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Century: 1865–1910

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PAUL LAUTER
General Editor



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NATION WITHIN A NATION: LAKOTAS/ DAKOTAS/NAKOTAS

Sixox. It is a word that, for people unfamiliar with Native America, conjures up the Hollywood image of an "Indian," a stern man in a long warbonnet, his face painted, his horse painted. He lives on the Great Plains, where he hunts bison or fights the cavalry. If we do not see him doing these things, we see him all alone, on a tired horse, disappearing into the sunset. This is an unchanging, monolithic notion of what Native America was, in the long ago.

In fact, "Sioux" describes an association of many Native nations, nations that existed before European horses replaced the dogs that once aided the people in transport and hunting. "Sioux" describes nations that continue to exist today, nations that continue to define themselves as other than, and sovereign from, the settler colonial nation of the United States.

The Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota, each also divided into smaller bands, form the three main branches of the Sioux. The term "Sioux" should conjure up an image of diverse communities of men and women in constant movement, constant negotiation with changing circumstances. It should conjure up an image of an affiliation of nations, linked to one another by story, tradition, and culture, but also different from one another, not always in agreement, and not always responding to change in the same way.

The Siouyan peoples were originally from around the headwaters of the Mississippi. They had horses by the early eighteenth century and moved west onto the Great Plains by the late eighteenth century, in response to the pressures of other Native nations being pushed further west by white settlement. When Lewis and Clark met them in the early nineteenth century, they met people who could curse in both French and English, wore wool, had guns, and were perfectly aware of and in adaptive relation to white cultural presence. By the middle of the nineteenth century, these nations stretched from Minnesota to the Dakotas and Wyoming. Dakotas lived in the upper Mississippi and western Minnesota. Nakotas lived between the Mississippi and the Missouri. Lakotas lived west of the Missouri.

The Great Plains, figured often as a desert landscape by white writers, became, across the nineteenth century, an arena of intense competition for hunting territory and resources among Native people. With the pressure for territory always increasing, warfare became a constant of High Plains life. Prestige as a warrior was essential for masculine power in the community. Warrior societies were the basis of government, but acts of bravery, witnessed by others and recounted at home, were the most important feature of war. Raids that brought back many horses, or striking an enemy harmlessly—"counting coup"—were more honored than killing.

Women's work changed, too. Bison had once been hunted on foot and with dogs. Few animals were killed. However, horses and guns made the killing of

bison easier, and with increased demand for bison robes in the east, bison hunting became essential for trade with whites and other Native nations. Women's place in the community consequently became tied to the laborious preparation of the skins for trade.

Pressure continued to grow among competing Native nations, however. The railroad came, and the vast bison herds were systematically brought to the brink of extinction under the aegis of the U.S. government. Genocide became the goal of U.S. military encounters with High Plains people. Genocide became the goal crushed Native mobility, gender roles, and cultural and political sovereignty. Children were taken away to boarding school, and they returned—if they returned—forever different. The people had to change again.

The decades covered by this volume encompassed for the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota a period of enormous change and enormous loss. The Civil War, which was as much about the future of the west as it was about the north and the plains during and after the Civil War are more honestly described as "wars of extermination"—a term that was in use at the time. These violent encounters between whites and Native people ranged from massacres of whole villages to skirmishes between small groups of militia and Native hunters to fully fledged battles between soldiers and warriors.

Palanapope's 1865 explanation of "How the Indians are Victimized by Government Agents and Soldiers" gives a portrait of the everyday irritation, often erupting into outright violence, of colonial presence immediately following the Civil War. In 1868, the Treaty of Fort Laramie formed the Great Sioux Reservation. This treaty guaranteed the Black Hills as well as hunting rights in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. In 1874, however, General George Armstrong Custer's Black Hills Expedition discovered gold in the Black Hills, and prospectors began invading. Full-scale war broke out.

The Black Hills War is most famous among non-Native people for the Battle of Greasy Grass Creek, or The Battle of Little Big Horn, in which Custer and all of the 7th Cavalry were killed by a combined force of Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors. Two Moons' description of the battle is surprising, if one expects to see Native jubilation over a great "victory." He says that after the battle the warriors were sad. Honor in traditional warfare came not from killing but from acts of bravery. The outcome—all the enemy dead—was not, in fact, commensurate with traditional notions of victory. In his description, Two Moons is careful to point out which white soldier was the bravest; he is more interested in honoring that man than in identifying Custer. He also explains that "war-women" had mutilated some soldiers. Women were present at the battle and in fact were responsible for humiliating the enemy, which was as much a part of the traditional structures of honor as the men's roles.

In spite of Greasy Grass Creek, the war ended in defeat. The reservation was made smaller, and a portion of the Black Hills was lost. Horses and guns were taken away. Religion was suppressed. Children began to be taken away to be "educated" in eastern boarding schools. This so-called "education" was in fact part of a plan of assimilation halted by Richard Henry Pratt, the mastermind of Indian boarding school education, as a means to "kill the Indian . . . and save the

man." Children arrived at school as young as five years old. Their hair was cut—for them, this was a sign of cowardice and mourning. They were punished if they spoke their language. They were forced to conform to white gender norms, and they weren't allowed to go home for years on end. Meanwhile, at home on the reservation, sickness, starvation, and suicide were rampant. In the selections by Zitkala-Sa, we have a portrayal of both reservation life and school life. Born in 1876, the year of the Battle of Greasy Grass Creek, Zitkala-Sa was enticed away to boarding school at the age of eight. She eventually taught at Carlisle Indian School, but the experience disgusted her and she published her memoir in 1900 in an attempt to reveal to white America the cultural genocide perpetrated by the boarding school system.

In John Grass, Sitting Bull, and Red Cloud, we see three leaders of three different groups responding differently to the imperative to change as the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota were confined on the reservation—forced to give up their religion, horses, and guns—and not allowed to move with the seasons. John Grass, a leader of the Blackfoot Lakota, rose to importance in 1876 and the years following because of his willingness to contemplate some aspects of assimilation, namely Christianity, farming, and white educational goals. However, he had little faith in the government. The piece included here shows his understanding of government trickery, and we see him demanding that his people be given good tools and strong animals and that their children be educated in a way that made them able to return and be useful to their own people. He asks that mixed and white people who understand themselves as Blackfoot also be understood by the United States government as belonging to the Blackfoot nation. This rejection of "race" as the signifier of Indianness is important. Indianness, Grass is arguing, is defined not by blood, but by participation in the culture.

In contrast to John Grass, Sitting Bull, a leader and holy man of the Hunkpapa Lakota, remained anti-assimilationist his whole life; after the Battle of Greasy Grass Creek, he took his band north to Canada rather than settle on the reservation. He and his people returned to the reservation in 1881, but, as we can see from his speech, he utterly rejected white definitions of virtue.

Red Cloud was a war-leader and a chief of the Oglala Lakota. He led the Oglala from 1868 to 1909; in other words, he led his nation both in the wars against the United States, in which he proved to be a brilliant strategist, and across his nation's transition to the reservation. In the selection here he explains why the Ghost Dance religion was so compelling to Native people. We include several of the Ghost Dance Songs in this section of the volume; the headnote to the Ghost Dance Songs discusses the context in which they arose. Red Cloud blames white depredations for the extreme suffering of High Plains people. It isn't the Ghost Dance that causes unrest, he explains. It is starvation and continually blasted hope.

In 1887 reservation life changed again. The Dawes Act (see this volume pp. 552–554) authorized the surveying of Indian land for the purpose of dividing it into allotments. The Great Sioux Reservation was broken up, and vast acreage was lost. Families were reorganized and gender roles redefined. In the wake of allotment, the Ghost Dance religion sparked anxiety in white America,

would it erupt in violence and prompt a return to the Indian wars? Newspapers called on the army to put a stop to the singing and dancing. Sitting Bull, who was sympathetic to the Ghost Dancers, was seen as a threat. It was feared that he would join them, and lend his strength to the movement. Reservation police were sent to arrest him on December 14, 1870; instead, they killed him. A group of his followers fled and met up with another band under the leadership of Big Foot. On the evening of December 28, at Wounded Knee creek, they were surrounded by the 7th Cavalry and surrendered. In the morning, during a search for weapons, shooting began, and the army proceeded to indiscriminately kill men, women, and children. Turning Hawk, Captain Sword, Spotted Horse, and American Horse give an account of the massacre in the pages that follow.

The massacre at Wounded Knee marks the end of nineteenth century armed resistance to white colonialism. New kinds of resistance and adaptation had to be found. Charles Eastman and Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin) are each the child of a white and a Native parent, and they each represent the struggles of their generation to account for the transition from traditional to reservation life. Eastman, whose mother was a white woman, was educated in white schools and became a physician. He returned to the reservation, where he witnessed both the Ghost Dance religion and the aftermath of the Wounded Knee massacre, both of which are described by him here. Zitkala-Sa's "Why I Am a Pagan" shows that Native religious sovereignty survived Wounded Knee; this hopeful piece insists upon the "survivance" of Native America, in the land and in the people.

Across the decades covered by this volume, the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people were faced with reinterpreting and rebuilding their cultures under terrible conditions. The losses were huge and the violence unremitting. However, the Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota came and continue to come through. "Survivance" is a neologism coined by Anishnaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor. It is a word that aims to move us past an understanding of Native cultures as always in a state of disappearance, crushed by genocidal machineries of colonialism. Instead, seeing Native cultures as always engaging in a practice of "survivance" is to see Native cultures in dynamic, creative, and enduring modes of generation. Devastation, loss, and grief must not be minimized, but survivance—which combines an understanding of survival, resistance, and active futurity—repudiates disappearance. Loss is certainly threaded through, but it is neither the beginning, the middle, nor the end of the story.

Bethany Ridgway Schneider
Bryn Mawr College

■ PALANEAPOPE (YANKTON SIOUX)
UNKNOWN DATES

*From "How the Indians are Victimized by
Government Agents and Soldiers"*¹

My friend, we are now done with the agent, and we will now commence with the soldiers. The first year they came up in this country, I think my grandfather must have told them to commence on me, and that is the reason I commence thus with them. I would like to know if my grandfather told them to commence against me first; I should think so, the way they treated us. The first time they came up our young men had nothing to eat, and had gone over the Missouri river to hunt, and the soldiers killed seven of them. The Two-Kettle band and the Low Yanktonais were friendly, and were then on my reservation at the time, and some of them went out with my young men to hunt, and were among the seven that were killed; they were all friendly to the whites. When General Sully returned from his expedition, and was crossing my reserve, there were some of the Indian women married to half-breeds, and they had houses, and the soldiers went in and drove all the persons in them out, and robbed the houses of all there was in them. I would like to know if my grandfather told them to do so. I do not think he did. (All the chiefs present assent to this.) One of my chiefs, Little Swan, now here, had a house, and the soldiers broke in and destroyed all his goods, furniture, utensils and tools, and all the property of his band, the same being stored there. I would like to know if my grandfather told the soldiers when they returned from the expedition with their horses worn out, lost or stolen, to take horses from the Yanktons, in place of those they had lost or had worn out and broken down; I don't believe he did, but that is the way the soldiers did. I think the way the white men treated us is worse than the wolves do. We have a way in the winter of putting our dead up on scaffolds up from the ground, but the soldiers cut down the scaffolds and cut off the hair of the dead, and if they had good teeth they pulled them out, and some of them cut off the heads of the dead and carried them away. One time one of my young men and two squaws went over the river to Fort Randall, and a soldier wanted one of the squaws to do something with; he wanted to sleep with her, and she refused to sleep with him; one of the Indians asked the other squaw if she would sleep with the soldier, and she said she would; but the soldier would not have her, but wanted the other squaw, and claimed that the Indian was trying to prevent him from sleeping with his (the Indian's) squaw, his wife, and the Indian, fearing trouble, started

for the ferry, and the soldier shot the Indian, though the Indian got over it. Another time when General Sully came up he passed through the middle of our field, turned all his cattle and stock into our corn and destroyed the whole of it. The ears of some were then a foot long; the corn was opposite Fort Randall, and they not only destroyed the corn but burnt up the fence. I think no other white man would do so; I do not think my grandfather told them to do so. The soldiers set fire to the prairie and burnt up four of our lodges and all there was in them, and three horses. When my corn is good to eat they cross the river from Fort Randall and eat it, and when it is not good they throw it in the river. I think my reserve is very small; the soldiers cut all my wood and grass, and I think this is bad treatment. The above in regard to the soldiers applies to my three chiefs on the reserve opposite Fort Randall, and I will now speak of things at my agency when the soldiers came down from the expedition last fall. At that time myself and others were out on a hunt, and had put our goods under the floors; but when the expedition came down the soldiers broke open the houses, destroyed our pans and kettles, and fired into the stoves and kettles. The soldiers are very drunken and come to our place—they have arms and guns; they run after our women and fire into our houses and lodges; one soldier came along and wanted one of our young men to drink, but he would not, and turned to go away, and the soldier shot at him. Before the soldiers came along we had good health; but once the soldiers come along they go to my squaws and want to sleep with them, and the squaws being hungry will sleep with them in order to get something to eat, and will get a bad disease, and then the squaws turn to their husbands and give them the bad disease.

