

Reminiscences of Little Crow /

LITTLE CROW, CHIEF OF THE SIOUX.

REMINISCENCES OF LITTLE CROW.*

* An address at the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Historical Society, January 21, 1907. In the absence of the author, Dr. Daniels, of St. Peter, Minn., at his winter home in Pomona, California, this paper was read for him by Gov. John A. Johnson.

BY DR. ASA W. DANIELS.

SERVICE AMONG THE SIOUX AS A PHYSICIAN.

Little has been written concerning Little Crow, the renowned chief of the Dakotas or Sioux, other than as a leader in the barbarous massacre of 1862. A more intimate knowledge of the man before that event may serve to give us a more intelligent understanding of his true character, and perhaps may modify somewhat existing impressions.

The following paper does not assume to give more than an imperfect sketch of some of the most conspicuous events of his life, and the impressions of the writer, who sustained a long and intimate relation with this interesting character, which terminated only a year prior to the outbreak.

The writer was appointed physician to the Medawakantonwan and Wahpekuta bands of Dakota Indians in July, 1854. At this time they were located on their reservation, on the south bank of the Minnesota river, twelve miles west of Fort Ridgely, and one hundred and thirty miles southwest of St. Paul. They were divided into bands, each with its chief, and were located in villages within a radius of fifteen miles of their agency, which was known as the Lower Sioux Agency. The government had plowed for each village a hundred or

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more acres which was cultivated in common. They numbered at this time nearly 3,300. Thirty miles west was the agency of the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands, known as the Upper Sioux Agency.

Annual payments took place, each head of a family receiving about fifty dollars, with clothing and provisions. They had also monthly or quarterly distributions of provisions. At the agency resided their agent, physician, teachers, carpenter, blacksmith, and other employees. One-half mile west were the three trading 514 houses. Three years later Bishop Whipple established a mission here, with a clergyman and two teachers.

During the writer's term of service, the agents were Major R. G. Murphy, Charles E. Flandrau, and Joseph R. Brown. The superintendents were Gov. Willis A. Gorman and Major William J. Cullen.

When at Fort Ridgely the writer amputated the arm of a halfbreed under the influence of chloroform, in the presence of several Indians in the room and many at the windows. It was the first time it had been given in that part of the state, and it was entirely unknown to the Indians. The effect was most profound. They invested the physician and medicine with supernatural powers, greatly magnifying the effect, and within a short time it became the talk and wonder of every tribe westward. There was still among them a general belief in conjuration in the treatment of disease, but they were disposed to combine with it the use of medicine. They expected their physician to protect them from smallpox by vaccination, to bleed, to scarify, to cup, to supply cough mixtures, anodynes, liniments, and cathartics, and to visit them when called.

From what has already been stated and what follows, it will be seen that the writer entered upon his duties at the Agency under favorable circumstances. From the first and during my long service among them, their treatment of me and my family was of the most generous and kindly character; and when I recall to mind the loving devotion of a few of the Indian women to my wife during her illness, I am moved with feelings of deepest gratitude.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF LITTLE CROW.

As my recollection serves, at the time of our first meeting, in 1854, Little Crow was a man of about forty years of age, five feet and ten inches in height, and weighed about one hundred and sixty pounds, with marked features of the Indian type. He was of a nervous temperament, restless and active, intelligent, of strong personality, of great physical vigor, and vainly confident of his own superiority and that of his people. He was affable and always self-possessed. Both wrists were badly deformed from fracture of the bones by gunshot wounds, but he had good use of 515 both hands. His head was decorated with three eagle feathers. notched and dyed, indicating his early exploits on the war-path.

THE FATHER OF LITTLE CROW.

My earliest knowledge of the father of Little Crow dates back to May, 1834, and comes from Mr. Samuel W. Pond, a lifelong missionary among the Dakotas. In a letter of his from Fort Snelling, dated May 25, 1834, he wrote: "I stayed last night with the famous chief, Little Crow, at Kaposia, where I went to help break up planting ground. I slept in his house and ate with him. He has two wives and a house full of children. He and his chief soldier, Big Thunder, held the plow alternately, while I drove the oxen, and these two men were doubtless the first Dakotas who ever plowed a furrow. He is a man of fair intelligence, a warm friend of the whites, loved by his people, and not hostile to the approach of civilization."

