

was spent, but the fast was more severe; it lasted from two to four and even five days, according to the strength of the individual. On these occasions it was usual for the young men to withdraw from the family residence to a retired spot, under the shade of a tree, where they passed their time in fasting and contemplation. To this spot the mother sometimes repaired with a small bunch of wild, unripe berries, which she suspended from a twig about a foot and a half from the ground, so that the young man might have the poor consolation of fixing his eyes occasionally upon them. The sight of these berries had the effect of watering the mouth in the same way as we feel before tasting any unripe fruit, especially when we have reason to suspect its being sour. The dreams of the last night which terminated their regular fasting days at any time of the year, were considered the most important, and were carefully studied as revelations from the Great Spirit. In the evening small wigwams were put up at a little distance from the family residence, each just big enough for the accommodation of one person. The youths who were practising the rite of fasting had to take up their quarters in these lodges for the night, using, if possible, only new furniture. Next morning it was the duty of the grandmother, or some other elderly female, to visit the young fasters by daylight. The first thing she did was to make a very thin corn soup, or some kind of broth, after which she went to ask them one by one of their dreams. She congratulated those who had favorable dreams upon their good fortune; but for those who had unlucky dreams she threw a piece of fur of some animal on the fire, in order to avert the consequences of such ill-omened visions. The longest fast practised among the Indians lasted ten days, during which time it was indispensable that the candidates for the special honors which it secured should neither taste anything nor sleep. They were made to dance every night, and sometimes were put in small cribs suspended from the ground, which were moved sideways, like a cradle, for the purpose of inducing sleep. Those who yielded, and fell asleep, were dismissed forthwith as unworthy. Most frequently all the candidates failed; but on some rare occasions one or two succeeded in completing the time. Even with these, however, this severe undertaking seems to have exceeded the powers of nature, as those who were successful—though regarded ever after with a certain degree of superstitious veneration—never fully recovered from the effects of it. Besides fasting, the young people had to abstain from certain kinds of animal food, and from certain parts of animals, for instance, the head, the