I would like to know if my grandfather tells the soldiers to get all my hay. Every year great contracts are made for cutting hay for Fort Randall, and they cut the hay all off our land, and I would like to know if my grandfather gave them permission to cut all the hay and take the money. I never see any of the money myself. They take all my mowing machines, bought with my money, to cut hay to sell to the soldiers, and I cannot get the mowing machines to cut anything for ourselves, and I have no use of them. I think the agents are in partnership with these men cutting hay to sell to the soldiers. The reason I think the agent had a hand in cutting hay for the soldiers is, because one year Burleigh gave all of us chiefs fifty dollars each for the hay cut upon the contract. Last spring I asked him for the money for the hay he cut last year, and he told me he could not give it to me, because he had spent it last winter to get us something to eat; but I do not know whether he did or not. I hope you will report these things to my grandfather, and have him stop those men from cutting the hay right off. I think if they would return me my mowing machine I could cut part of the hay on the contract, and I must have some for my ponies; I wish you would attend to it. When I started to come down here they were getting ready to cut hay on another contract for the soldiers at Fort Randall. If they would return our mowing machines we could take the contract ourselves; we have some white men and half-breeds who could assist us, but they want it all

¹From Senate Report No. 156, U.S. Congress (1867). "Grandfather" is a respectful way of referring to the U.S. president.

themselves. The reason I talk thus is, I think all is wrong. I know the young man who has the contract. I think he has had it two years before. When he breaks any part of the mowing machine he goes to my blacksmith shop and carpenter shop to repair it; it is all paid for out of my annuity fund. It is Hedges who has the contract. Thompson, our blacksmith, has had charge of cutting the hay on the contracts for the past two years, and is getting ready to cut it this year....

Since I made the treaty I am an American. My new agent told me the other day that the old Commissioner of Indian Affairs had been stealing part of the annuities, and that a better man had been put in his place. At this I felt good, and I put on my hat, I felt so good, my heart so big. My new agent is an entirely different man; he shows me the invoices, and I think he is a good man for us. He hired a blacksmith right off. My friend, what I am going to tell you is the truth. We only get five dollars apiece; we have only had one trader; he often makes us feel bad; he sells us goods so high it makes us cry. I think there ought to be two traders. I want two traders. I think if you come up to our agency you will laugh in the first place, and then be mad to see our storehouse in the same building with the trader's store. I want the store moved away a mile, so that it won't be so handy to our goods; I want you to have this changed. I hope my grandfather will see that the store is moved away from my warehouse, because the trader's store is under the floor where my goods are stored. I sometimes have bad dreams; I feel that there may be cracks that my goods may fall through.

I am done. Again I say, my friend, I am glad you have come to see us, and I hope will report all I have said to the Great Father, and that you will do us good. The Great Spirit knows that I have Spoken the truth.

1867

TWO MOONS (CHEYENNE)

UNKNOWN DATES

The Battle of the Little Bighorn, Narrated by an Indian Who Fought in It, June 25, 1876¹

[The Black Hills region of the Dakotas was recognized as inviolable Indian land by the federal government. But the onset of a gold rush there in 1874–75 led the administration of President Ulysses S. Grant to decide that it would be easier to contrive a war against the Indians and seize the land than it would be to oust the white intruders. The campaign of 1876 was

¹From *McClure's Magazine*, September, 1898.

commanded by Generals George Crook and Alfred Terry. General George A. Custer and his 7th Cavalry arrived at the huge Sioux encampment in eastern Montana, and there he hoped to achieve fame and advancement by defeating the Indians.]

That spring [1876] I was camped on Powder River with fifty lodges of my people—Cheyennes. The place is near what is now Fort Mc-Kenney. One morning soldiers charged my camp. They were in command of Three Fingers [Colonel Mckenziel]. We were surprised and scattered, leaving our ponies. The soldiers ran all our horses off. That night the soldiers slept, leaving the horses one side, so we crept up and stole them back again, and then we went away. We traveled far, and one day we met a big camp of Sioux at Charcoal

Butte. We camped with the Sioux, and had a good time, plenty grass, plenty game, good water. Crazy Horse was head chief of the camp. Sitting Bull was camped a little ways below, on the Little Missouri River.

Crazy Horse said to me, "I'm glad you are come. We are going to fight the white man again."

The camp was already full of wounded men, women, and children.

I said to Crazy Horse, "All right. I am ready to fight. I have fought already. My people have been killed, my horses stolen; I am satisfied to fight."

[Here the old man paused a moment, and his face took on a lofty and somber expression.]

I believed at that time the Great Spirits had made Sioux, put them there [he drew a circle to the right], and white men and Cheyennes here [indicating two places to the left], expecting them to fight. The Great Spirits I thought liked to see the fight; it was to them all the same like playing. So I thought then about fighting. [As he said this, he made me feel for one moment the power of a sardonic god whose drama was the wars of men.]

About May, when the grass was tall and the horses strong, we broke camp and started across the country to the mouth of the Tongue River. Then Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse and all went up the Rosebud. There we had a big fight with General Crook, and whipped him. Many soldiers were killed—few Indians. It was a great fight, much smoke and dust.

From there we all went over the divide, and camped in the valley of Little Horn. Everybody thought, "Now we are out of the white man's country. He can live there, we will live here." After a few days, one morning when I was in camp north of Sitting Bull, a Sioux messenger rode up and said, "Let everybody paint up, cook, and get ready for a big dance."

Cheyennes then went to work to cook, cut up tobacco, and get ready. We all thought to dance all day. We were very glad to think we were far away from the white man.

I went to water my horses at the creek, and washed them off with cool water, then took a swim myself. I came back to the camp afoot. When I got near my lodge, I looked up the Little Horn towards Sitting Bull's camp. I saw a great dust rising. It looked like a whirlwind. Soon Sioux horsemen came rushing into camp shouting: "Soldiers come! Plenty white soldiers."

I ran into my lodge, and said to my brother-in-law, "Get your horses; the white man is coming. Everybody run for horses."

Outside, far up the valley, I heard a battle cry, *Hay-ay, hay-ay!* I heard shooting, too, this way [clapping his hands very fast]. I couldn't see any Indians. Everybody was getting horses and saddles. After I had caught my horse, a Sioux warrior came again and said, "Many soldiers are coming."

Then he said to the women, "Get out of the way, we are going to have hard fight."

I said, "All right, I am ready."

I got on my horse, and rode out into my camp. I called out to the people all running about: "I am Two Moon, your chief. Don't run away. Stay here and fight. You must stay and fight the white soldiers. I shall stay even if I am to be killed."

I rode swiftly toward Sitting Bull's camp. There I saw the white soldiers fighting in a line [Reno's men]. Indians covered the flat. They began to drive the soldiers all mixed up—Sioux, then soldiers, then more Sioux, and all shooting. The air was full of smoke and dust. I saw the soldiers fall back and drop into the river-bed like buffalo fleeing. They had no time to look for a crossing. The Sioux chased them up the hill, where they met more soldiers in wagons, and then messengers came saying more soldiers were going to kill the women, and the Sioux turned back. Chief Gall was there fighting, Crazy Horse also.

I then rode toward my camp, and stopped squaws from carrying off lodges. While I was sitting on my horse I saw flags come up over the hill to the east like that [he raised his finger-tips]. Then the soldiers rose all at once, all on horses, like this [he put his fingers behind each other to indicate that Custer appeared marching in columns of fours]. They formed into three bunches [squadrans] with a little ways between. Then a bugle sounded, and they all got off horses, and some soldiers led the horses back over the hill.

Then the Sioux rode up the ridge on all sides, riding very fast. The Cheyennes went up the left way. Then the shooting was quick, quick, Pop—pop—pop very fast. Some of the soldiers were down on their knees, some standing. Officers all in front. The smoke was like a great cloud, and everywhere the Sioux went the dust rose like smoke. We circled all round him—swirling like water round a stone. We shoot, we ride fast, we shoot again. Soldiers drop, and horses fall on them. Soldiers in line drop, but one man rides up and down the line—all the time shouting. He rode a sorrel horse with white face and white fore-legs. I don't know who he was. He was a brave man.

Indians keep swirling round and round, and the soldiers killed only a few. Many soldiers fell. At last all horses killed but five. Once in a while some man would break out and run toward the river, but he would fall. At last about a hundred men and five horsemen stood on the hill all bunched together. All along the bugler kept blowing his commands. He was very brave too. Then a chief was killed. I hear it was Long Hair [Custer], I don't know; and then the five horsemen and the bunch of men, may be so forty,

started toward the river. The man on the sorrel horse led, them, shouting all the time. He wore a buckskin shirt, and had long black hair and mustache. He fought hard with a big knife. His men were all covered with white dust. I couldn't tell whether they were officers or not. One man all alone ran far down toward the river, then round up over the hill. I thought he was going to escape, but a Sioux fired and hit him in the head. He was the last man. He wore braid on his arms [sergeant].

All the soldiers were now killed, and the bodies were stripped. After that no one could tell which were officers. The bodies were left where they fell. We had no dance that night. We were sorrowful.

Next day four Sioux chiefs and two Cheyennes and I, Two Moon, went upon the battlefield to count the dead. One man carried a little bundle of sticks. When we came to dead men, we took a little stick and gave it to another man, so we counted the dead. There were 388. There were thirty-nine Sioux and seven Cheyennes killed, and about a hundred wounded.

Some white soldiers were cut with knives, to make sure they were dead; and the war women had mangled some. Most of them were left just where they fell. We came to the man with the big mustache; he lay down the hills towards the river. The Indians did not take his buckskin shirt. The Sioux said, "That is a big chief. That is Long Hair." I don't know. I had never seen him. The man on the white-faced horse was the bravest man.

That day as the sun was getting low our young men came up the Little Horn riding hard. Many white soldiers were coming in a big boat, and when we looked we could see the smoke rising. I called my people together, and we hurried up the Little Horn, into Rotten Grass Valley. We camped there three days, and then rode swiftly back over our old trail to the east. Sitting Bull went back into the Rosebud and down the Yellowstone, and away to the north. I did not see him again.

1876

JOHN GRASS (BLACKFOOT SIOUX)

1837–1918

Indian Conditions for Treaty Renewal, October 11, 1876¹

My friends, this day I behold you, and I behold you with a glad heart. We are going this day to renew a treaty, that is why my heart is glad. You saw me and you pray to the Great Spirit, which pleases me very much. The

¹From Senate Executive Document No. 9, 44th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 47–48.

