still practiced by them, which were entirely of native origin. They manufactured pottery; built boats of buffalo-hide; made mats and baskets of various descriptions, and wooden bowls so durable that they last for many generations; and formed spoons and ladles out of the horns of the buffalo and Rocky Mountain sheep. Their hair-brushes they made sometimes out of porcupine-quills, but more commonly of grass—the long, tough awns of the *Stipa juncea*. They fashioned whistles of the bones of large birds, and fifes and other wind-instruments out of wood; some of these were for musical purposes; others were to imitate, for the hunter's benefit, the bleat of the antelope or the whistle of the elk. They garnished their clothing with porcupine-quills, which they colored brilliantly with dye-stuffs of Indian discovery. They had flint and horn arrow-heads, and horn wedges with which they split wood. They knew something of the manufacture of glass, and made rude beads and pendants out of it; they possessed various pigments, and with them recorded the events of their day in symbolic pictures; and, in the manufacture and use of the various appliances of war and the chase, they had no superiors on the plains. Their arms were the same as those of the Dakotas and other western tribes; and they have been so often described that I feel there is little left for me to say concerning them.