

PAWNEE WAR TALES

By GEORGE A. DORSEY

NOTE. — The two tales of war here presented were obtained from a very old Pawnee warrior commonly called George Shooter, a Chaui. Their chief interest is in the information they furnish regarding the methods formerly pursued by the Pawnee in preparing for and while on raiding expeditions.

THE DEFEAT OF THE PAWNEE BY THE CHEYENNE, ARAPAHO, AND COMANCHE

One night a warrior sat in his lodge with many friends about him listening to his experiences while on the war-path. As the night wore on and he continued to tell of his exploits, a great longing seized him and he asked his friends if they would accompany him the next morning, for he had decided to start on the war-path again. On that same night three other warriors sat in their lodges and told their friends of their own experiences in war, and a great longing to fight filled the breast of each of these warriors ; then they asked their friends to go with them on the morrow, for they too had decided to start on the war-path again. Before the break of day the four warriors and their men were on the way to the country of the enemy. During the day the scouts from each party met and at night the four parties came together. The scouts resented the presence of one another, for every scout preferred to have the country to himself, but the four leaders joined forces and traveled together to the enemy's country.

One day the leaders sat down in a valley and sent out men to kill buffalo. The men went out, killed a buffalo, and started to skin it. When they had it about half skinned, the buffalo rolled over, jumped up, and ran away with its skin flapping up and down. The men were dumb with astonishment for a time ; then they went on and killed another buffalo, skinned it, cut up the meat and took it to camp where the leaders were. While they were roasting the meat, the men who had been out to kill buffalo told the leaders

about the buffalo that was nearly skinned when it jumped up and ran away from them. One of the leading warriors said to the other leading warriors: "This is a very bad omen; tomorrow I shall leave you three warriors to go your way with your parties, and I will go with my party to another country." The other warriors spoke up and said that there was no danger and that they should all go together. All the warriors stayed at the place over night, but the next morning the warrior who said that he was going to leave started out toward the north with his men. They had gone but a short distance when the other companies sent four scouts to look over the country and see whether there were any signs of enemies. The scout who started first told the other three scouts that he would go ahead; that if he should fail then another should follow, and then the other one.

When the first scout had climbed a high hill on the south side, the main body were looking at him. Just as he was about to stand up, for he had been crawling up the hill, a man on horseback came up on the other side so that they saw each other at the same time. The man afoot crawled back. The man on horseback turned around and went back whence he came. Then the first scout gave a sign to the second that he (the first) had been seen; then the second scout gave the sign that the enemy had seen their scout, to the third scout, who passed it on to the fourth. The fourth man ran to the place where the main company of warriors was and told them that the first warrior had given a sign to the second, and the second to the third, and the third to himself, that an enemy had seen the first scout. The war-party slipped quietly away into a thickly timbered country and there they stayed. The other three scouts then stopped crawling and stood up and walked toward the place where the leaders and their warriors were in hiding. While they were walking over the prairie, several men on horseback came over the hill, saw them, turned their horses about, and disappeared over the hill. In a few seconds the enemy all came over the hill on horseback. They whipped up their ponies and rode toward the timber.

In the meantime the other leader who had gone had turned back with his company and joined the main body of warriors, and all the warriors were putting on their war clothing. There was one young

man who put on a wolf robe, seized his bow and arrows, jumped up in front of the leader and the men, and said: "Leader, to-day the Wolf-man shall defend you and your men!" Then he went back and sat down. Then another young man jumped up and stood before the leader. This man had a bear robe about his shoulders. He said: "Leader and men, to-day the Bear-man shall defend you!" When he sat down, another man, who had a buffalo robe about him, stood up before the leader and said: "To-day Young-Bull shall defend you and these men!" He sat down and another man, with a coyote robe on, stood up and said: "Leader, to-day the Coyote-man shall protect and fight for you!"

During this time the enemy were rapidly approaching on horseback. The four leaders then arrayed their men in a line and said that all the men should fight for their leaders. The enemy came and they were many. As they rode up, the four men jumped up on a bank and fought them, killing several and driving them back. Again the enemy made a charge and the warriors beat them off again. Again the enemy made an attack upon the warriors and again they were driven back.

About this time a man called out from the distance. The warriors looked and saw many men on horseback coming from another direction. The man who had hallooted to them, called out, saying: "My brothers, Pawnee, we are Comanche; the Cheyenne and Arapaho are fighting you; you have driven them back four times; now we will stand here and watch you fight, but we will not take part, since you are our brothers." When the Comanche finished speaking, some one from the warrior crowd of Pawnee shot at him and hit him upon the forehead, killing him instantly. The Comanche were aroused at once, for the Pawnee had killed their chief in return for their offer of peace. They rode away and joined the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

Then the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Comanche all rode up to the Pawnee and surrounded them. The four warriors fought well. The Coyote-man, one of the four men who spoke, was killed. The enemy surrounded them, retreated, then rushed up again many times, but the Buffalo-man and the Bear-man held out against them for a long time. After a time, the Bear-man saw that there was

little hope for them and ordered the men to run into a ravine that extended up the hill side. They were surrounded in the ravine, for they did not know where to go. The Buffalo-man led the way, killing the enemies in front of him as he progressed. When the Buffalo-man had killed one man, another Pawnee caught the pony of the dead man, mounted it, and rode away. The Bear-man plunged ahead by fighting his way through the enemy, who closed in on all sides, killing them on the right and on the left. The Bear-man brought up the rear and fought the enemy from behind.