Great Spirit made this earth for me and He raised me on it; you brought this to my mind and I am thankful. Our Great Father selected this commission from just and kind-hearted men. Look well at me with both eyes and listen to me with both ears. What I am looking forward to in the future I want you to remember always. The white people look for a country that pleases them; they find one, make a selection, locate themselves there, and consider that as an inheritance for their children; the Indians do the same. The different countries that the Great Spirit has made, the people inhabiting these countries, are bargaining with each other for land. You come here from the Great Father to inquire of me about my land. I will never find another land better than the one I have. I cannot look upon my land as cheap and valueless. You speak to us about a strange country. We want you to strike that out. My father had the white people for friends. Our grandfathers, our fathers, and all of our kindred were raised on the Missouri River. I told my grandchildren that I would never leave the land on the Missouri River. Red Cloud and Spotted Tail's people are not pleased to live on the Missouri River, hence you take them off to look at other countries, but we are not displeased with this country; we are pleased with the country on the Missouri River, and consequently we wish to remain here. You have come to us with the words from her other agencies. If the majority of Indians desire to remain on the Missouri River I wish the commission would decide that Red Cloud and Spotted Tail should also be brought to the Missouri River. I am going to say something that will not please you before I sign the agreement: I desire to know whether the commissioners are willing to erase that part of the propositions where you ask the Indians to go to a strange country?...

My friends, I have considered the words you have brought me, and I am ready to answer you. The chiefs you see here have all come to the same conclusion. You have brought words to the chiefs here that will bring life to their children; that will make their children live; they answer *how* [signifying their approval] to that. And now since they have ceded their country to you, they want to tell you of certain things that they shall want for their families, and people, and children in the future. What we shall need for our children to succeed in life, to instruct our children so that they will become self-supporting—the things you have spoken to us about. The affairs at this agency are allotted to a society of Christians. They are to think for our people, and to instruct our people in the way they should live. I want them to live in this country with us and instruct our children. I want them that are good wagons, and will last for ten years; and we want some light wagons so that can ride over the country rapidly. We want some light stallions for breeding purposes. We want some sheep and hogs. We want mares and plows; we also want small plows, and cultivators, and harrows. We want yokes of heavy cattle for plowing. I want a house with at least three rooms in it. I want furniture for the house—stoves, tables and other house furniture. We have not seen the Great Father and discussed this matter with

him. I wish that I could see him and talk these matters over with him. If I could see him, I think he would have a reply for me in regard to these things that I am asking for. I wish when the Great Father buys anything for my people—provisions, annuity, goods, etc.—that he would send [give a list of the articles purchased. I want this list to be sent to me every year, for all goods purchased. I also want a copy of this agreement left with me. Is the present President the one that has been buying goods and annuities for the Indians? Are the men that have been our agents here, from time to time, still living? The Great Father has not been respected nor obeyed; I have not been respected, I have been abused together with the Great Father. The Great Father thinks that I have received all that has been purchased for me, but that which I have received is the smallest part of what has been provided for us. Notwithstanding that I did not receive them, they are mine still, they were all for me, and are still mine, and I expect to get them, and shall look for them. I want the Great Father to look these things up, and make the men that have made away with them pay for them. These things have been made away with, and I am an Indian, and am not able to tell the Great Father. I meet these just men, and hope you will tell a straight story to the Great Father. The things that would enable me to become self-supporting on this river, this day you remind me of them, but they are all gone. This day I want to learn something, to learn a lesson, to learn how to do something. You have talked to me well, spoken to me well, and I am going to state in what way I can learn something to-day. You are writing here [referring to the stenographer], and you have a paper underneath the one upon which you are writing that is not written on. In times past we used to know such things as that; we have seen business done the same way in past times—a blank paper underneath the? one we sign. I wish the Great Father would select a physician, a man who is capable of treating sick Indians, and who can cure them, and send him to us. I want a sawyer, a blacksmith, and a man that can work in tin to make pans, kettles, cups, etc., I also want an expert carpenter. I want a trader that will trade with us at the same prices that he trades with the whites, one that will not charge an Indian more than he does a white man. I have a trader here, but he treats me badly. He has a bad way of trading. Tell the Greats Father to take him away and send a man in his place who is acquainted with Indians and with Indian ways, a man who can live with the Indians and be their friend. I wish they would send me three or four traders. We want you to consider our half-breeds and the white men who are married to our women as a part of our people.

■ SITTING BULL (HUNKPAPA SIOUX) ■
1831–1890

Keeping Treaties¹

What treaty that the whites have kept has the red man broken? Not one. What treaty that the whites ever made with us red men have they kept? Not one. When I was a boy the Sioux owned the world. The sun rose and set in their lands. They sent 10,000 horsemen to battle. Where are the warriors to-day? Who slew them? Where are our lands? Who owns them? What white man can say I ever stole his lands or a penny of his money? Yet they say I am a thief. What white woman, however lonely, was ever when a captive insulted by me? Yet they say I am a bad Indian. What white man has ever seen me drunk? Who has ever come to me hungry and gone unfed? Who has ever seen me beat my wives or abuse my children? What law have I broken? Is it wrong for me to love my own? Is it wicked in me because my skin is red; because I am a Sioux; because I was born where my fathers lived; because I would die for my people and my country?

1891

■ RED CLOUD (OGALA SIOUX) ■
1822–1908

Reasons for the Trouble between the Indians and the Government During the Excitement of the Ghost Dance Excitement of 1890¹

Everybody seems to think that the belief in the coming of the Messiah has caused all the trouble. This is a mistake. I will tell you the cause.

When we first made treaties with the Government, this was our position: Our old life and our old customs were about to end; the game upon which we lived was disappearing; the whites were closing around us, and nothing remained for us but to adopt their ways and have the same rights with them if we wished to save ourselves. The Government promised us all

the means necessary make our living out of our land, and to instruct us how to do it, and abundant food to support us until we could take care of ourselves. We looked forward with hope to the time when we could be as independent as the whites, and have a voice in the Government.

The officers of the army could have helped us better than any others, but we were not left to them. An Indian Department was made, with a large number of agents and other officials drawing large salaries, and these men were supposed to teach us the ways of the whites. Then came the beginning of trouble. These men took care of themselves but not of us. It was made very hard for us to deal with the Government except through them. It seems to me that they thought they could make more by keeping us back than by helping us forward. We did not get the means to work our land. The few things given were given in such a way as to do us little or no good. Our rations began to be reduced. Some said that we were lazy and wanted to live on rations and not to work. That is false. How does any man of sense suppose that so great a number of people could get to work at once, unless they were at once supplied with means to work, and instructors enough to teach them how to use them?

Remember that even our little ponies were taken away under the promise that they would be replaced by oxen and large horses and that it was long before we saw any, and then we got very few. We tried, even with the means we had, but on one pretext or another we were shifted from place to place or were told that such a transfer was coming. Great efforts were made to break up our customs, but nothing was done to introduce the customs of the whites. Everything was done to break the power of the real chiefs who really wished their people to improve, and little men, so-called chiefs, were made to act as disturbers and agitators. Spotted Tail wanted the ways of the whites; and a cowardly assassin was found to remove him. This was charged upon the Indians, because an Indian did it, but who set on the Indian?

I was abused and slandered, to weaken my influence for good and make me seem like one who did not want to advance. This was done by the men paid by the Government to teach us the ways of the whites. I have visited many other tribes, and find that the same things were done among them. All was done to discourage and nothing to encourage. I saw the men paid by the Government to help us all very busy making money for themselves, but doing nothing for us.

Now, don't you suppose we saw all this? Of course we did, but what could we do? We were prisoners, not in the hands of the army, but in the hands of robbers. Where was the army? Set by the Government to watch us, but having no voice in setting thing right, so that they would not need to watch us. They could not speak for us, though we wished it very much. Those who held us pretended to be very anxious about our welfare, and said our condition was a great mystery. We tried to speak and clear up this mystery, but were laughed at and treated as children. So things went on from year to year. Other treaties were made, and it was all the same. Rations were further reduced, and we were starving, sufficient food not given us, and no

¹From W. Fletcher Johnson, *Life of Sitting Bull* (1891), p. 201.

¹From W. Fletcher Jones, *Life of Sitting Bull* (1891). For background on the Ghost Dance religion and the massacre at Wounded Knee, see the introduction to the "Ghost Dance Songs" and Charles Eastman, "The Ghost Dance War," both in this section.

means to get food from the land were provided. Rations were still further reduced. A family got for two weeks what was not enough for one week.

What did we eat when that was gone? The people were desperate from starvation—they had no hope. They did not think of fighting. What good would it do? They might die like men, but what would the women and children do? Some say they saw the son of God. All did not see Him. I did not see Him. If He had come He would do some great thing as He did before. We doubted it, because we saw neither Him nor His works. Then Gen. Crook came. His words sounded well, but how could we know that a new treaty would be kept any better than the old one? For that reason we did not care to sign. He promised to see that his promises would be kept. He, at least, had never lied to us. His words gave the people hope. They signed. They hoped. He died. Their hope died with him. Despair came again. The people were counted, and wrongly counted. Our rations were again reduced. The white men seized on the land we sold them through Gen. Crook, but our pay was as distant as ever. The man who counted us told all over that we were feasting and wasting food. Where did he see this?

How can we eat or waste what we have not? We felt that we were mocked in our misery. We had no newspapers, and no one to speak for us. We had no redress. Our rations were again reduced. You who eat three times each day, and see your children well and happy around you, can't understand what starving Indians feel. We were faint with hunger and maddened by despair. We held our dying children, and felt their little bodies tremble as their souls went out and left only a dead weight in our hands. They were not very heavy, but we ourselves were very faint, and the dead weighed us down. There was no hope on earth, and God seemed to have forgotten us. Some one had again been talking of the Son of God, and said He had come. The people did not know; they did not care. They snatched at the hope. They screamed like crazy men to Him for mercy. They caught at the promises they heard He had made.

The white men were frightened, and called for soldiers. We had begged for life, and the white men thought we wanted theirs. We heard that soldiers were coming. We did not fear. We hoped that he could tell them our troubles and get help. A white man said the Soldiers meant to kill us. We did not believe it, but some were frightened and ran away to the Bad Lands. The soldiers came. They said: "Don't be afraid, we come to make peace, and not war." It was true. They brought us food, and did not threaten us. If the Messiah has really come, it must be in this way. The people prayed for life, and the army brought it. The Black Robe, Father Jule, went to the Bad Lands and brought in some Indians to talk to Gen. Brooke. The General was very kind to them, and quieted their fears, and was a real friend. He sent out Indians to call in the other Indians from the Bad Lands. I sent all my horses and all my young men to help Gen. Brooke save the Indians. Am I not right when I say that he will know how to settle this trouble? He has settled it.

The Indian Department called for soldiers to shoot down the Indians whom it had starved into despair. Gen. Brooke said, "No, what have they

done? They are dying. They must live." He brought us food. He gave us hope. I trust to him now to see that we will be well treated. I hope that the despair that he has driven away will never return again. If the army had been with us from the first there never would have been any trouble. The army will, I hope, keep us safe and help us to become as independent as the whites.

[What do you think of the killing of Sitting Bull?]

Sitting Bull was nothing but what the white men made him. He was a conceited man who never did anything great, but wanted to get into notice, and white men who had something to make by it, encouraged him and used him. When they had made him as great as they could they killed him to get a name by it. The fight at his arrest would have been made for any one arrested in the same way. If he was a little man, he was a man, and should not have been murdered uselessly. What is worse, many good men were killed also. The soldiers came in time to prevent more murders, but too late to save all. If the army had wanted to arrest him they knew how to do it, and never would have done it in that way. You see how they are doing here. The agent does not interfere with the army, and the army saves lives and does not do anything foolish. No Indian wants to fight; they want to eat, and work, and live; and as the soldiers are peace-makers there will be no trouble here.

The Indian Department has almost destroyed us. Save us from it. Let the army take charge of us. We know it can help us. Let it manage our affairs in its own way. If this can be done I will think that all this late trouble has been only a storm that broke the clouds. Let the sun shine on us again.

