

present haunts, or indeed, anywhere within hundreds of miles either to the east or the west of them. Their origin is involved in mystery. According to their own tradition they were the first people created in the world, and they lived originally inside the earth in a great cave. They have the story of a vine which grew in their cave up through a hole in the earth overhead, that a number of them climbed up this vine and so were introduced to the surface of the earth; then the vine broke and the rest of their Nation were left below. They say that they can still hear their people talking under the earth at certain times and places; and on important occasions they consult with them for their opinions and advice.

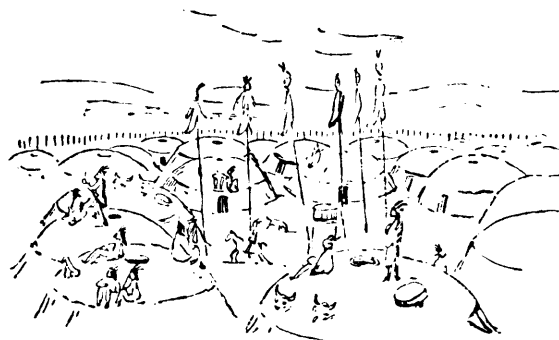
The Mandans are a branch of the great Siouan Stock, to which belong the Dakotas, the Omahas, the Poncas, the Osages, the Crows, the Assiniboines, the Kaws, the Otoes, and several other tribes. Their numbers are now very greatly reduced. This was brought about mainly by the small-pox, which visited their two villages on the Missouri River, in 1838, and left scarcely a soul remaining. In 1884 they numbered 311; in 1885, 410; in 1887, 286. They are still living in the same neighborhood as formerly, on the west bank of the Missouri, near Fort Berthold, in Dakota Territory. It was some time before the American Government could induce them to give up their village life, and to adopt agriculture as a mode of gaining their livelihood; now, however, many of them have their own farms and comfortable frame houses to live in, and quite a number of their children attend the Fort Stevenson Industrial School, which is seventeen miles distant from their Reservation. Their immediate neighbors are the Arickaree and Gros Ventres Indians, tribes of a different language to themselves.

In former days, these people lived mainly by hunting buffaloes; buffalo meat and berries was at that time their main food; they also cultivated the ground to some extent, and grew maize, squashes, pumpkins and tobacco; they also ate a species of wild turnip found on the prairies.

In stature, the men were rather below the average standard, but they were well-proportioned and graceful in their movements; the men banged their hair on the forehead and wore it long on the sides; the women parted the hair in the middle and rubbed the parting, as do many Indian tribes, with vermilion. Their dresses were made of skins; their leggings and moccasins embroidered with colored porcupine quills and fringed with scalp locks; their head dresses were ornamented with the tail feathers of the war eagle—two

horses would be the price asked for a handsome head-dress. They would also ornament the head with a mat of ermine skins and tails, the tails and strips of skin falling as a thick fringe, like the mane of a buffalo, about their face and shoulders. As a people, the Mandans have always been friendly to the whites; they were never of a warlike disposition, and are very hospitable to strangers; the pot in the lodge is always kept boiling, and food is kept ready to place before the visitor. The women are spoken of as particularly modest and chaste in their behaviour.

At the time when Catlin visited them in 1832, he found them living, as has been said, in two large villages on the banks of the Missouri; the appearance of these villages he thus describes. "The groups of lodges around me present a very curious and pleasing appearance, resembling in shape, so many potash kettles inverted. On the tops of these are to be seen groups of people standing and reclining, whose wild and picturesque appearance it would be difficult to describe. In the centre of the village is an open space or public area 150 feet in diameter, and circular in form, which is used for public games and festivals; and in the middle of the circle is an object in the form of a large hogshead eight or ten feet high, made of planks and hoops, containing their medicines or mysteries, and called by them their "big canoe." They hold this object in the highest reverence, and once every year they have a high festival in commemoration of the flood."



MANDAN VILLAGE.

The dome-shaped houses in which these people used to live were from forty to fifty feet in diameter, sunk two feet in the ground, and about fifteen feet high in the centre. The outside circular wall was formed of upright posts about six feet high, and on the tops of these rested the butt ends of long poles all sloping towards one common centre, where a hole was left for sky-light and chimney; the roof was supported by beams