The enemy had killed many Pawnee warriors, but the man they wanted very much to kill was the Buffalo-man. In those days it was customary for the Pawnee to have their hair roached, but the Buffalo-man had long hair; so the enemy wanted to kill him and take his scalp. The Buffalo-man and the Bear-man succeeded in getting the Pawnee through the line of the enemy, but out of the one hundred and twenty men only twenty were left.

PEACE BETWEEN THE PAWNEE AND THE COMANCHE

There was one man who made up his mind to go on the war-path. He sent for several other young men to join him. They sat in his lodge with him and smoked the warrior's pipe. The warrior then told the young men that he had it in his mind to go on the war-path and that he had selected them to join him. The other young men, when they heard it, were glad. Each in his turn spoke and said: "I will go with you; this night I go to my lodge and tell my mother and sisters to make me several pairs of moccasins and to fill the moccasins with pounded buffalo meat and corn." The warrior was glad to know that the young men were willing to go with him. The young men left the lodge and went to their homes, and each told his mothers and sisters to make several pairs of moccasins and fill them with food. The mothers and sisters of these young men made several pairs of moccasins that night, and the next day they made more, so that by night they had made all the moccasins that the warriors needed. In the night the warrior sat in his lodge and the young men came in with their packed moccasins. The young men sat around the fire in the lodge. Some of the young men went out in pairs and sang war

songs around the village, to let the other young men know that they were about to leave the village to go on the war-path. Toward morning all had come into the lodge and the warrior led them out of the village.

The war-party went away into the southern country for many days and months. When they reached the enemy's country they were very careful to hide during the day and to travel only during the night. One day they were traveling along a ravine, when one of the scouts climbed up the side of a hill and saw a lone tipi on the prairie. He came down and reported to the leader that there was a lone tipi on the prairie. The leader went up the hill and saw the tipi there by itself. He went back and selected one of the scouts to go and visit the tipi and see who was in it. The scout went up, came to the tipi, peeped in, and saw that there were only one woman and a little boy about four years old. The woman was close to the entrance, pounding dried meat with a pestle. The scout went back and reported to the leader that there were a woman and a little boy in the tipi. The leader then told all the warriors to lie down in the ravine, saying he was going up to see whether he could persuade the woman to feed them. When the leader reached the top of the hill, he looked over the country and saw a man coming on horseback. He lay down and hid. When the man on horseback came to the tipi, he lariatied the pony and went inside. Then the leader arose and called his warriors and they followed him to the tipi. The warriors sat down outside of the tipi, while the leader went close up to the tipi and sat down. The little boy in the tipi was playing and laughing. The leader peeped into the tipi, and he saw that the man was lying down with a robe over his head, and the woman was still pounding the buffalo meat. The leader sat there for a long time, making up his mind whether to kill the people or whether to save them. He heard the boy ask his mother to give him some meat. The mother took some pemmican, pressed it together and made a ball of it, and gave it to the boy. He ran out of the tipi, up to the leader, put his arms about the leader's neck, and sat in his lap. The leader took the pemmican, then the boy went into the tipi to get something more. Again he went up to the leader and gave him the ball of pemmican, then

went into the tipi and asked for another ball of pemmican, took it out, and gave it again to the leader. Several times the boy took out meat and came back without any. The woman, knowing that there were no dogs about the tipi, thought there must be somebody outside to whom the child was giving meat. She called her husband and told him that she had given several balls of pemmican to the child, that he had gone out and returned without any, that she was sure she heard voices outside.

As the man rose up in the bed and rested on one of his elbows, the leading warrior made a motion to his warriors to follow him into the tipi. The leading warrior threw open the entrance and went in, and as soon as he went in the others followed him. The enemy lying in bed was paralyzed with fear. As soon as the warriors sat around the circle of the fireplace, the leader made a motion for the man to get up, but the man was so paralyzed that he did not get up for some time. The little boy in the meantime ran up to the leader and sat in his lap. The leader then made a motion to the man lying down to get up from his bed and to sit with them, assuring him that they did not intend to do them any harm, for said the leader, "I have a child like this little boy at my home." The little boy came and touched him with his arms and gave him something to eat, then gave him water to drink. "I have entered your lodge, and as I sit in your lodge the little boy again comes to me, as if he were my son; he sits in my lap; I love the little boy as I do my own, so you need not be afraid that we will kill you." The man lying upon the bed arose and sat with them. He breathed a sigh of relief, then he turned around to his wife and told her to put a kettle over the fire and to cut a little dried buffalo meat and boil the meat for the people. Then the man told the leader that his brother-in-law was the head chief of the Comanche; that the Comanche had been camping there and had broken camp that morning; that the men had gone over the hills but a short distance; that the people were waiting for them at another place; that they knew that the man of the tipi was hunting his ponies, and that this was how he and his family came to be alone in this spot; that he had been looking for his ponies that had strayed away from him and had not found them. The man of the