By invitation of this elder chief, Dr. Thomas S. Williamson in 1835 commenced his work as missionary at his village, where he remained for some years. Two of our Presidents, in recognition of his friendly services, had bestowed silver medals upon him. These he had preserved with the greatest care, and they were only worn on occasions of meeting government officials in council. They descended with the chieftainship to the later Little Crow.

CONFLICT FOR THE CHIEFTAINSHIP.

The accession of Little Crow as chief of his band was of a most tragical character, the particulars of which were given me by Dr. Williamson, who was a missionary at Kaposia at the time.

The father of Little Crow had four sons, two of whom were killed while leading a war party against the Ojibways. Little Crow was the elder of the surviving sons, and the heir apparent to the chieftainship. This honor he felt assured of, but he was ambitious to be chief of a western band as well. Therefore he went among the Wahpekutas, living a year or two among them, and married during the time a daughter of the chief of the band, hoping through his personal efforts and the influence of his father-in-law to accomplish this object. While he was away among the Wahpekutas, his father was accidentally killed, and before his death 516 had placed his medals upon his younger son and proclaimed him his legitimate successor.*

* Compare the account of the death of the elder Little Crow, with his appointment of his successor, as narrated by Hon. H. H. Sibley in Volume III, pages 251–254, of this Society's Historical Collections. The successor then appointed may probably have been the brother who was killed by the second Little Crow's followers in the ensuing strife.

News of this occurrence soon reached Little Crow, when he immediately set about securing a party of followers. This done, he left for Kaposia, determined to assert his right to the chieftainship. The brother learned of this hostile movement, and organized a considerable party of warriors for his support. When Little Crow reached Kaposia he was met by his brother, and an engagement followed in which this brother was killed, and Little Crow had the bones of both wrists shattered by a musket ball passing through them. The right to the chieftainship was duly acknowledged, but his wounds were of such a serious nature as to render him totally helpless.

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It was decided to take him to Fort Snelling, for the advice and aid of the army surgeon. When they reached the fort with their wounded chief and the examination was made, the surgeon pronounced that to save his life both arms should be amputated. A council of the head men followed, who determined that a chief without hands would be helpless, and that they would return with him and treat him as best they could; that if the Great Spirit looked with favor upon him and desired he should be chief, he would recover, and if not, another could be selected. After months of careful nursing, he recovered, with two useful hands, though a marked deformity remained during life.

THE CROW TOTEM.

His totem, or sacred animal, was a crow, the skin of which was carefully prepared to represent the bird in repose, and was worn back of and below the right shoulder. It was in some mysterious sense regarded as the ancestral spirit or soul of the family. He led his soldiers in the attack upon New Ulm, in August, 1862, and during that long, all-day fight ten of the defenders were killed, and among them was Jerry Quane, who fell far out toward the enemy's line. On gathering up the dead the following morning, the totem of Little Crow was found attached to his breast,—a silent but significant message.

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ELOQUENCE, DOMESTIC LIFE, AND LEADERSHIP.

Little Crow was a gifted, ready and eloquent speaker, and in council was always ready to answer any demand made by the government. Of his gift in this direction he seemed very proud, and made the most of opportunities that afforded such a display. His appeals in these addresses to the government and to the Great Spirit that justice be done to his people, with his rugged eloquence, the lighting up of his countenance, the graceful pose of his person, and the expressive gestures, presented a scene wonderfully dramatic. He was possessed of a remarkably retentive memory, enabling him to state accurately promises

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made years before to these Indians by government officials and to give the exact amount of money owing them, to the dollar and cent.

Before removing to the reservation, he was promised a frame house as his residence at that place, and this was found ready and to his satisfaction. During the writer's service he saw much of his domestic life, having attended one of his wives during an attack of typhoid fever, and frequently visited his family professionally. He had at that time three wives, the daughters of a Sisseton chief; they seemed obedient, modest and faithful, and the children were well cared for and all seemed happy. Alluding to his wives, he boasted of his wisdom in marrying three sisters, as their close relationship prevented domestic quarrels.

