

functionary is obliged to practise seven fasts, and to live during the term of his priesthood in entire celibacy. Even if he possesses a family, on his appointment as "Great Medicine" he must separate from them during his term, and the public supports them. All religious councils are held in his lodge, and disputes are generally adjusted by him as judge. His presence and voice are sufficient to quell all domestic disturbance, and altogether he holds more actual power and influence than even the civil and war chiefs. His face is always painted black, and he wears his hair tied in a large knot over his forehead, and through this knot is passed a sharp stick with which he scratches his body, should he have occasion, for he is not to use his finger nails for this purpose. None but he can or dare handle the sacred pipe and emblems. At the end of his term the tribe presents him with a new lodge, horses, and so forth, wherewith to commence life anew.

It cannot but strike the attention of an observer, that this custom, this peculiar personage with his lodge and sacred emblems, among the roving sons of the prairies, resembles forcibly the ark and high priesthood of the wandering Israelites of old. I wish again to remark that the fact of this custom being in use among the Blackfeet, has not been obtained under my own personal observation, and therefore I cannot vouch fully for its truth. Having learned it, however, of persons of undoubted veracity, I have deemed it worthy of insertion here. It was corroborated to me during the summer of 1849, by Paul Kane, Esq., a Canadian gentleman,¹ while stopping at my house at Crow Wing on the Mississippi, with Sir Edward Poor and

¹ Paul Kane was an artist of Toronto. In the Parliament Library of the Dominion of Canada, at Ottawa, are twelve of his oil paintings representing Indian life toward the Rocky Mountains. In 1859 a book from his pen was published in London, with the title *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, from Canada to Van Couver's Island and Oregon.*—E. D. N.