

and each squaw took the dish, with what her husband had left, which she carried home and ate with her children. Neither married women nor youth under twenty were allowed to be present, but old widow squaws and captive men were allowed to sit by the wigwam door. The Indian men continued in the wigwam relating their warlike and hunting exploits, or telling comical stories. The seniors gave maxims of prudence and grave counsel to the young men, which were always listened to with a degree of respect and attention, to which white men are too often strangers. Each spoke according to his fancy, but rules of order were observed; there was no coughing down of speakers, as in modern Houses of Parliament; and but one spoke at a time. When every man had told his story, one would rise up and sing a feast song, while others succeeded alternately, and then the company broke up.

The taciturn and silent character of the Indians has been so much spoken of as to have become almost proverbial, but it seems to be much less a natural quality with them than is generally supposed. They are decidedly fond of speech-making, and equally fond of telling stories of the prowess either of their ancestors or of themselves. The causes of their taciturnity will be easily understood when it is remembered how limited is the range of subjects on which they are able to converse. Their hunting or warlike exploits, and a few traditions, are almost the only matters on which they can speak. Unlike civilized men, they know nothing of the news of the world, the teachings of history or philosophy, or the politics and business of life. Their education and pursuits entirely unfit them for the discussion of a thousand questions with which civilized men are familiar, and hence they are silent for lack of having anything to say.

But it is as warriors that the Indians have attracted the greatest amount of attention and won the most fame. With the Indians, war was the object that they regarded as most worthy of their efforts, and to be a great warrior was their highest ambition. They taught their children that valor, fortitude and skill in war, were the noblest accomplishments of a man, in which respect they resembled the people of Sparta; but unlike them they did not consider that to attain them it was necessary to sacrifice decency, honesty and truth. In these respects, the uncivilized and untaught savages were superior to the polished Greeks. Their falsehood never passed into a proverb. They were distinguished for their