He was devoted to his children. His oldest son, fourteen years of age and the heir apparent, was his great pride. When government officials were to be present at an important council, this son, dressed in the most elaborate manner, with embroidered garments, ribbon decorations, and two silver medals on his neck, was led into the assemblage and presented as his son and successor.

The writer's oldest daughter was born at the Agency, the first white child. Soon after the event Little Crow called to pay his respects, bringing game and wild rice, and from that time to the termination of the writer's service he manifested a continued and affectionate interest in her. This was manifested by his frequent visits, giving her a favorite name, and bearing her in his arms,—the writer mentions this as indicating his natural love for children.

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Little Crow was a man of good habits; the writer never knew of his using intoxicating liquors. He was truthful and strictly honorable in his dealings with the government and traders. Occasionally he would be called to St. Paul to consult the Superintendent, and would be without funds to make the trip, and would apply to me for a loan. These obligations were always faithfully paid. There was no drunkenness and little crime among these Indians during this time.

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A delegation of Indians who participated in the treaties of 1851 visited Washington that year or the year following. Among them was Little Crow, who observed everything and instructed himself as fully as possible in matters that most interested him. His retentive memory and great descriptive powers enabled him to entertain his people with the wonders he had seen. Describing to them the speed of a railroad train, he declared that it was much faster than the horse. To many of them this statement was beyond belief, and it was agreed that it should be left to their physician to decide. A selected three waited upon the writer and asked my decision. Of course the veracity of their chief was vindicated.

The writer had a panoramic view taken from Bunker Hill monument, showing Charlestown, part of Boston, and a large scope of the surrounding country. This interested him greatly, and when a council among them took place he would borrow it for exhibition, as evidence of the strength and great numbers of our people. These councils of chiefs and head men of the different bands were frequent, and Little Crow was always the leading spirit among them.

He was the most active and influential of the different chiefs of the Lower Sioux, assuming a general supervision of all the bands, overseeing their annual payments, the monthly distribution of supplies, and the labor of the farmers, and was in frequent consultation with the agent and superintendent, giving and receiving advice in matters concerning the management of his people. Wabasha was a chief highly esteemed, but he lacked the energy and gift of speech that gave Little Crow such controlling influence.

THE INKPADUTA MASSACRE IN 1857.

Minnesota suffered her first Indian outbreak at Springfield and Spirit Lake, in March, 1857, when a band of lawless Sisseton Indians, under the leadership of Inkpaduta, massacred forty-two settlers 519 and carried into captivity four women. They were not treaty Indians, but a band of vagabonds who had infested the northwest part of Iowa for years, seldom mingling with the agency Indians. News of the outbreak was received at the agency at four

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o'clock in the afternoon of the 18th, from two men coming on foot from Spirit Lake. There was no road or trail, and they were obliged to make the distance over a trackless prairie, covered by a recent deep fall of snow. It was with the greatest difficulty they reached the agency, and they were so exhausted from exposure and fatigue that it was necessary to confine them to bed for days. Colonel Alexander, the commanding officer at Fort Ridgely, was at once notified, and the following morning a company of infantry left for the scene of the massacre. The snow was deep, and, though all possible haste was enforced, the march was slow and tedious, and on reaching their destination it was found that the Indians had gone westward days before, so that a pursuit was thought useless. They buried the dead and returned.

This event created a panic throughout the state, the settlers fearing it was the commencement of a general Indian war. Volunteer companies were hastily formed in the larger villages of the frontier, some of which marched to the scene of the outbreak.

Urgent demand was made for immediate punishment to follow, but no further action was taken by the commanding officer at the fort. The whites were disposed to make no distinction, but to hold all Indians equally responsible. The situation seemed so urgent that Superintendent Cullen and Agent Flandrau, thinking not only to punish the Indians guilty of the outrage, but to vindicate the treaty Indians, appealed to Little Crow to call together one hundred of his best warriors and follow up and exterminate the whole band.