1891

■ TURNING HAWK, CAPTAIN SWORD, SPOTTED HORSE, AND AMERICAN HORSE (SIOUX) ■

UNKNOWN DATES

The Massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota,

on December 29, 1890¹

TURNING HAWK, Pine Ridge (Mr Cook, interpreter). Mr Commissioner, my purpose to-day is to tell you what I know of the condition of affairs at the agency where I live. A certain falsehood came to our agency from the west which had the effect of a fire upon the Indians, and when this certain fire came upon our people those who had farsightedness and could see into the

¹From *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1896), Part 2, pp. 884–886.

matter made up their minds to stand up against it and fight it. The reason we took this hostile attitude to this fire was because we believed that you yourself would not be in favor of this particular mischief-making thing; but just as we expected, the people in authority did not like this thing and we were quietly told that we must give up or have nothing to do with this certain movement. Though this is the advice from our good friends in the east, there were, of course, many silly young men who were longing to become identified with the movement, although they knew that there was nothing absolutely bad, nor did they know there was anything absolutely good, in connection with the movement.

In the course of time we heard that the soldiers were moving toward the scene of trouble. After awhile some of the soldiers finally reached our place and we heard that a number of them also reached our friends at Rosebud. Of course, when a large body of soldiers is moving toward a certain direction they inspire a more or less amount of awe, and it is natural that the women and children who see this large moving mass are made afraid of it and be put in a condition to make them run away. At first we thought that Pine Ridge and Rosebud were the only two agencies where soldiers were sent, but finally we heard that the other agencies fared likewise. We heard and saw that about half our friends at Rosebud agency, from fear at seeing the soldiers, began the move of running away from their agency toward ours (Pine Ridge), and when they had gotten inside of our reservation they there learned that right ahead of them at our agency was another large crowd of soldiers, and while the soldiers were there, there was constantly a great deal of false rumor flying back and forth. The special rumor I have in mind is the threat that the soldiers had come there to disarm the Indians entirely and to take away all their horses from them. That was the oft-repeated story.

So constantly repeated was this story that our friends from Rosebud, instead of going to Pine Ridge, the place of their destination, veered off and went to some other direction toward the "Bad Lands." We did not know definitely how many, but understood there were 300 lodges of them, about 1,700 people. Eagle Pipe, Turning Bear, High Hawk, Short Bull, Lance, No Flesh, Pine Bird, Crow Dog, Two Strike, and White Horse were the leaders.

Well, the people after veering off in this way, many of them who believe in peace and order at our agency, were very anxious that some influence should be brought upon these people. In addition to our love of peace we remembered that many of these people were related to us by blood. So we sent out peace commissioners to the people who were thus running away from their agency.

I understood at the time that they were simply going away from fear because of so many soldiers. So constant was the word of these good men from Pine Ridge agency that finally they succeeded in getting away half of the party from Rosebud, from the place where they took refuge, and finally were brought to the agency at Pine Ridge. Young-Man-Afraid-of-his-Horses, Little Wound, Fast Thunder, Louis Shangreau, John Grass, Jack Red Cloud, and myself were some of these peacemakers.

The remnant of the party from Rosebud not taken to the agency finally reached the wilds of the Bad Lands. Seeing that we had succeeded so well, once more we sent to the same party in the Bad Lands and succeeded in bringing these very Indians out of the depths of the Bad Lands and were being brought toward the agency. When we were about a day's journey from our agency we heard that a certain party of Indians (Big Foot's band) from the Cheyenne River agency was coming toward Pine Ridge in flight.

CAPTAIN SWORD. Those who actually went off of the Cheyenne River agency probably number 303, and there were a few from the Standing Rock reserve with them, but as to their number I do not know. There were a number of Ogalallas, old men and several school boys, coming back with that very same party, and one of the very seriously wounded boys was a member of the Ogalalla boarding school at Pine Ridge agency. He was not on the warpath, but was simply returning home to his agency and to his school after a summer visit to relatives on the Cheyenne river.

TURNING HAWK. When we heard that these people were coming toward our agency we also heard this. These people were coming toward Pine Ridge agency, and when they were almost on the agency they were met by the soldiers and surrounded and finally taken to the Wounded Knee creek, and there at a given time their guns were demanded. When they had delivered them up, the men were separated from their families, from their tipis, and taken to a certain spot. When the guns were thus taken and the men thus separated, there was a crazy man, a young man of very bad influence and in fact a nobody, among that bunch of Indians fired his gun, and of course the firing of a gun must have been the breaking of a military rule of some sort, because immediately the soldiers returned fire and indiscriminate killing followed.

SPOTTED HORSE. This man shot an officer in the army; the first shot killed this officer. I was a voluntary scout at that encounter and I saw exactly what was done, and that was what I noticed; that the first shot killed an officer. As soon as this shot was fired the Indians immediately began drawing their knives, and they were exhorted from all sides to desist, but this was not obeyed. Consequently the firing began immediately on the part of the soldiers.

TURNING HAWK. All the men who were in a bunch were killed right there, and those who escaped that first fire got into the ravine, and as they went along up the ravine for a long distance they were pursued on both sides by the soldiers and shot down, as the dead bodies showed afterwards. The women were standing off at a different place from where the men were stationed, and when the firing began, those of the men who escaped the first onslaught went in one direction up the ravine, and then the women, who were bunched together at another place, went entirely in a different direction through an open field, and the women fared the same fate as the men who went up the deep ravine.

AMERICAN HORSE. The men were separated, as has already been said, from the women, and they were surrounded by the soldiers. Then came next the village of the Indians and that was entirely surrounded by the soldiers also. When the firing began, of course the people who were standing

immediately around the young man who fired the first shot were killed right together, and then they turned their guns, Hotchkiss guns, etc., upon the women who were in the lodges standing there under a flag of truce, and of course as soon as they were fired upon they fled, the men fleeing in one direction and the women running in two different directions. So that there were three general directions in which they took flight. There was a woman with an infant in her arms who was killed as she almost touched the flag of truce, and the woman and children of course were strewn all along the circular village until they were dispatched. Right near the flag of truce a mother was shot down with her infant; the child not knowing that its mother was dead was still nursing, and that especially was a very sad sight. The women as they were fleeing with their babes were killed together, shot right through, and the women who were very heavy with child were also killed. All the Indians fled in these three directions, and after most all of them had been killed a cry was made that all those who were not killed or wounded should come forth and they would be safe. Little boys who were not wounded came out of their places of refuge, and as soon as they came in sight a number of soldiers surrounded them and butchered them there.

Of course we all feel very sad about this affair. I stood very loyal to the government all through those troublesome days, and believing so much in the government and being so loyal to it, my disappointment was very strong, and I have come to Washington with a very great blame on my heart. Of course it would have been all right if only the men were killed; we would feel almost grateful for it. But the fact of the killing of the women, and more especially the killing of the young boys and girls who are to go to make up the future strength of the Indian people, is the saddest part of the whole affair and we feel it very sorely.

I was not there at the time before the burial of the bodies, but I did go there with some of the police and the Indian doctor and a great many of the people, men from the agency, and we went through the battlefield and saw where the bodies were from the track of the blood.

TURNING HAWK. I had just reached the point where I said that the women were killed. We heard, besides the killing of the men, of the onslaught also made upon the women and children, and they were treated as roughly and indiscriminately as the men and boys were.

Of course this affair brought a great deal of distress upon all the people, but especially upon the minds of those who stood loyal to the government and who did all that they were able to do in the matter of bringing about peace. They especially have suffered much distress and are very much hurt at heart. These peacemakers continued on in their good work, but there were a great many fickle young men who were ready to be moved by the change in the events there, and consequently, in spite of the great fire that was brought upon all, they were ready to assume any hostile attitude. These young men got themselves in readiness and went in the direction of the scene of battle so they might be of service there. They got there and finally exchanged shots with the soldiers. This party of young men was made up from Rosebud, Ogalalla (Pine

Ridge), and members of any other agencies that happened to be there at the time. While this was going on in the neighborhood of Wounded Knee—the Indians and soldiers exchanging shots—the agency, our home, was also fired into by the Indians. Matters went on in this strain until the evening came on, and then the Indians went off down by White Clay creek. When the agency was fired upon by the Indians from the hillside, of course the shots were returned by the Indian police who were guarding the agency buildings.

Although fighting seemed to have been in the air, yet those who believed in peace were still constant at their work. Young-Man-Afraid-of-his-Horses, who had been on a visit to some other agency in the north or northwest, returned, and immediately went out to the people living about White Clay creek, on the border of, the Bad Lands, and brought his people out. He succeeded in obtaining the consent of the people to come out of their place of refuge and return to the agency. Thus the remaining portion of the Indians who started from Rosebud were brought back into the agency. Mr. Commissioner, during the days of the great whirlwind out there, those good men tried to hold up a countering power, land that was "Peace." We have now come to realize that peace has prevailed and won the day. While we were engaged in bringing about peace our property was left behind, of course, and most of us have lost everything, even down to the matter of guns with which to kill ducks, rabbits, etc, shotguns, and guns of that order. When Young-Man-Afraid brought the people in and their guns were asked for, both men who were called hostile and men who stood loyal to the government delivered up their guns.

1896

■ GHOST DANCE SONGS ■

In 1871 Congress terminated the U.S. policy of making treaties with Native peoples as sovereign nations, thus making the tribes subject to the will of Congress and the administrative rulings of the president. The pace of Anglo-American expansion and expropriation of Native lands quickened, culminating within a decade in the destruction of the vast buffalo herds and the forcible confinement of many tribes to unproductive reservation land, where starvation threatened their lives and acculturation threatened their traditional cultures with extinction. The response of many Native people to threats to their way of life was a powerful apocalyptic dream of a future time when enemies would be overthrown and the world returned to the divine order established in the beginning.

The Ghost Dance, the most dramatic and widespread manifestation of this phenomenon, began when the Paiute prophet Wovoka experienced such a vision. He prophesied that the crow would bring whirlwinds and earthquakes to cleanse the earth and destroy the white invaders, and that the Native dead (the

“ghosts”) and the slaughtered buffalo would return to reclaim the land. The vision and the trance-inducing round dance and songs accompanying it spread like wildfire among reservation communities from California to the Dakotas.

Among the Sioux, facing a desperate struggle for both physical and cultural survival, the Ghost Dance became especially powerful, catching up men like Sitting Bull in its fervor and persuading others of their invulnerability to the white man’s bullets. Fear swept over whites living on and near the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, provoking confrontations. In 1890, when Sitting Bull was killed while being arrested, others like Big Foot and his band saw no future and left the reservation. They made it into the Dakota Badlands as far as a place called Wounded Knee, where members of the U.S. cavalry armed with machine guns surrounded and searched them for weapons. A few shots were heard, then many from the machine guns. When silence settled, around 200 Native American men, women, and children were dead, and so was the hope awakened by Wowoka’s dream. The Ghost Dance songs that follow should be read with the account of Charles Eastman, a Dakota trained in medicine, who returned to the Pine Ridge Reservation in time to witness the calamity at Wounded Knee.

Andrew O. Wiget
New Mexico State University

PRIMARY SOURCES

James Mooney, *The Ghost Dance Religion and Sioux Outbreak of 1890*. Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Pt. 2. Washington: GPO, 1893.

Ghost Dance Songs

I

My children,¹ when at first I liked the whites,
My children, when at first I liked the whites,
I gave them fruits,
I gave them fruits.

II

Father, have pity on me,
Father, have pity on me;
I am crying for thirst,
I am crying for thirst;
All is gone—I have nothing to eat.
All is gone—I have nothing to eat.

5

10

III

My son, let me grasp your hand,
My son, let me grasp your hand,
Says the father,
Says the father.
You shall live,
You shall live,
Says the father,
Says the father.
I bring you a pipe,²
I bring you a pipe,
Says the father,
Says the father.
By means of it you shall live,
By means of it you shall live,
Says the father,
Says the father.

