

bare earth, the grass having been plucked out, and the ground very well trodden. It was surrounded by a "grove" of large trees, whose wide spreading branches screened it considerably from the scorching rays of our Fatean sun.

The musical instrument was primitive and coarse enough. It stood out in "bold relief" in the centre of the ground. It consisted of a group of logs planted in the earth, each from six to ten feet in height, and from six to thirty inches in diameter, the smaller being shorter and *vice versa*. There would have been about twenty logs in the group. They were planted with space enough intervening between them to admit the musicians to pass among them. Each log was hollowed out through a long narrow slit with a great deal of labour. Rude carvings of human figures, pig's teeth, guns, boats under sail, might be seen on some of them.

The musicians, some seven or eight in number, stood to their post among the logs. Every one with a drum stick in each hand. "The leader of the choir" seemed to attend to only one bass-toned log. The others, I noticed, attended to more than one a piece. The sound emitted by these hollow logs when beaten, reminded me of a sound once familiar to my ear—that made by the wood-pecker of North America. In beating the logs the musicians kept time, and that is about all that can be said in commendation of the performance.

The spectators formed a considerable group, all standing round and looking on. Each was dressed in the most approved style. Men and women had their faces and bodies painted in alternate stripes of red and black. The women wore narrow mats of divers bright colours, suspended behind from a belt. They came down below the knee and were richly fringed with the caudal appendages of swine and canine race. The ladies moreover wore long strings of native and foreign beads set off with tassels of the above mentioned description. What little garments they wore consisted in unmade calicos and native mats. They wore garlands of green leaves on their heads, and tassels of variegated

and aromatic plants were suspended from their belts. And above all came the Fatean comb to which was attached a plume of feathers.

The dancers consisted of two groups—the one of males, the other of females. There were ten men and five women "on the floor" when I saw them. The men walked round the musical pile five abreast, each with a club, spear, or hatchet in hand, which was kept in a constantly undulating motion as they went on.

The women followed after, now lessening now increasing the distance between themselves and the men. Each woman carried in her hand in an erect posture a branch from a native variegated bush which was kept in waving motion as above, while trotting their rounds.

The dance was no more nor less than a trotting round the musical instruments.—Now the company would accelerate, now they would retard their pace as the drummers beat with greater or less vehemence.

I heard no yelling noise, nor saw I antic tricks or gestures performed. The dancers halted at stated periods in front of the "leader of the choir," when one of them, in turn, leaning forward, and fixing a gloomy and earnest stare on the ground before him, as if he expected every moment to see the *Namtuim* issue forth, sung some jarring strain of which I did not understand a word. At stated periods the rest of the company who were standing in front of the singer, would join in a boisterous chorus. This ended, the drummers again were at the logs, and the company off on a fresh march.

While looking on I noticed a small enclosure some four feet in diameter staked in and piled up with bits of rotten wood, and various kinds of rubbish. On the top of the heap were two large conchs. I noticed a man coming along with a little pig on a cord. Having brought it to the pile it was killed over it. On enquiry I was told that the pile was an altar, and that they gave the *Namtuim* the blood of animals in order to propitiate his favour.

Of course you, my christian readers, will all join with me in characterising his wild,