In explanation of the condition existing at the time, Superintendent Cullen reported to the Interior Department: "For the present it is equally important to protect the Indians from the whites as the whites from the Indians." He stated that Little Crow labored with him night and day in organizing the party, riding continually between the Lower and Upper agencies; that they scarcely slept till the war party had set out on the track of the murderers; and that, in spite of all this, they (the innocent Indians) 520 were in continual danger of being shot at sight by the terrified and unreasoning settlers.

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This movement, so actively and loyally prosecuted by Little Crow, resulted in the killing of a part of Inkpaduta's band, and on his return Little Crow offered, if assisted by a company of soldiers, to return and exterminate the rest.

Except the killing of a son of Inkpaduta by a company of soldiers under command of Agent Flandrau, no further action was taken, thus suffering the escape of the larger part of a band of the most dangerous characters the frontier had known. This undoubtedly was one of the causes that operated to bring about the outbreak of 1862.

LITTLE CROW'S BAND ATTACKED BY OJIBWAYS IN 1854.

The writer's first meeting with Little Crow occurred at Fort Ridgely early in June, 1854, while medical officer at that post. His band had been moving from their old home at Kaposia to their reservation in divisions. The last division, consisting largely of the old men, women, and children of the band, numbering a hundred and fifty or two hundred, was in charge of Little Crow in person, with a half dozen of his soldiers.

Their removal came to the knowledge of the Ojibways, who determined that it would be a favorable time to ambush them somewhere along the route. A war party of eight was made up, who selected a point a short distance north of the fort and in plain sight from it. The government road along which the Sioux must pass was just beyond the edge of the ravine, and at the farther edge of the road was a thicket of small trees and brush, which formed a good cover for an ambuscade.

The Ojibways lay there concealed for three days, awaiting the coming of the Sioux, living on a scanty supply of parched corn they had brought with them, and stealing down at night to a creek in the ravine for water. Their patience was finally rewarded. It was toward the middle of a bright afternoon that the Sioux came in sight.

Little Crow and his braves marched ahead with their guns, followed by the rest of the band with their families and household possessions. They were scattered along in the easy

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disorder of a long march. There were a few carts and wagons loaded with baggage, 521 on which the women might ride by turns. The ponies, with their loads of baggage and children, placed on the primitive Indian conveyance, formed by two trailing lodge poles fastened to their sides, were plodding sleepily along. Here and there in the train were women bending wearily forward under a burden held on their backs by straps passing across the forehead and over and around the shoulders. Occasionally there was a bright blanket or a gaudy piece of calico that gave some color to the caravan, but it was a listless, tired-looking party. They trudged peacefully along in utter unconsciousness of the enemy lying in wait, lulled into a feeling of perfect security by the proximity of the fort.

A group of officers, sitting in the shade of the buildings, watching the approach of the Sioux, were startled to hear a volley ring out from the Ojibways in ambush and to see one Sioux warrior fall. Though badly disconcerted, the Sioux returned the fire and did what they could to repulse the attack, but were held at until the enemy had taken the scalp of the fallen Indian and left the field in triumph. The women and children fled to the ravine, toward the fort, and were soon safe from the enemy, whose numbers, in their fright, were estimated at hundreds. This all occurred in a very short space of time,—the brief struggle over, all that was to be seen was the demure ponies with their burdens, quietly nipping the grass, undisturbed by the stirring event.

Only one of the Sioux was killed. Several were slightly wounded, and among them was Little Crow, who was hit with several buckshot in the shoulder and arm. He came to the writer to have his injuries dressed. Thus occurred the writer's introduction to this strenuous character.

A squad of cavalry was immediately sent in pursuit of the fleeing Ojibways, and finally came upon four of them, about three miles from the scene of the fight. Three of the party were uninjured and were supporting the fourth, who had been shot through the right breast. Encumbered as they were by their wounded comrade, they could make but slow

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progress. The three made no effort to escape, but remained with their comrade. All were taken prisoners and brought to the fort.

The wounded man was placed on a white horse and supported on either side by a soldier. The spectacle of that horse all bedabbled with blood, surmounted by the bleeding and drooping figure, 522 naked except for breech-clout, leggings and moccasins, and all in their war paint, made a sight not soon to be forgotten. The three were placed in the guard house, and the wounded man was turned over to the writer at the hospital. Although a large scope of country was ridden over in the search, the other four of this war party escaped.

