

vaunting forth the most extravagant boasts of their wonderful prowess in war, whilst they brandish their war weapons in their hands. A number of young women are selected to aid (though they do not actually join in the dance), by stepping into the centre of the ring, and holding up the scalps that have been recently taken, whilst the warriors dance (or rather *jump*), around in a circle, brandishing their weapons, and barking and yelping in the most frightful manner, all jumping on both feet at a time, with a simultaneous stamp, and blow, and thrust of their weapons; with which it would seem as if they were actually cutting and carving each other to pieces. During these frantic leaps, and yelps, and thrusts, every man distorts his face to the utmost of his muscles, darting about his glaring eye-balls and snapping his teeth, as if he were in the heat (and actually brenting through his inflated nostrils the very hissing death) of battle! No description that can be written, could ever convey more than a feeble outline of the frightful effects of these scenes enacted in the dead and darkness of night, under the glaring light of their blazing flambeaux; nor could all the years allotted to mortal man, in the least obliterate or deface the vivid impress that one scene of this kind would leave upon his memory.

The precise object for which the scalp is taken, is one which is definitely understood, and has already been explained; but the motive (or motives), for which this strict ceremony is so scrupulously held by all the American tribes, over the scalp of an enemy, is a subject, as yet not satisfactorily settled in my mind. There is no doubt, but one great object in these exhibitions is public exultation; yet there are several conclusive evidences, that there are other and essential motives for thus formally and strictly displaying the scalp. Amongst some of the tribes, it is the custom to bury the scalps after they have gone through this series of public exhibitions; which may in a measure have been held for the purpose of giving them notoriety, and of awarding public credit to the persons who obtained them, and now, from a custom of the tribe, are obliged to part with them. The great respect which seems to be paid to them whilst they use them, as well as the pitying and mournful song which they howl to the *manes* of their unfortunate victims; as well as the precise care and solemnity with which they afterwards bury the scalps, sufficiently convince me that they have a superstitious dread of the spirits of their slain enemies, and many conciliatory offices to perform, to ensure their own peace; one of which is the ceremony above described.