25

IV

My children, my children,
I take pity on those who have been taught,
I take pity on those who have been taught,
Because they push on hard,
Because they push on hard.
Says our father,
Says our father.

30

V

The whole world is coming,
A nation is coming, a nation is coming,
The Eagle has brought the message to the tribe.
The father says so, the father says so.
Over the whole earth they are coming.
The buffalo are coming, the buffalo are coming.
The Crow has brought the message to his tribe,
The father says so, the father says so.

40

¹The songs are sung as a dialogue, with the Sun (“Our Father”) addressing the Indians (“my children”).

²*I.e.*, “a vision.” The pipe was smoked to put one in prayerful contact with the sacred.

Here “a pipe” functions as symbol for the vision that smoking the pipe would induce.

VI

The spirit host is advancing, they say,
The spirit host is advancing, they say,
The spirit host is advancing, they say,
They are coming with the buffalo, they say,
They are coming with the buffalo, they say,
They are coming with the buffalo, they say,
They are coming with the new earth, they say,
They are coming with the new earth, they say,
They are coming with the new earth, they say.

45

VII

He' yoho' ho! *He' yoho' ho!*³
The yellow-hide, the white skin
I have now put him aside—
I have now put him aside—
I have now put him aside—
I have no more sympathy with him,
I have no more sympathy with him,
He' yoho' ho! *he' yoho' ho!*

50

VIII

I' yehel my children—*Uhi' yeye' heyel!*
I' yehel my children—*Uhi' yeye' heyel!*
I' yehel we have rendered them desolate—*Eye' ae' yuhé' yui!*
I' yehel we have rendered them desolate—*Eye' ae' yuhé' yui!*
The whites are crazy—*Ahe' yuhé' yui!*

55

1893

 ■ CHARLES ALEXANDER EASTMAN (SIOUX) ■

1858–1939

What's in a name? In the case of Charles Eastman, a complicated story of cross cultural relations: Born in 1858, he was given the name Hakadah ("Pitiful Last"), because his mother soon died. Raised in the culture of the Santee Sioux, at the age of four he was given a new name, Ohiyesa ("The Winner"), after his village won a game of lacrosse. Eastman was in more ways than one a champion, but he would also face more than his share of losses.

Tensions between encroaching whites and Native people in Minnesota were mounting, and the failure of the U.S. government to adhere to its treaty obligations created a desperate situation. In 1862 some Sioux rebelled, killing a number of settlers. When the U.S. Army put down the insurrection, some three hundred Sioux were imprisoned and sentenced to die—including Eastman's father, Many Lightnings. His uncle and grandmother escaped with other Santee into the "deep woods" of Canada. His uncle gave Ohiyesa a warrior's education, preparing him to take revenge.

In 1873, however, Ohiyesa's father reappeared, as if back from the dead. Abraham Lincoln had commuted his sentence to a term in prison, where he had converted to Christianity. The elder Eastman now read the Bible and took up the plow, following a model that reformers had advocated for hunting-and-gathering Natives. To symbolize the change, he adopted the last name of his deceased wife Mary Eastman, whose father was a white soldier. He expected his son to follow in his footsteps along this new path, and thus Ohiyesa journeyed with him to his farm in South Dakota and was there christened Charles Eastman.

Eastman began his cultural reeducation by going to a nearby missionary-run school, where he soon excelled. Reversing the westward route of manifest destiny, he then traveled ever eastward from school to school—Beloit in Wisconsin, Knox in Illinois, Dartmouth in New Hampshire, and finally Boston University, where he earned a medical degree in 1890. He was then ready to go back to the West to serve his people at the Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota, where he became known as the "white doctor who is an Indian."

In 1890 the Ghost Dance religion was spreading among the Sioux. Following the vision of the prophet Wovoka, some Sioux believed that if the Ghost Dance was performed, whites would vanish, the buffalo would return, and Native land, life, and culture would be restored. Attempting to quell this millenarian movement, the army ended up massacring approximately 200 men, women, and children at Wounded Knee. Although Eastman had adopted much of what the white world offered, the sight of so many brutalized bodies shattered the idea that white society represented only light and progress.

Many reformers of his day clung to this idea and tried to convince both Native people and whites that Native cultures were inferior and backward. They espoused a "Kill the Indian and save the man" philosophy, believing that the only way Natives could survive in modern America was to wash their hands of the old ways and completely assimilate. Reformers often held up educated Native people like Eastman as confirmation of their views. While Eastman's life proved that Native people could succeed on the white man's terms, he himself insisted that Native people were valuable in their own right and, further, that they had much to offer modern America. While the missionaries believed that Christianity would civilize the "savage," Eastman held that Native people could educate white Americans on how to become truly civilized and spiritual. His motto could have been "Save the Indian and save the American."

Interestingly, he found a receptive audience among white Americans. As the country stepped up the pace of industrialization, many people became unsettled in the increasingly urbanized landscape. Seeking a kind of therapy for the anxieties of the machine age, many turned to Native peoples to try to

³The words are vocables, with no referential significance.

reconnect with nature and recover a soul seemingly being exhausted by smoke-stack America.

Much of what Eastman wrote responded to this desire. His wife, Elaine Goodale, a poet and writer whom he had met at Pine Ridge in 1890 when she was serving as a supervisor of Native education, encouraged his literary efforts. In 1902, in *Indian Boyhood*, he told the story of the years before his introduction to white education. With the editorial help of his wife he wrote several other popular works, becoming a leading light in the Boy Scout movement and lecturing widely. In books such as *The Soul of an Indian* (1911) and his autobiographical *From Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916), Eastman acted as a spokesperson, explaining Native cultures to white America. In the process of explaining, though, he was also creating, for, as he well knew, there was no single Native culture. Eastman was helping forge a pan-Native identity that could both command the respect of whites and offer a vantage point from which to criticize the materialism and other drawbacks of mainstream American culture. The traditional ways and wisdom he celebrated were thus reinvented for a new audience, a new time, and a new purpose.

Eastman's legacy is perhaps best illustrated by the work he did between 1903 and 1909 to standardize the family names of the Sioux. This project involved more than simple translation from Lakota into English, because the Sioux followed a different cultural logic in their naming than did the dominant society. Eastman had to negotiate between two cultures in order to create a synthesis that was somehow true to both sides. This was the sort of challenge Eastman faced his whole life, and because he met this particular one, his people gave him a new and most appropriate appellation: Name Giver. Through his writing and other work, Eastman made a name both for himself and for Native peoples at a time when they otherwise might have been deleted from the rolls of the nation.

Douglas C. Sackman

University of Puget Sound

PRIMARY WORKS

Indian Boyhood, 1902; *Red Hunters and the Animal People*, 1904; *Old Indian Days*, 1907; *Wigwam Evenings* (with Elaine Goodale Eastman), 1909; *The Soul of the Indian*, 1911; *Indian Child Life*, 1913; *Indian Scout Talks*, 1914; *The Indian To-Day*, 1915; *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, 1916; *Indian Heroes and Great Chiefsaints*, 1918.

from The Soul of the Indian

I. The Great Mystery¹

The original attitude of the American Indian toward the Eternal, the "Great Mystery" that surrounds and embraces us, was as simple as it was exalted.

¹In subsequent chapters, Eastman describes of morality in Indian society, the role of oral the family's role in religious training, the tradition in religion, and Indian concepts social reinforcement of religious views regarding the spirit world. [All footnotes by Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr.]

To him it was the supreme conception, bringing with it the fullest measure of joy and satisfaction possible in this life.

The worship of the "Great Mystery" was silent, solitary, free from all self-seeking. It was silent, because all speech is of necessity feeble and imperfect; therefore the souls of my ancestors ascended to God in wordless adoration. It was solitary, because they believed that He is nearer to us in solitude, and there were no priests authorized to come between a man and his Maker. None might exhort or confess or in any way meddle with the religious experience of another. Among us all men were created sons of God and stood erect, as conscious of their divinity. Our faith might not be formulated in creeds, nor forced upon any who were unwilling to receive it; hence there was no preaching, proselyting, nor persecution, neither were there any scoffers or atheists.

There were no temples or shrines among us save those of nature. Being a natural man, the Indian was intensely poetical. He would deem it sacrilege to build a house for Him who may be met face to face in the mysterious, shadowy aisles of the primeval forest, or on the sunlit bosom of virgin prairies, upon dizzy spires and pinnacles of naked rock, and yonder in the jeweled vault of the night sky! He who en-ropes Himself in filmy veils of cloud, there on the rim of the visible world where our Great-Grandfather Sun kindles his evening camp-fire. He who rides upon the rigorous wind of the north, or breathes forth His spirit upon aromatic southern airs, whose war-canoe is launched upon majestic rivers and inland seas—He needs no lesser cathedral!

That solitary communion with the Unseen which was the highest expression of our religious life is partly described in the word *hambeday*, literally "mysterious feeling," which has been variously translated "fasting" and "dreaming." It may better be interpreted as "consciousness of the divine."

The first *hambeday*, or religious retreat, marked an epoch in the life of the youth, which may be compared to that of confirmation or conversion in Christian experience. Having first prepared himself by means of the purifying vapor-bath, and cast off as far as possible all human or fleshly influences, the young man sought out the noblest height, the most commanding summit in all the surrounding region. Knowing that God sets no value upon material things, he took with him no offerings or sacrifices other than symbolic objects, such as paints and tobacco. Wishing to appear before Him in all humility, he wore no clothing save his moccasins and breech-clout. At the solemn hour of sunrise or sunset he took up his position, overlooking the glories of earth and facing the "Great Mystery," and there he remained, naked, erect, silent, and motionless, exposed to the elements and forces of His arming, for a night and a day to two days and nights, but rarely longer. Sometimes he would chant a hymn without words, or offer the ceremonial "filled pipe." In this holy trance or ecstasy the Indian mystic found his highest happiness and the motive power of his existence.

When he returned to the camp, he must remain at a distance until he had again entered the vapor-bath and prepared himself for intercourse with his fellows. Of the vision or sign vouchsafed to him he did not speak, unless it had included some commission which must be publicly fulfilled. Sometimes an old man, standing upon the brink of eternity, might reveal to a chosen few the oracle of his long-past youth.

The native American has been generally despised by his white conquerors for his poverty and simplicity. They forget, perhaps, that his religion forbade the accumulation of wealth and the enjoyment of luxury. To him, as to other single-minded men in every age and race, from Diogenes to the brothers of Saint Francis, from the Montanists to the Shakers,² the love of possessions has appeared a snare, and the burdens of a complex society a source of needless peril and temptation. Furthermore, it was the rule of his life to share the fruits of his skill and success with his less fortunate brothers. Thus he kept his spirit free from the dog of pride, cupidity, or envy, and carried out, as he believed, the divine decree—a matter profoundly important to him.

It was not, then, wholly from ignorance or improvidence that he failed to establish permanent towns and to develop a material civilization. To the untutored sage, the concentration of population was the prolific mother of all evils, moral no less than physical. He argued that food is good, while surfeit kills; that love is good, but just destroys; and not less dreaded than the pestilence following upon crowded and unsanitary dwellings was the loss of spiritual power inseparable from too close contact with one's fellow-men. All who have lived much out of doors know that there is a magnetic and nervous force that accumulates in solitude and that is quickly dissipated by life in a crowd; and even his enemies have recognized the fact that for a certain innate power and self-poise, wholly independent of circumstances, the American Indian is unsurpassed among men.