The Sioux, after being satisfied that the enemy had left, placed the body of their dead warrior upon a cart and proceeded on the way to their village, amid the mournful wailing of the women.

ENDEAVORS OF THE SIOUX FOR REVENGE.

The fertile brain of Little Crow was at once active in devising plans for avenging this outrage. He arranged for two hundred well mounted men from the different bands to meet at a specified time and place and then proceed under cover to near the fort, when, at a given signal, they would rush upon it, and in the confusion would carry off or kill the prisoners. Orders were given that no guns should be fired and no soldier injured, if possible, relying upon overriding all opposition by force of numbers. The fort was not stockaded and was illy prepared to resist such an attack, and the soldiers were scattered in various directions on extra duty, so that there was only the guard of a dozen men for immediate defense.

Three days after the previous event, and in the middle of the afternoon, riding rapidly toward the post, the Indians came in full sight. They had a full half mile to cover, which gave a short time to prepare for their reception. The long roll was sounded and the men hastily fell in, headed by Major Armstead, who seized the bridle of the foremost Indian's

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horse, beating down the guns levelled at him. The soldiers supported him with fixed bayonets and arrested the onrush for a moment, the brief time being sufficient for the soldiers to form an opposing front which was rapidly growing stronger. The distance that the Indians had to cover after coming in sight was fatal to their plans.

Realizing their failure, they hardly stopped, but turning swept out on the prairie about half a mile, halted, and held a council. After a short deliberation, a messenger came riding forward under a flag of truce. He said that Little Crow had made this raid upon the fort hoping to take the prisoners without much opposition, 523 and that he now demanded that they be given up to him for punishment; that their chief had charged them not to fire a gun or hurt a soldier, but to take the Ojibways, and now he hoped they would be permitted to do so.

The demand was refused, and, after further consultation, Little Crow sent another messenger, saying, in substance, that he had many warriors and could spare some of them, and that he would take the captives by force if they were not given up. The Major replied that if they thought it wise to take the prisoners against his will they might come and try it, but that he would not give them up. Convinced at last of the futility of their demands, the Indians concluded to compromise, and a third messenger was sent, promising that if an ox was given them they would return peacefully to their reservation. This request was also denied, and after a long time spent in council, disappointed and sullen, they turned their ponies westward and disappeared.

Under the restraint of ball and chain, the three Ojibways were kept in the guard house for about a month, and then one moonlight night they were allowed to escape. I think the Major was in a quandary to decide just what to do with them and considered this the easiest solution.

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The wounded Ojibway remained in the hospital for some months, when, having so far recovered that it was thought safe, he was allowed to return to his people. We afterward learned that he reached them safely.

PROGRESS TOWARD CIVILIZATION.

From the time the Dakota or Sioux Indians located upon their reservation, the policy of the government was to encourage in every way their becoming self-supporting. Large fields were plowed for each village, a farmer was provided to assist and instruct, and a few frame buildings were erected for such as proved most willing to work. This policy met with favor by most of the Indians, the fields being all cultivated, the work being mostly done by the women, but the men who were most forward in the movement joined their wives and worked faithfully.

A frame house and later a brick house were built for Little Crow, and other influences were brought to bear, but he persisted in maintaining a negative attitude toward the movement. His 524 wives were industrious workers in the field, but he proudly held himself above such menial calling.

Major Joseph R. Brown, on assuming the duties of agent, inaugurated a more radical policy, and urged upon all who were willing to go forward in the civilizing movement, to have their hair cut and adopt the costume of the whites. This was received by the progressive party favorably, but with open hostility by the others. Little Crow was one of the most pronounced opponents, declaring that early death would be visited upon them if they forsook the ways of their fathers.

Within a short time some one hundred and fifty came forward, had their hair cut, and put on citizens' clothing. Quite a number of them were from the band of Little Crow, who viewed this transformation with sullen contempt.

