

THE FEAST OF THE VIRGINS.

Proud Red Cloud turned to the braves and said,
As he shook the plumes on his haughty head:
"Ho! the warrior that scorneth the foe and fire
Heyóka will crown with his heart's desire!"
He snatched from the embers a red-hot brand,
And held it aloft in his naked hand.
He stood like a statue in bronze or stone,—
Not a muscle moved, and the braves looked on.
He turned to the chieftain,—“I scorn the fire,—
Ten feathers I wear of the great Wanmdeé;
Then grant me, Wakâwa, my heart's desire;
Let the sunlight shine in my lonely tee.¹⁹
I laugh at red death and I laugh at red fire;
Brave Red Cloud is only afraid of fear;
But Wiwâstè is fair to his heart and dear;
Then grant him, Wakâwa, his heart's desire.”

The warriors applauded with loud “Ho! Ho!”²⁰
And he flung the brand to the drifting snow.
Three times Wakâwa puffed forth the smoke
From his silent lips; then he slowly spoke:
“Mâhpiya is strong as the stout-armed oak
That stands on the bluff by the windy plain,
And laughs at the roar of the hurricane.
He has slain the foe and the great Mató
With his hissing arrow and deadly stroke.
My heart is swift but my tongue is slow:
Let the warrior come to my lodge and smoke;
He may bring the gifts;²¹ but the timid doe
May fly from the hunter and say him no.”