The red man divided mind into two parts,—the spiritual mind and the physical mind. The first is pure spirit, concerned only with the essence of things, and it was this he sought to strengthen by spiritual prayer, during which the body is subdued by fasting and hardship. In this type of prayer there was no beseeching of favor or help. All matters of personal or selfish concern, as success in hunting or warfare, relief from sickness, or the sparing of a beloved life, were definitely relegated to the plane of the lower or material mind, and all ceremonies, charms, or incantations designed to

²Diogenes of Sinope (c. 400-c. 325 B.C.), as an exile in Athens, lived in poverty and believed that happiness resulted from satisfaction of one's natural needs as easily and cheaply as possible and that any natural act was decent and honorable. The doctrine of poverty espoused by St. Francis of Assisi was practiced by the Franciscan friars he founded in 1209. Montanism, based on the apocalyp-

tic teachings of Montanus of Phrygia (who lived sometime in the second century), was characterized by asceticism, zeal, and anti-institutionalism in the Church. Shakers grew out of the Quaker revival in England in 1747. In America, after 1774, they formed communal societies in which property was held in common.

secure a benefit or to avert a danger, were recognized as emanating from the physical self.

The rites of this physical worship, again, were wholly symbolic, and the Indian no more worshiped the Sun than the Christian adores the Cross. The Sun and the Earth, by an obvious parable, holding scarcely more of poetic metaphor than of scientific truth, were in his view the parents of all organic life. From the Sun, as the universal father, proceeds the quickening principle in nature, and in the patient and fruitful womb of our mother, the Earth, are hidden embryos of plants and men. Therefore our reverence and love for them was really an imaginative extension of our love for our immediate parents, and with this sentiment of filial piety was joined a willingness to appeal to them, as to a father, for such good gifts as we may desire. This is the material or physical prayer.

The elements and majestic forces in nature, lightning, Wind, Water, Fire, and Frost, were regarded with awe as spiritual powers, but always secondary and intermediate in character. We believed that the spirit pervades all creation and that every creature possesses a soul in some degree, though not necessarily a soul conscious of itself. The tree, the waterfall, the grizzly bear, each is an embodied Force, and as such an object of reverence.

The Indian loved to come into sympathy and spiritual communion with his brothers of the animal kingdom, whose inarticulate souls had for him something of the sinless purity that we attribute to the innocent and irresponsible child. He had faith in their instincts, as in a mysterious wisdom given from above; and while he humbly accepted the supposedly voluntary sacrifice of their bodies to preserve his own, he paid homage to their spirits in prescribed prayers and offerings.

In every religion there is an element of the supernatural, varying with the influence of pure reason over its devotees. The Indian was a logical and clear thinker upon matters within the scope of his understanding, but he had not yet charted the vast field of nature or expressed her wonders in terms of science. With his limited knowledge of cause and effect, he saw miracles on every hand,—the miracle of life in seed and egg, the miracle of death in lightning flash and in the swelling deep! Nothing of the marvellous could astonish him; as that a beast should speak, or the sun stand still. The virgin birth would appear scarcely more miraculous than is the birth of every child that comes into the world, or the miracle of the loaves and fishes excite more wonder than the harvest that springs from a single ear of corn.

Who may condemn his superstition? Surely not the devout Catholic, or even Protestant missionary, who teaches Bible miracles as literal fact! The logical man must either deny all miracles or none, and our American Indian myths and hero stories are perhaps, in themselves, quite as credible as those of the Hebrews of old. If we are of the modern type of mind, that sees in natural law a majesty and grandeur far more impressive than any solitary infraction of it could possibly be, let us not forget that, after all, science has not explained everything. We have still to face the ultimate miracle,—the origin and principle of life! Here is the supreme mystery that is the essence

of worship, without which there can be no religion, and in the presence of this mystery our attitude cannot be very unlike that of the natural philosopher, who beholds with awe the Divine in all creation.

It is simple truth that the Indian did not, so long as his native philosophy held sway over his mind, either envy or desire to imitate the splendid achievements of the white man. In his own thought he rose superior to them! He scorned them, even as a lofty spirit absorbed in its stern task rejects the soft beds, the luxurious food, the pleasure-worshipping dalliance of a rich neighbor. It was clear to him that virtue and happiness are independent of these things, if not incompatible with them.

There was undoubtedly much in primitive Christianity to appeal to this man, and Jesus' hard sayings to the rich and about the rich would have been entirely comprehensible to him. Yet the religion that is preached in our churches and practiced by our congregations, with its element of display and self-aggrandizement, its active proselytism, and its open contempt of all religions but its own, was for a long time extremely repellent. To his simple mind, the professionalism of the pulpit, the paid exhorter, the moneyed church, was an unspiritual and unedifying thing, and it was not until his spirit was broken and his moral and physical constitution undermined by trade, conquest, and strong drink, that Christian missionaries obtained any real hold upon him. Strange as it may seem, it is true that the proud pagan in his secret soul despised the good men who came to convert and to enlighten him!

Nor were its publicity and its Phariseism the only elements in the alien religion that offended the red man. To him, it appeared shocking and almost incredible that there were among this people who claimed superiority many irreligious, who did not even pretend to profess the national faith. Not only did they not profess it, but they stooped so low as to insult their God with profane and sacrilegious speech! In our own tongue His name was not spoken aloud, even with utmost reverence, much less lightly or irreverently.

More than this, even in those white men who professed religion we found much inconsistency of conduct. They spoke much of spiritual things, while seeking only the material. They bought and sold everything: time, labor, personal independence, the love of woman, and even the ministrations of their holy faith! The lust for money, power, and conquest so characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race did not escape moral condemnation at the hands of his untutored judge, nor did he fail to contrast this conspicuous trait of the dominant race with the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus.

He might in time come to recognize that the drunkards and licentious among white men, with whom he too frequently came in contact, were condemned by the white man's religion as well, and must not be held to discredit it. But it was not so easy to overlook or to excuse national bad faith. When distinguished emissaries from the Father at Washington, some of them ministers of the gospel and even bishops, came to the Indian nations, and pledged to them in solemn treaty the national honor, with prayer and mention of their God; and when such treaties, so made, were promptly and

shamelessly broken, is it strange that the action should arouse not only anger, but contempt? The historians of the white race admit that the Indian was never the first to repudiate his oath.

It is my personal belief, after thirty-five years' experience of it, that there is no such thing as "Christian civilization." I believe that Christianity and modern civilization are opposed and irreconcilable, and that the spirit of Christianity and of our ancient religion is essentially the same.

1911

From From the Deep Woods to Civilization

VII. The Ghost Dance War¹

A religious craze such as that of 1890–91 was a thing foreign to the Indian philosophy.² I recalled that a hundred years before, on the overthrow of the Algonquin nations, a somewhat similar faith was evolved by the astute Delaware prophet, brother to Tecumseh.³ It meant that the last hope of race entirely had departed, and my people were groping blindly after spiritual relief in their bewilderment and misery. I believe that the first prophets of the "Red Christ" were innocent enough and that the people generally were sincere, but there were doubtless some who went into it for self-advertisement, and who introduced new and fantastic features to attract the crowd.⁴

The ghost dancers had gradually concentrated on the Medicine Root creek and the edge of the "Bad Lands,"⁵ and they were still further isolated by a new order from the agent, calling in all those who had not adhered to the new religion.⁶ Several thousand of these "friendlies" were soon encamped on the White Clay creek, close by the agency.⁷ It was near the

¹In earlier chapters, Eastman describes his life as a student at Santee Normal Training School, Dartmouth College, and Boston University Medical School. Subsequent chapters relate his career as a government physician, as a lecturer and writer, and as a leader in the Indian Y.M.C.A. His final chapter contains his estimation of how well Indians have fared in the assimilation process.

²The Ghost Dance and the messianic religion with which it was associated. See headnote to *Ghost Dance Songs*.

³Tenskwatawa rose to prominence in 1805 when, in a vision, the Master of Life announced to him a new mode of action, which his people must take in order to regain divine favor. They must reject witchcraft and the white man's whiskey, dress and technology, and Indian women must no longer marry whites. Only when they returned to their former life ways would they find the happiness that they had known in aboriginal days. Tenskwatawa's teachings, like Wovoka's,

were a response to the cultural discontinuity that came with white contact. Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh were Shawnees, not Delawares as Eastman says.

⁴Eastman may refer here to the trances common among dancers and their belief that bullets could not penetrate the Ghost Dance shirts they wore.

⁵An area of rough, broken land just off the reservation, about fifty miles northwest of the Pine Ridge agency, South Dakota.

⁶Agency officials, Washington bureaucrats, and military officers considered the Ghost Dance movement a serious threat to their authority and control over the Indians. As Eastman indicates below, the excitement at the time of the so-called Ghost Dance War was heightened by political differences among the Indians, personal ambitions, and real grievances against the federal government.

⁷The agency was located near the Nebraska border, southwest of the Wounded Knee massacre site.

middle of December, with weather unusually mild for that season. The dancers held that there would be no snow so long as their rites continued.

An Indian called Little⁸ had been guilty of some minor offense on the reservation and had hitherto evaded arrest. Suddenly he appeared at the agency on an issue day, for the express purpose, as it seemed, of defying the authorities. The assembly room of the Indian police, used also as a council room, opened out of my dispensary⁹ and on this particular morning a council was in progress. I heard some loud talking, but was too busy to pay particular attention, though my assistant had gone in to listen to the speeches. Suddenly the place was in an uproar, and George¹⁰ burst into the inner office, crying excitedly "Look out for yourself, friend! They are going to fight!"

I went around to see what was going on. A crowd had gathered just outside the council room, and the police were surrounded by wild Indians with guns and drawn knives in their hands. "Hurry up with them!" one shouted, while another held his stone war-club over a policeman's head. The attempt to arrest Little had met with a stubborn resistance.

At this critical moment, a fine-looking Indian in citizen's clothes faced the excited throng, and spoke in a clear, steady, almost sarcastic voice.

"Stop! Think! What are you going to do? Kill these men of our own race? Then what? Kill all these helpless white men, women and children? And what then? What will these brave words, brave deeds lead to in the end? How long can you hold out? Your country is surrounded with a network of railroads; thousands of white soldiers will be here within three days. What ammunition have you? what provisions? What will become of your families? Think, think, my brothers! this is a child's madness."

It was the "friendly" chief, American Horse,¹¹ and it seems to me as I recall the incident that this man's voice had almost magic power. It is likely that he saved us all from massacre, for the murder of the police, who represented the authority of the Government, would surely have been followed by a general massacre. It is a fact that those Indians who upheld the agent were in quite as much danger from their wilder brethren as were the whites, indeed it was said that the feeling against them was even stronger. Jack Red Cloud, son of the chief,¹² thrust the muzzle of a cocked revolver almost into the face of American Horse. "It is you and your kind," he shouted, "who

⁸Little had been arrested and brought to the agency, but had been rescued by his friends a few weeks earlier.

⁹Eastman had been appointed government physician at Pine Ridge only weeks earlier, after graduation from medical school at Boston University.

¹⁰Perhaps George Sword, captain of the agency's Indian police squad.

¹¹American Horse, an Oglala, had signed a treaty in 1887 by which the Sioux reservation was reduced by one half. Objections to the treaty added to the discontent of the

Ghost Dance adherents and led them to their so-called "hostile" state in 1890. American Horse worked to resolve differences and to convince the "hostiles" to relent.

¹²Red Cloud (1822–1909), an Oglala, had been one of the most famous and powerful chiefs and since 1867 had been on peaceful terms with the United States. Old and partially blind, he took no part in the events of 1890. Jack Red Cloud was one of the Ghost Dancers who had earlier been induced to leave the Bad Lands and come to the agency.

have brought us to this pass!" That brave man never flinched. Ignoring his rash accuser, he quietly reentered the office; the door closed behind him; the mob dispersed, and for the moment the danger seemed over.

I scarcely knew at the time, but gradually learned afterward, that the Sioux had many grievances and causes for profound discontent, which lay back of and were more or less closely related to the ghost dance craze and the prevailing restlessness and excitement. Rations had been cut from time to time; the people were insufficiently fed, and their protests and appeals were disregarded. Never was more ruthless fraud and graft practiced upon a defenseless people than upon these poor natives by the politicians! Never were there more worthless "scraps of paper" anywhere in the world than many of the Indian treaties and Government documents! Sickness was prevalent and the death rate alarming, especially among the children. Trouble from all these causes had for some time been developing, but might have been checked by humane and conciliatory measures. The "Messiah craze" in itself was scarcely a source of danger, and one might almost as well call upon the army to suppress Billy Sunday¹³ and his hysterical followers. Other tribes than the Sioux who adopted the new religion were let alone, and the craze died a natural death in the course of a few months.