tipi further told the leader that he was glad that the warriors had not killed him, his wife and his child; and that they should start after they had eaten, and that he would take them to the village of his own people and give them assistance in capturing many ponies. The woman took the kettle from the fire and the warriors took charge of the kettle. The leader selected two men to take the meat out of the kettle and to divide it equally among the men. After the meat was divided equally, they all ate. Then the leader told the man that they were going down to the ravine to hide until night, when they would go with him to the village of his people. The leader and his warriors went out from the tipi to the hollow. Just as they climbed over the hill, one of the warriors looked back and there came upon the hill behind the tipi a man on horseback driving several ponies. The man who saw them called to the leader, who stopped and looked. He said that it was another man who was bringing the ponies that belonged to the man of the tipi. The warriors hid in the ravine, while the leader stood upon the hill. The man who brought the ponies went into the tipi. Shortly after he went in, the man of the tipi came out and went to the place where the warriors were in hiding. Then the man told the leader and the warriors that his brother-in-law had brought the ponies to his tipi and that, as his brother-in-law was chief of the Comanches, he had asked the leader and his warriors to come to the tipi again. The warriors all arose and followed the man to his tipi. They entered the tipi and there the chief was sitting by the woman at the southeast of the entrance of the tipi. The chief arose and shook hands with the leader, then shook hands with all the others. He made signs to the leader to let him know that he was thankful that he had not killed the man, the woman, and the child. He made the leader understand that the woman was his sister, that the child was his nephew. The chief also told the leader that the family were to take down the tipi, bring the ponies and pack all their things on them and go where their village was; that this man must make his tipi on the south side of the village, some distance away, and that they must come out there after dark, for the woman would have something for them to eat. The chief further said that he was going to give the leader

a fine pony with a saddle, and that when they got ready to go away, he would help the warriors capture many ponies. The leader said it was good. When this was all arranged the warriors went back and hid in the ravine.

The man and woman took down the tipi, brought their ponies and packed them, and went on to their village, and the warriors followed. The family arrived at the village and put up their tipi on the south side, and after dark the warriors went to the tipi and the chief and the man of the tipi were there. The chief told the Pawnee warriors that he was going to have the crier go through the village and tell the people to go to his tipi to tell war stories. The warriors, being afraid of treachery, told the chief that if he did not come back they would have to kill the man, woman, and child, but the chief said that he was in earnest. So the chief went to the village and called the crier to go through the village and invite all the men to come to his tipi. The chief stayed there. When all the men entered his tipi he told them that he wanted them to tell war stories. When the men came they began to tell their war stories and the chief slipped out and went to the tipi where his brother-in-law was with the enemy. He entered, and taking the warrior by the hand, led him out and gave him the pony and saddle he promised him. Then they went back into the tipi, the chief and the leader, and the chief begged the leader to give him the pipe that he carried. The leader said that he could not do that, but that when the chief should help the warriors capture many ponies and after they had been three days on their way home, he would kill one of the ponies, and then if the chief would go so many steps west of the dead pony he would find the pipe in the grass. The Pawnee did not want to give his pipe to the enemy for fear he would give him all the power that the pipe possessed. The pipe was one with which smoke had been offered to the different gods in the heavens, so that the gods watched over the men who carried the pipe and gave them success in capturing ponies or attacking people. By dropping the pipe it would lose its power. All these things were agreed on by the warriors and the Comanche chief. After the warriors had eaten and were given plenty of meat to carry home, they began to get ready to go with the chief where the ponies

were. The chief led them to a bottom land where all the ponies were. He told the Pawnee warriors to take as many as they wanted. The Pawnee took all the ponies they could manage and went on, the chief going home. The Comanche men who were in the chief's tipi were still telling war stories, but by morning there was a noise through the camp that the enemy had come to the camp and stolen many ponies. The chief then had the crier go through the village to tell the men to come to his tipi and he would lead them and try and catch the enemy who had stolen their ponies. So the warriors gathered around the chief's tipi and they struck out after the Pawnee warriors.

For several days they went on their trail, and on the third day they could see them going, but a long distance away. About that time the Comanche found a dead pony lying upon the path. The Comanche stopped and the chief kept going around until at last he went as many steps as he was told, and there in the grass he found the pipe. The chief picked it up and told them that he had found the pipe. The Comanche were glad that the Pawnee had dropped their pipe, and thought that all the powers that went with the pipe might now be given to them ; so they were glad to turn back. Many years after, the Comanche and Pawnee met. This story was told to the Comanche, and then the Comanche understood why so many ponies were stolen from them, and why the chief had invited all the men to his tipi. When the Comanche knew the story they were not afraid to visit the Pawnee, for now they were friends.