

tic ritual by which the worshippers of the ancient Sun-God seek to win his favour. And here are seen in all their barbaric splendour of nakedness, paint and feathers those weird,

Canadian side of the international boundary line, cling the closest to their old life and customs. Their Sun Dance celebration usually lasts for three or four weeks, and it is



THE SUN DANCE

uncouth dances, a blending of the social, the martial and the religious, which are so common to primitive peoples and so incomprehensible at first to the minds of modern civilisation.

The Blackfoot nation proper is really composed of three tribes—Bloods, Peigans and Blackfeet, all speaking the same language, and recognising one another as kinsmen. Their hunting grounds formerly lay just to the east of the more northerly chains of the Rocky Mountains, where the level stretches of the prairie rolled up into the foot-hills, and were tempered by the warm winds of the Pacific coast, so that ponies and buffaloes grazed in the open all winter long.

Of the three branches, the Bloods, who now occupy a reservation on the

this now almost obsolete spectacle that the writer proposes to describe.

The gathering of the tribe commenced about the beginning of June, and for days the winding trails which led through wooded river bottom and over rolling prairie were alive with rumbling waggons, trotting ponies, and scraping travois poles. The spot selected for the camp was a southern slope of prairie. Each day the number of tepees grew, until finally nearly the whole tribe of some 1,200 souls was collected there.

When completed, the camp formed a huge circle, with an irregular circumference of tepees surrounding the open space, which served as the arena for the various performances. Along the inner edge of the circle of ordinary tepees stood the somewhat larger assembly lodges of the various bands