Among the leaders of the malcontents at this time were Jack Red Cloud, No Water, He Dog, Four Bears, Yellow Bear, and Kicking Bear.¹⁴ Friendly leaders included American Horse, Young Man Afraid of His Horses, Bad Wound, Three Stars.¹⁵ There was still another set whose attitude was not clearly defined, and among these men was Red Cloud, the greatest of them all. He who had led his people so brilliantly and with such remarkable results, both in battle and diplomacy, was now an old man of over seventy years, living in a frame house which had been built for him within a half mile of the agency. He would come to council, but said little or nothing. No one knew exactly where he stood, but it seemed that he was broken in spirit as in body and convinced of the hopelessness of his people's cause.

It was Red Cloud who asked the historic question, at a great council held in the Black Hills region with a Government commission, and after good Bishop Whipple¹⁶ had finished the invocation, "Which God is our brother praying to now? Is it the same God whom they have twice deceived, when they made treaties with us which they afterward broke?"

Early in the morning after the attempted arrest of Little, George rushed into my quarters and awakened me. "Come quick!" he shouted, "the soldiers

¹³William Ashley Sunday (1862–1935), a well-known American evangelist.

¹⁴No Water's camp on the White River near Pine Ridge was the site of much Ghost Dance activity. In 1891, He Dog served as one of the Sioux delegates to Washington, sent to try to resolve tribal differences.

¹⁵Kicking Bear, from the Cheyenne River reservation, was a Ghost Dance priest who had organized the first dance at Sitting Bull's

camp on the Standing Rock reservation. Four Bears and Yellow Bear have not been identified.

¹⁶Young Man Afraid of His Horses, an Oglala, had made his reputation in the wars of the 1860s but, like Red Cloud, had lived peacefully since 1867 and counseled peace during the crisis. Bad Wound and Three Stars have not been identified.

¹⁶Bishop Henry Benjamin Whipple.

are here!" I looked along the White Clay creek toward the little railroad town of Rushville, Nebraska, twenty-five miles away, and just as the sun rose above the knife-edged ridges black with stunted pine, I perceived a moving cloud of dust that marked the trail of the Ninth Cavalry. There was instant commotion among the camps of friendly Indians. Many women and children were coming in to the agency for refuge, evidently fearing that the dreaded soldiers might attack their villages by mistake. Some who had not heard of their impending arrival hurried to the offices to ask what it meant. I assured those who appealed to me that the troops were here only to preserve order, but their suspicions were not easily allayed.

As the cavalry came nearer, we saw that they were colored troopers, wearing buffalo overcoats and muskrat caps; the Indians with their quick wit called them "buffalo soldiers." They halted, and established their temporary camp in the open space before the agency enclosure. The news had already gone out through the length and breadth of the reservation, and the wildest rumors were in circulation. Indian scouts might be seen upon every hill top, closely watching the military encampment.

At this juncture came the startling news from Fort Yates, some two hundred and fifty miles to the north of us, that Sitting Bull had been killed by Indian police while resisting arrest, and a number of his men with him, as well as several of the police. We next heard that the remnant of his band had fled in our direction, and soon afterward, that they had been joined by Big Foot's band from the western part of Cheyenne River agency, which lay directly in their road.¹⁷ United States troops continued to gather at strategic points, and of course the press seized upon the opportunity to enlarge upon the strained situation and predict an "Indian uprising." The reporters were among us, and managed to secure much "news" that no one else ever heard of. Border towns were fortified and cowboys and militia gathered in readiness to protect them against the "red devils." Certain classes of the frontier population industriously fomented the excitement for what there was in it for them, since much money is apt to be spent at such times. As for the poor Indians, they were quite as badly scared as the whites and perhaps with more reason.

General Brooke¹⁸ undertook negotiations with the ghost dancers, and finally induced them to come within reach. They camped on a flat about a mile north of us and in full view, while the more tractable bands were still gathered on the south and west. The large boarding school had locked its doors and succeeded in holding its hundreds of Indian children, partly for their own sakes, and partly as hostages for the good behavior of their fathers. At the agency were now gathered all the government employes and their families, except such as had taken flight, together with traders,

¹⁷After Sitting Bull's death, the Hunkpapa Ghost Dancers fled from the Standing Rock reservation. The group Eastman refers to fled to the camp of Big Foot, a Minneconjou. Big Foot, gravely ill, yet considered

dangerous by the authorities, started with his people toward the Pine Ridge reservation, where he hoped to find refuge.

¹⁸General J. R. Brooke, commander of the troops sent to Pine Ridge.

missionaries, and ranchmen, army officers, and newspaper men. It was a conglomerate population.

During this time of grave anxiety and nervous tension, the cooler heads among us went about our business, and still refused to believe in the tragic possibility of an Indian war. It may be imagined that I was more than busy, though I had not such long distances to cover, for since many Indians accosted to comfortable log houses were compelled to pass the winter in tents, there was even more sickness than usual. I had access and welcome to the camps of all the various groups and factions, a privilege shared by my good friend Father Jutz,¹⁹ the Catholic missionary, who was completely trusted by his people.

Three days later, we learned that Big Foot's band of ghost dancers from the Cheyenne river reservation north of us was approaching the agency, and that Major Whiteside²⁰ was in command of troops with orders to intercept them.

Late that afternoon, the Seventh Cavalry under Colonel Forsythe²¹ was called to the saddle and rode off toward Wounded Knee creek, eighteen miles away. Father Craft,²² a Catholic priest with some Indian blood, who knew Sitting Bull and his people, followed an hour or so later, and I was much inclined to go too, but my fiancée²³ pointed out that my duty lay rather at home with our Indians, and I stayed.

The morning of December 29th was sunny and pleasant. We were all straining our ears toward Wounded Knee, and about the middle of the forenoon we distinctly heard the reports of the Hotchkiss guns. Two hours later, a rider was seen approaching at full speed, and in a few minutes he had dismounted from his exhausted horse and handed his message to General Brooke's orderly. The Indians were watching their own messenger, who ran on foot along the northern ridges and carried the news to the so-called "hostile" camp. It was said that he delivered his message at almost the same time as the mounted officer.

The resulting confusion and excitement was unmistakable. The white tepees disappeared as if by magic and soon the caravans were in motion, going toward the natural fortress of the "Bad Lands." In the "friendly" camp there was almost as much turmoil, and crowds of frightened women and children poured into the agency. Big Foot's band had been wiped out by the troops, and reprisals were naturally looked for. The enclosure was not barricaded in any way and we had but a small detachment of troops for our

¹⁹Father John Jutz.

²⁰Major Samuel Whiteside, with a detachment of the Seventh Cavalry, intercepted Big Foot on December 28 and convinced him to encamp for the night at Wounded Knee.

²¹Colonel James W. Forsyth, commander of the Seventh Cavalry, joined Whiteside at Wounded Knee on the night of December 28.

²²Father Craft was at the massacre and was wounded.

²³Elaine Goodale, who had taught for a number of years on the Great Sioux Reservation, was then superintendent for Indian education in the Dakotas. She and Eastman married in 1891. In later years, an author in her own right, she encouraged Eastman to write and lecture and collaborated with him on many works. The extent of her influence on his writing may never be known, but it was certainly great.

protection. Sentinels were placed, and machine guns trained on the various approaches.

A few hot-headed young braves fired on the sentinels and wounded two of them. The Indian police began to answer by shooting at several braves who were apparently about to set fire to some of the outlying buildings. Every married employee was seeking a place of safety for his family, the interpreter among them. Just then General Brooke ran out into the open, shouting at the top of his voice to the police: "Stop, stop! Doctor, tell them they must not fire until ordered!" I did so, as the bullets whistled by us, and the General's coolness perhaps saved all our lives, for we were in no position to repel a large attacking force. Since we did not reply, the scattered shots soon ceased, but the situation remained critical for several days and nights.

My office was full of refugees. I called one of my good friends aside and asked him to saddle my two horses and stay by them. "When general fighting begins, take them to Miss Goodale and see her to the railroad if you can," I told him. Then I went over to the rectory. Mrs. Cook refused to go without her husband,²⁴ and Miss Goodale would not leave while there was a chance of being of service. The house was crowded with terrified people, most of them Christian Indians, whom our friends were doing their best to pacify.

At dusk, the Seventh Cavalry returned with their twenty-five dead and I believe thirty-four wounded, most of them by their own comrades, who had encircled the Indians, while few of the latter had guns.²⁵ A majority of the thirty or more Indian wounded were women and children, including babies in arms. As there were not tents enough for all, Mr. Cook offered us the mission chapel, in which the Christmas tree still stood, for a temporary hospital. We tore out the pews and covered the floor with hay and quilts. There we laid the poor creatures side by side in rows, and the night was devoted to caring for them as best we could. Many were frightfully torn by pieces of shells, and the suffering was terrible. General Brooke placed me in charge and I had to do nearly all the work, for although the army surgeons were more than ready to help as soon as their own men had been cared for, the tortured Indians would scarcely allow a man in uniform to touch them. Mrs. Cook, Miss Goodale, and several of Mr. Cook's Indian helpers acted as volunteer nurses. In spite of all our efforts, we lost the greater part of them, but a few recovered, including several children who had lost all their relatives and who were adopted into kind Christian families.

On the day following the Wounded Knee massacre there was a blizzard, in the midst of which I was ordered out with several Indian police, to look for a policeman who was reported to have been wounded and left some two

miles from the agency. We did not find him. This was the only time during the whole affair that I carried a weapon; a friend lent me a revolver which I put in my overcoat pocket, and it was lost on the ride. On the third day it cleared, and the ground was covered with an inch or two of fresh snow. We had feared that some of the Indian wounded might have been left on the field, and a number of us volunteered to go and see. I was placed in charge of the expedition of about a hundred civilians, ten or fifteen of whom were white men. We were supplied with wagons in which to convey any of whom we might find still alive. Of course a photographer and several reporters were of the party.

Fully three miles from the scene of the massacre we found the body of a woman completely covered with a blanket of snow, and from this point on we found them scattered along as they had been relentlessly hunted down and slaughtered while fleeing for their lives. Some of our people discovered relatives or friends among the dead, and there was much wailing and mourning. When we reached the spot where the Indian camp had stood, among the fragments of burned tents and other belongings we saw the frozen bodies lying close together or piled one upon another. I counted eighty bodies of men who had been in the council and who were almost as helpless as the women and babes when the deadly fire began, for nearly all their guns had been taken from them. A reckless and desperate young Indian fired the first shot when the search for weapons was well under way,²⁶ and immediately the troops opened fire from all sides, killing not only unarmed men, women, and children, but their own comrades who stood opposite them, for the camp was entirely surrounded.

It took all of my nerve to keep my composure in the face of this spectacle, and of the excitement and grief of my Indian companions, nearly every one of whom was crying aloud or singing his death song. The white men became very nervous, but I set them to examining and uncovering every body to see if one were living. Although they had been lying untended in the snow and cold for two days and nights, a number had survived. Among them I found a baby of about a year old warmly wrapped and entirely unhurt. I brought her in, and she was afterward adopted and educated by an army officer. One man who was severely wounded begged me to fill his pipe. When we brought him into the chapel he was welcomed by his wife and daughters with cries of joy, but he died a day or two later.

Under a wagon I discovered an old woman, totally blind and entirely helpless. A few had managed to crawl away to some place of shelter, and we found in a log store near by several who were badly hurt and others who had died after reaching there. After we had dispatched several wagon loads to the agency, we observed groups of warriors watching us from adjacent buttes; probably friends of the victims who had come there for the same purpose as ourselves. A majority of our party, fearing an attack, insisted

²⁴The Reverend Charles Smith Cook, an Oglala, was an 1881 graduate of Trinity College and had studied theology at Seabury Divinity School. He was ordained and served as a teacher and minister on the Pine Ridge reservation. Cook died in 1892.