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The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, visiting these Indians in 1861, reported as follows:

I was surprised to find so many of the Sioux Indians wearing the garb of civilization, many of them living in frame or brick houses, some of them with stables or out-houses, and their fields indicating a considerable knowledge of agriculture. Their condition affords abundant evidence of what may be accomplished among the Sioux Indians by steadily adhering to a uniform, undeviating policy. Their condition is so much better than that of the wild Indians, that they, too, are becoming convinced that it is the better way to live, and many are coming in, asking to have their hair cut, and for a suit of clothes, and to be located on a piece of land where they can build a house and fence their fields.

After some months, although still opposed to this policy, Little Crow ceased all active opposition, as did also most of the other Indians, hoping it might result in good for his people. This was the condition up to July, 1861, which certainly encouraged the hope and expectation that their progress toward a condition of civilization would be more rapid in the years to come.

THE CIVIL WAR AND THE SIOUX OUTBREAK IN 1862.

Little Crow watched the war between the North and the South with the deepest solicitude. His runners were always early at the office waiting the arrival of the mail, and, after gathering the news concerning the war, hastened away to their chief. Our early defeats, losses in battle, and the enlisting of men at the Agency, 525 no doubt shook his confidence in our strength, and perhaps encouraged the hopes of success in an uprising against the whites. His statement to Mrs. Brown, a few days after the outbreak, that he had opposed it with all his might, and had joined them in their madness against his better judgment, the writer believes was truthful. His visits to Washington and other large cities of the East impressed him profoundly of our great strength, and must have influenced him against such a doubtful undertaking; but the ambitious, bloodthirsty young warriors were in the majority and determined the result.

LITTLE CROW'S TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

The following is from a historic sketch written by Samuel J. Brown (a son of Hon. Joseph R. Brown). He and his mother who was a mixed-blood Indian woman, and his sisters and brothers, were prisoners with the hostile Indians from the beginning of the massacre, and he gives us a correct understanding of the treatment accorded to the prisoners, and also the expectations of Little Crow at the commencement of the outbreak.

When mother entered, the chief [Little Crow] arose from his couch and stepped up and greeted her very cordially, and then handed her a cup of cold water and told her to drink, saying that she was his prisoner now. We were all hurried upstairs and told to remain quiet. The chief gave us robes and blankets and told us to lie down and go to sleep. He would sneak up stairs and ask mother (in a whisper) if she was comfortable, how the children were, etc. He was anxious to get into conversation with her, and finally said to her that he wanted her to know all about the troubles that have so suddenly come upon his people, and he wanted to tell her about it. He said, in substance, that his young men had started to massacre; that he at first opposed the movement with all his might, but when he saw he could not stop it, he joined them in their madness against his better judgment, but now did not regret it and was never more in earnest in his life; that the plan was for the Winnebago Indians to sweep down the Minnesota river from Mankato to St. Paul, the Chippewa Indians down the Mississippi from Crow Wing to St. Paul, and the Lower Sioux down between the two rivers, from the Lower Agency through the Big Woods to St. Paul; that all would meet in the neighborhood of the confluence of the two rivers, and make a grand charge on Fort Snelling; that this was a stone fort and might take a day or two to batter the walls down.

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The chief was very kind to us and assured us that we would not be harmed, that he would take as good care of us as he would if we were members of his own family.

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Mr. Brown regarded the kindness shown to their family as an effort to gain the support of the Upper Sioux; but the captives taken after this and held by Little Crow do not seem to justify such a conclusion. The Brown family were among the first prisoners taken, at which time there was a bitter hostility to any being held, but before their surrender Little Crow had succeeded in overcoming this opposition, and was caring for two hundred and sixty captives, of whom one hundred and four were white women and children.

The treatment of Mr. Blair by Little Crow is deeply interesting, and the writer quotes again from Mr. Brown's statement:

He was afraid, he said once, that he could not keep Blair alive until morning; that the young men outside were bloodthirsty and desperate, and should they learn that a white man was in camp there was no telling what might happen. The chief got some vermilion and daubed Blair's face with the red paint, and gave him a new red Mackinac blanket and a pair of red leggings, and pulled off his own moccasins and put them on Blair's feet, and then cautioned us to remain quiet, as bad Indians were near by, and then went back down stairs.

