

2 or 3 yards by the players, and as the ring strikes the barrier and is falling on its side the spears are thrown so that the ring may fall on them; if only one of the spears should be covered by the ring the owner of it counts according to the coloured bead over it. But it generally happens, from the dexterity of the players, that the ring covers both spears, and each count according to the colours of the beads above his weapon. They then play towards the other barrier, and so on until one party has attained the number agreed upon for game.

The Chinooks have tolerably good horses, and are fond of racing, at which they bet considerably; they are expert jockeys and ride fearlessly.

They also take great delight in a game with a ball, which is played by them in the same manner as by the Cree, Chippewa and Sioux Indians. Two poles are erected about a mile apart, and the company is divided into two bands armed with sticks, having a small ring or hoop at the end with which the ball is picked up and thrown to a great distance, each party then strives to get the ball past their own goal. There are sometimes hundreds on a side, and the play is kept up with great noise and excitement. At this game they also bet heavily, as it is generally played between tribes or villages.

The sepulchral rites of this singular tribe of Indians are too curious to be entirely omitted. Upon the death of a Chinook the body is securely tied up in rush matting and placed in the best canoe they can procure, without any peculiar ceremonies. This canoe is as highly decorated as the family of the deceased can afford. Tin cups, kettles, plates, pieces of cotton, red cloth, and furs, and in fact everything which they themselves most value, and which is most difficult for them to obtain, are hung round the canoe; inside, beside the body, they place paddles, spears, bows and arrows, and food, with everything else which they consider necessary for a very long journey,—I have even found beads, Iroquois shells, brass buttons and small coins in the mouths of the skeletons,—the canoe is then taken to the burial place of the tribe, generally selected for its isolated situation. The two principal places are rocky Islands in the lower part of the Columbia river; one is called Coffin Rock from the appearance it presents, covered with the raised biers of the deceased members of the tribe; to these they tow the canoe, which is then either fastened up in a tree or supported on a sort of frame 4 or 5 feet from the ground made of strong cedar boards, and holes bored in the bottom of the canoe to let the water run out, they are then covered with a large piece of bark to protect them from the rain. Before leaving they destroy the usefulness of every article left with the corpse, making holes in the kettles, cans, and baskets, cracking the bows, arrows and spears, and if there is a gun they take the lock off, believing that the Great Spirit will mend them upon the deceased arriving at the hunting grounds of their Elysium. The greatest crime which an Indian can commit in the eyes of his people is that of desecrating one of these canoes, and it very seldom happens that the slightest thing is removed.

In obtaining a specimen of one of the peculiarly formed skulls of the tribe I had to use the greatest precaution, and ran no small risk not only in getting it but in having it in my possession afterwards; even the voyageurs would have refused to travel with me had they known that I had it among my collections, not only on account of the superstitious dread in which they hold these burial places, but also on account of the danger arising from a discovery, which might have cost the lives of the whole party.

A few years before my arrival at Fort Vancouver, Mr. Douglass, who was then in charge, heard from his office the

report of a gun inside the gates, this being a breach of discipline he hurried out to enquire the cause of so unusual a circumstance, and found one of Casenov's slaves standing over the body of an Indian whom he had just killed, and in the act of reloading his gun with apparent indifference, Casenov himself standing by. On Mr. Douglass arriving at the spot, he was told by Casenov, with an apology, that the man deserved death according to the laws of the tribe, who as well as the white man inflicted punishment proportionate to the nature of the offence. In this case the crime was one of the greatest an Indian could be guilty of, namely, the robbing the sepulchre canoes. Mr. Douglass after severely reprimanding him allowed him to depart with the dead body.

Sacred as the Indians hold their burial places, Casenov himself, a short time after the latter occurrence, had his only son buried in the cemetery of the Fort. He died of consumption—a disease very frequent amongst all Indians—proceeding no doubt from their constant exposure to the sudden vicissitudes of the climate. The coffin was made sufficiently large to contain all the necessaries supposed to be required for his comfort and convenience in the world of spirits. The chaplain of the Fort read the usual service at the grave, and after the conclusion of the ceremony, Casenov returned to his lodge, and the same evening attempted, as narrated below, the life of the bereaved mother, who was the daughter of the great chief generally known as King Comecomly, so beautifully alluded to in Washington Irving's "Astoria." She was formerly the wife of a Mr. McDougall, who bought her from her father for, as it was supposed, the enormous price of ten articles of each description, guns, blankets, knives, hatchets, &c., then in Fort Astoria. Comecomly, however, acted with unexpected liberality on the occasion by carpeting her path from the canoe to the Fort with sea otter skins, at that time numerous and valuable, but now scarce, and presenting them as a dowry, in reality far exceeding in value the articles at which she had been estimated. On Mr. McDougall's leaving the Indian country she became the wife of Casenov.

It is the prevailing opinion of the chiefs that they and their sons are too important to die in a natural way, and whenever the event takes place they attribute it to the malevolent influence of some other person, whom they fix upon, often in the most unaccountable manner, frequently selecting those the most dear to themselves and the deceased. The person so selected is sacrificed without hesitation. On this occasion Casenov selected the afflicted mother, notwithstanding she had during the sickness of her son been one of the most assiduous and devoted of his attendants, and of his several wives she was the one he most loved; but it is the general belief of the Indians on the west side of the mountains, that the greater the privation they inflict on themselves the greater would be the manifestation of their grief, and the more pleasing to the departed spirit. Casenov assigned to me an additional motive for his wish to kill his wife, namely, that as he knew she had been so useful to her son and so necessary to his happiness and comfort in this world, he wished to send her with him as his companion on his long journey. She, however, escaped into the woods, and next morning reached the Fort imploring protection; she was accordingly secreted for several days until her own relations took her home to Chinook Point. In the meantime a woman was found murdered in the woods and the act was universally attributed to Casenov or one of his emissaries.

I may here mention a painful occurrence which took place on Thompson's river, in New Caledonia, as illustrative of this peculiar superstition.