

among a chosen few, and hand them down from one generation to another. Medical practice among the Indians,<sup>1</sup>—and when I speak of Indians I must be understood as referring to the Winnebagoes, with whose customs and language I am alone familiar,—is very crude, yet in certain classes of cases it seems to be sufficient. In the treatment of wounds and chronic sores, the Indian medicine men are more successful, so far as my observation goes, than the average white surgeons. In such cases, they dress the wounds very carefully, and apply poultices of herbs. In cases of sickness, peculiar concoctions of herbs and roots are used, with sweats and rubbings. Of course this is accompanied by mystic ceremonials and incantations, which I imagine are chiefly thrown in for effect; I do not think the medicine men themselves believe in them. When a medicine man is needed, it is customary to tender him a present in advance, as a sort of retaining fee. Indeed, many will not respond to a call without such fee. If, in due course of time, the patient dies on the medicine man's hands, or is thought by the family to be unimproved, the latter is discharged and is expected to give back all of the fees he has received up to date. A new man is then patronized, on the same terms — “No cure, no pay.”

The secret society is conducted by these medicine men. Fully one-half of the tribe—men and women, and youths of both sexes—belong; possibly a majority of them do. When a person wishes to join, and is accepted by the fraternity, he must accumulate a heap of goods as an initiation fee. Before the government payments, it sometimes took years to make this accumulation; but since the inauguration of the payments, money is somewhat easier among them. Indeed, the demands of the society swallow up no small portion of the government annuity. These initiation fees are given to the head medicine man of the neighborhood, who is supposed to divide them among the fraternity, but it is a matter of general notoriety that he keeps the lion's share. The medicine meetings<sup>2</sup> are usually

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 497.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.—ED.