About midnight some one came to see Little Crow. He told the chief that it was rumored about camp that a white man and some strangers were in the house; that the warriors were very angry about it, and he wanted to know if there was any foundation to the rumor. When told that there was and that we were Sisseton mixed-bloods and his friends, the man got very angry and insisted that we should all be killed at once. He said that no prisoners ought to be taken; that the Sissetons were a different people and had no claim whatever on the Lower Sioux, and the mixed-bloods of that tribe are no better than white people, and should be treated the same as the whites.

He wanted Little Crow to call a council at once, but the chief told the man that we were his friends...and he would protect us; that it was too late for a council that night, and then compelled the man to leave.

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As soon as the man had gone away, Little Crow came quietly upstairs and told mother that he had just had a stormy interview with his (Little Crow's) private secretary, and that he had just left the house in a very angry mood...Mother and Little Crow talked over the matter, and they both agreed that not only was Blair's life in danger, but the lives of all of us, including that of Little Crow himself. The only hope was to get Blair away,—send him off in the dark. 527 My mother and Mrs. Blair resolved to do this. They at once went to work to get him ready. They gave him what crackers they had, and Little Crow gave him a shawl to wrap around his head, and then summoned his head warrior and instructed him to lead Blair down stairs and out through the camp, and down through the woods to the river bank, a few hundred yards back of the house, and leave him there to make his escape as best he could. Little Crow said to Mrs. Blair: "I have known your mother for many years. She is good woman, and in sending your husband away I am risking my life for her and for you all tonight. Be brave, your husband shall live.

After a sad farewell, Blair was taken away. He was dressed in full Indian costume.

Fort Ridgely was but about fifteen miles away, and yet the poor fellow was seven days getting to it.

CAUSES OF THE OUTBREAK.

On considering the causes that led to the outbreak, in August, 1862, the writer is convinced that the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota, in 1851, were the most prominent. The Dakota Indians were in possession of an empire that the whites urgently demanded, and in possessing ourselves of it we took from them their means of subsistence, giving them no adequate return. The area ceded by these treaties consisted of nearly twenty-four million acres of the most fertile lands of the Mississippi and Minnesota valleys. Governor Ramsey, in his report, thus speaks of the territory acquired:

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It is so diversified in natural advantages that its productive powers may be considered almost inexhaustible. Probably no tract upon the face of the globe is equally well watered...A large part is rich, arable land; portions are of unsurpassed fertility, and eminently adapted to the production in incalculable quantities of the cereal grains. The boundless plains present inexhaustible fields of pasturage, and the river bottoms are richer than the banks of the Nile.

For this immense territory the government agreed to pay nominally \$3,075,000, which would be about twelve cents an acre. But \$2,520,000 of that amount was to be held in trust, and only the interest at five per cent yearly to be paid to the Indians, and this only for the term of fifty years, at which time the principal was to revert to the Government.

The sums stipulated by these treaties to be paid immediately to the Dakota bands amounted to \$555,000; and the successive interest payments provided for them during fifty years amounted 528 to \$126,000 yearly, to be paid partly in goods and provisions, partly for agricultural and educational purposes, and the remainder (\$70,000 yearly) in money.

For the immediate payments, wholly due in money, the Commission allowed about \$300,000 to the Indian traders, through whose influence the treaties were effected, as payments of their excessive claims for debts of the Indians; and it was alleged that \$60,000 besides went to Hugh Tyler in payment of a fictitious claim for securing the ratification of the treaty by the Senate.

The Indians protested against the payment of such exorbitant claims, declaring they did not owe so much. Red Iron, a Sisseton chief, proposed leaving it to three disinterested whites, and what they determined to be justly owing to the traders they would willingly pay; but this proposition was rejected, and for refusing to comply with the demands of the Commission he was put in irons and confined for days.

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By intimidation, and by promises that the amount the Dakotas would receive would abundantly provide for their future wants, the treaties were finally consummated. As years passed and they came to more fully realize the great value of the country they had parted with, their sense of the injustice done them was ever becoming more intense. At every council, up to the outbreak, their unvarying cry was, that the treaties had been forced upon them, that their money had been unjustly paid to the traders, and that they had been robbed of their country.

