

of life. At about the age of puberty the Indian boy bethought himself of taking the necessary steps for the preparation of this mysterious amulet or charm. He retired to some solitary spot, where he spent several days, lying upon the ground, taking nothing to eat, and employing himself constantly in praying to the Great Spirit. Becoming exhausted, he would fall asleep, and of course dream very important and significant dreams. He would then return home, and after gaining sufficient strength, start out in pursuit of the bird or animal which appeared most conspicuous in his dreams, not resting until he had obtained a specimen. This done, he would return and dress the skin, stuff it with moss, or some other light substance, after which he would ornament it with every description of savage finery. This medicine-bag was considered invaluable, and was carried in every important undertaking. "These curious appendages," says Mr. Catlin, "to the persons or wardrobe of an Indian are sometimes made of the skin of an otter, a beaver, a muskrat, a weasel, a raccoon, a pole-cat, a snake, a frog, a toad, a bat, a mouse, a mole, a hawk, an eagle, a magpie, or a sparrow; sometimes of the skin of an animal so large as a wolf."

The Crows were inferior in numbers to the Blackfeet, but with whom they were for many years at war. Physically they are a fine race, being much taller than the Indians of surrounding tribes, and models of agility and strength. In their primitive state they were an honest, trustworthy set of savages, but in later days, when corrupted by the evils of civilization, they became a lawless, thieving horde. As will be seen in the course of our narrative, the Crows and Blackfeet were objects of terror to the pioneer settlers, traders, and trappers of the Far West. Mr. Brownell, in speaking of their personal appearance, says that one distinguishing peculiarity of these Indians was the extraordinary length of their hair, which was cherished and cultivated as an ornament, until it swept the ground after them. This profusion was to be seen in no tribe except the Crows, although some of their neighbors endeavored to imitate it by glueing an additional length to their natural hair. The Crows spoke a different language from the Blackfeet.