



This game seems to amuse them, not only for hours but for whole nights, and the great cause of excitement lies in the stakes. Ten is game, and the party lose or win two at each guess.

They have another sport, which seemed to be the favourite with the Indians around Vancouver: this is played with a number of disks of bone or ivory, of the size of a quarter of a dollar, one of which differs from the rest. These are concealed in tow or fibrous hemp, and the guessing takes place in the same way. With these disks the players make a great noise by shaking them in their hands. There is great attention required in those who venture to play the game; and such appears to be its fascination, that I have seen them deprive themselves of one garment or article after another, until they were entirely destitute; and it is even said they often stake the freedom, not only of themselves, but of their children.

At Astoria we saw one day, when there was quite a crowd of Indians at the encampment, several squaws, all dressed in their best attire. These were all more than usually attentive to their personal appearance. The principal among them was a widow, whose time of mourning for the death of her husband had just expired. Her object was to notify her friends that she was ready to receive the addresses of any one who was in want of a wife. To give such notification was, as I found on inquiry, a common custom among the Chinooks.

The widow was of masculine make, and what we would call a buxom dame. She was attended by seven others, of small stature in comparison, who were her maids, and all evidently accompanied her to do honour to the occasion. Every half hour they would arrange themselves in a row, and the widow at their head, affecting a modest downcast look, would commence a chaunt, informing the bystanders that her period of mourning was out, that she had forgotten her deceased husband, given her grief to the winds, and was now ready to espouse another. This chaunt was accompanied by a small movement of the feet and body, which, with the guttural song and consequent excitement of such an exhibition, caused the fair ones to wax so