It was expected that the monthly issue of provisions would be sufficient to mostly supply their necessities, but the Government had to do with an improvident race, and they were often destitute and in urgent want. This condition became more acute as the game on their reservations decreased and their income from that source became less; and, at times, the issue of flour and pork was unfit for human consumption, which added to their grievance.

During these times of destitution the Indians would appeal to the agent for greater supplies. When they were on hand and the condition seemed to warrant, they were granted; but in case of refusal, on some occasions, the Indians raided the warehouse, taking by force what they required. This condition continued for years, and sometimes they became so threatening that troops from Fort Ridgely were necessary to stay their turbulence.

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The delay in making payments, after the time fixed upon by the Superintendent, was a source of great suffering and was another prominent cause of the outbreak. There was usually a delay of a month or two, and generally during the cold weather of autumn, when there would be assembled seven thousand men, women, and children, some of whom came from long distances, and all with small stores of provisions, which would soon be exhausted. Then would follow begging dances, appeals to the agent and traders, who could only give temporary relief, so that for a month or more these poor people would be

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scarcely half supplied with the necessaries of life, and some of the time in a state of actual starvation.

This condition would be followed by sickness and many deaths. During the long delay of the payment of 1854, smallpox broke out, and one entire band of the Upper Sioux, who had not been vaccinated, perished from the disease. The traders gave credit during such conditions of suffering to the amount of their money annuity, and when the payment finally took place, the traders were generally faithfully paid, and the poor wards of the Government would return to their homes famished, destitute, and sullen.

Thus the sense of wrong was ever deepening, and the future giving no promise of improvement, in their exasperated condition an event of minor importance led to open hostilities and the massacre.

ESTIMATE OF LITTLE CROW'S CHARACTER.

Every race of human beings in its progress has passed through the stage of barbarism. The Indians, like ourselves, represent a stage of human progress; and in trying to estimate the character of Little Crow, he must be judged as a somewhat advanced type of a barbarous people.

He believed in the right of refusing to submit to injustice, and of resenting injustice by force if necessary. Every important battle in the Sioux war of 1862 was led by Little Crow in person, but it is not known that he participated in any raid upon the settlements, or was guilty of murdering women and children. His taking prisoners, and their humane treatment, evidenced a spirit superior to the inherited custom of the Indian tribes.

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The final event of his life, near Hutchinson, Minnesota, in July, 1863, must ever remain a mystery. Why did he flee to a settlement of whites? It has been often stated that it was for the purpose of stealing horses; but to such as knew him intimately it is difficult to believe

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his proud spirit could so humiliate itself. It seems more probable that, knowing all had been lost, home, friends, and country, he sought his enemies, expecting, and perhaps seeking, the death that followed.

During the Indian war and the bitter feeling that attended it, there was some excuse for our people resorting to the extreme retaliation that was adopted, but that condition no longer exists. Other states have suffered from their Indian wars, but none have thought proper to desecrate their State Capitol with the scalp of a fallen foe. Such a spectacle reflects sadly upon the humanity of a Christian people, and all citizens who prize the good name of our state should desire its removal.

The writer's resignation took place in July, 1861. Learning of my contemplated leaving, Little Crow appealed to me to remain with his people, urging that my long residence with them and knowledge of their language had made my service acceptable; that he feared the coming of a stranger, ignorant of the ways of the Indians and their wants.

Dr. Philander P. Humphrey was appointed as my successor. He was a homeopathic physician of fair abilities and a gentleman, and he should have succeeded in a community of whites, but his system of medical practice failed to satisfy the Indians, who had always been accustomed to a more heroic treatment. The doctor and his wife and two children were victims of the massacre that occurred a little more than twelve months later. A son, John A. Humphrey, a lad of twelve years, escaped.

In conclusion, it seems to the writer that when we consider the conditions existing among these Indians for years, there is good reason to believe that had their treatment been just, humane and generous, the outbreak of 1862 would never have occurred.