²⁵The few Indians who had weapons had been disarmed, except one, when the firing commenced.

²⁶The young man who fired the first shot was Black Coyote, alleged to have been deaf.

that some one ride back to the agency for an escort of soldiers, and as mine was the best horse, it fell to me to go. I covered the eighteen miles in quick time and was not interfered with in any way, although if the Indians had meant mischief they could easily have picked me off from any of the ravines and gulches.

All this was a severe ordeal for one who had so lately put all his faith in the Christian love and lofty ideals of the white man. Yet I passed no hasty judgment, and was thankful that I might be of some service and relieve even a small part of the suffering. An appeal published in a Boston paper brought us liberal supplies of much needed clothing and linen for dressings. We worked on. Bishop Hare of South Dakota²⁷ visited us, and was overcome by faintness when he entered his mission chapel, thus transformed into a rude hospital.

After some days of extreme tension, and weeks of anxiety, the "hostiles," so called, were at last induced to come in and submit to a general disarmament. Father Jutz, the Catholic missionary, had gone bravely among them and used all his influence toward a peaceful settlement. The troops were all recalled and took part in a grand review before General Miles,²⁸ no doubt intended to impress the Indians with their superior force.

1916

■ GERTRUDE BONNIN (ZITKALA-SA) (SIOUX) ■ 1876–1938

In her writings as well as her work as an Indian rights activist, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, or Zitkala-Sa (Red Bird), is a vital link between the oral culture of tribal America in conflict with its colonizers and the literate culture of contemporary American Indians. A Yankton, born on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, she was the third child of Ellen Tate 'Iyohiwin Simmons, a full-blood Sioux. Little is known of her father, a white man. Her mother brought up the children in traditional ways. At the age of eight, Zitkala-Sa left the reservation to attend a Quaker missionary school in Wabash, Indiana. She returned to the reservation but was culturally unhinged, "neither a wild Indian nor a tame one," as she described herself later in "The Schooldays of an Indian Girl." After four unhappy years she returned to her school, graduated, and at age nineteen enrolled—against her mother's wish—at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana.

²⁷Bishop W. D. Hare, long-time Episcopal missionary bishop among the Sioux.

²⁸General Nelson A. Miles, commander of the Army Department of the Missouri, who had ordered the arrest of Sitting Bull.

She later taught at Carlisle Indian School for about two years. Having become an accomplished violinist, she also studied at the Boston Conservatory of Music. Meanwhile, the estrangement from her mother and the old ways of the reservation had grown, as had her indignation over the treatment of American Indians by the state, church, and population at large. Around 1900 she began to express her feelings publicly in writing. In articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* and other journals, she struggled with the issues of cultural dislocation and injustice that brought suffering to her people. Her authorial voice was not merely critical, however. She was earnestly committed to being a bridge builder between cultures, for example, by writing *Old Indian Legends*, published in 1901. "I have tried," she says in the introduction to that work, "to transplant the native spirit of these tales—root and all—into the English language, since America in the last few centuries has acquired a second tongue."

In the following decades, Zitkala-Sa's writing efforts were increasingly part of, and finally supplanted by, her work as an Indian rights activist. She had accepted a clerkship at the Standing Rock Reservation, where she met and married Raymond T. Bonnin, another Sioux employee of the Indian service. The Bonnins then transferred to a reservation in Utah where they became affiliated with the Society of American Indians. Zitkala-Sa was elected secretary of the Society in 1916, and the Bonnins moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked with the Society and edited the *American Indian Magazine*. In 1926 she founded the National Council of American Indians and continued to pursue reforms through public speaking and lobbying efforts. She was instrumental in the passage of the Indian Citizenship Bill and secured powerful outside interests in Indian reform. Zitkala-Sa died in Washington, D.C., in 1938 and was buried in Arlington Cemetery.

Although her output was limited, her artistic accomplishment is noteworthy. In addition to her earlier works, in 1913 she collaborated with William P. Hanson in producing an Indian opera, "Sundance." In 1921 her collection of *American Indian Stories* was published, combining her previously printed work with some new essays and merging autobiography and fiction in a unique way. In her writings, Zitkala-Sa anticipated some aspects of the work of present-day American Indian fiction writers like N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Silko and advocates of the Indian cause like Vine Deloria, Jr. As her collection of *Old Indian Legends* proves, she realized that political rights would be fruitless unless they were rooted in a recovery of cultural identity through a revitalization of the oral tradition.

Zitkala-Sa's autobiographical work makes her perhaps the first American Indian woman to write her own story without the aid of an editor, interpreter, or ethnographer. Her essay, "Why I am a Pagan," merits special attention because at the time it was published it was popular for American Indians to describe their conversions to Christianity.

Kristin Herzog

University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill

PRIMARY WORKS

Old Indian Legends, 1901, 1985; *American Indian Stories*, 1921, 1985.

From Impressions of an Indian Childhood¹

I. My Mother

A wigwam of weather-stained canvas stood at the base of some irregularly ascending hills. A footpath wound its way gently down the sloping land till it reached the broad river bottom; creeping through the long swamp grasses that bent over it on either side, it came out on the edge of the Missouri.

Here, morning, noon, and evening, my mother came to draw water from the muddy stream for our household use. Always, when my mother started for the river, I stopped my play to run along with her. She was only of medium height. Often she was sad and silent, at which times her full arched lips were compressed into hard and bitter lines, and shadows fell under her black eyes. Then I clung to her hand and begged to know what made the tears fall.

"Hush; my little daughter must never talk about my tears," and smiling through them, she patted my head and said, "Now let me see how fast you can run to-day." Whereupon I tore away at my highest possible speed, with my long black hair blowing in the breeze.

I was a wild little girl of seven. Loosely clad in a slip of brown buckskin, and light-footed with a pair of soft moccasins on my feet, I was as free as the wind that blew my hair, and no less spirited than a bounding deer. These were my mother's pride, – my wild freedom and overflowing spirits. She taught me no fear save that of intruding myself upon others.

Having gone many paces ahead I stopped, panting for breath, and laughing with glee as my mother watched my every movement. I was not wholly conscious of myself, but was more keenly alive to the fire within. It was as if I were the activity, and my hands and feet were only experiments for my spirit to work upon.

Returning from the river, I tugged beside my mother, with my hand upon the bucket I believed I was carrying. One time, on such a return, I remember a bit of conversation we had. My grown-up cousin, Warca-Ziwin (Sunflower), who was then seventeen, always went to the river alone for water for her mother. Their wigwam was not far from ours; and I saw her daily going to and from the river. I admired my cousin greatly. So I said: "Mother, when I am tall as my cousin Warca-Ziwin, you shall not have to come for water. I will do it for you."

With a strange tremor in her voice which I could not understand, she answered, "If the paleface does not take away from us the river we drink."

"Mother, who is this bad paleface?" I asked.

"My little daughter, he is a sham, – a sickly shami! The bronzed Dakota is the only real man."

I looked up into my mother's face while she spoke; and seeing her bite her lips, I knew she was unhappy. This aroused revenge in my small soul. Stamping my foot on the earth, I cried aloud, "I hate the paleface that makes my mother cry!"

Setting the pail of water on the ground, my mother stooped, and stretching her left hand out on the level with my eyes, she placed her other arm about me; she pointed to the hill where my uncle and my only sister lay buried.

"There is what the paleface has done! Since then your father too has been buried in a hill nearer the rising sun. We were once very happy. But the paleface has stolen our lands and driven us hither. Having defrauded us of our land, the paleface forced us away.

"Well, it happened on the day we moved camp that your sister and uncle were both very sick. Many others were ailing, but there seemed to be no help. We traveled many days and nights; not in the grand happy way that we moved camp when I was a little girl, but we were driven, my child, driven like a herd of buffalo. With every step, your sister, who was not as large as you are now, shrieked with the painful jar until she was hoarse with crying. She grew more and more feverish. Her little hands and cheeks were burning hot. Her little lips were parched and dry, but she would not drink the water I gave her. Then I discovered that her throat was swollen and red. My poor child, how I cried with her because the Great Spirit had forgotten us!

"At last, when we reached this western country, on the first weary night your sister died. And soon your uncle died also, leaving a widow and an orphan daughter, your cousin Warca-Ziwin. Both your sister and uncle might have been happy with us to-day, had it not been for the heartless paleface."

My mother was silent the rest of the way to our wigwam. Though I saw no tears in her eyes, I knew that was because I was with her. She seldom wept before me.

1900

The School Days of an Indian Girl¹

I. The Land of Red Apples

There were eight in our party of bronzed children who were going East with the missionaries. Among us were three young braves, two tall girls, and we three little ones, Judewin, Thowin, and I.

We had been very impatient to start on our journey to the Red Apple Country,² which, we were told, lay a little beyond the great circular horizon

¹"Impressions of an Indian Childhood" initially appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* 85 (1900), pp. 37–47. It was reprinted in Zitkala-Sa's *American Indian Stories* (1921).

¹"The School Days of an Indian Girl" appeared in *Atlantic*, 85 (February, 1900), 185–194. It was reprinted in Zitkala-Sa's *American Indian Stories* (1921).

²*I.e.*, Indiana.

of the Western prairie. Under a sky of rosy apples we dreamt of roaming as freely and happily as we had chased the cloud shadows on the Dakota plains. We had anticipated much pleasure from a ride on the iron horse, but the throngs of staring palefaces disturbed and troubled us.

On the train, fair women, with tottering babies on each arm, stopped their haste and scrutinized the children of absent mothers. Large men, with heavy bundles in their hands, halted near by, and riveted their glassy blue eyes upon us.

I sank deep into the corner of my seat, for I resented being watched. Directly in front of me, children who were no larger than I hung themselves upon the backs of their seats, with their bold white faces toward me. Sometimes they took their forefingers out of their mouths and pointed at my moccasined feet. Their mothers, instead of reproving such rude curiosity, looked closely at me, and attracted their children's further notice to my blanket. This embarrassed me, and kept me constantly on the verge of tears.

I sat perfectly still, with my eyes downcast, daring only now and then to shoot long glances around me. Changing to turn to the window at my side, I was quite breathless upon seeing one familiar object. It was the telegraph pole which strode by at short paces. Very near my mother's dwelling, along the edge of a road thickly bordered with wild sunflowers, some poles like these had been planted by white men. Often I had stopped, on my way down the road, to hold my ear against the pole, and, hearing its low moaning, I used to wonder what the paleface had done to hurt it. Now I sat watching for each pole that glided by to be the last one.

In this way I had forgotten my uncomfortable surroundings, when I heard one of my comrades call out my name. I saw the missionary standing very near, tossing candies and gums into our midst. This amused us all, and we tried to see who could catch the most of the sweet-meats. The missionary's generous distribution of candies was impressed upon my memory by a disastrous result which followed. I had caught more than my share of candies and gums, and soon after our arrival at the school I had a chance to disgrace myself, which, I am ashamed to say, I did.

Though we rode several days inside of the iron horse, I do not recall a single thing about our luncheons.

It was night when we reached the school grounds. The lights from the windows of the large buildings fell upon some of the icidled trees that stood beneath them. We were led toward an open door, where the brightness of the lights within flooded out over the heads of the excited palefaces who blocked the way. My body trembled more from fear than from the snow I trod upon.

Entering the house, I stood close against the wall. The strong glaring light in the large whitewashed room dazzled my eyes. The noisy hurrying of hard shoes upon a bare wooden floor increased the whirring in my ears. My only safety seemed to be in keeping next to the wall. As I was wondering in which direction to escape from all this confusion, two warm hands grasped me firmly, and in the same moment I was tossed high in midair. A rosy-checked

paleface woman caught me in her arms. I was both frightened and insulted by such trifling. I stared into her eyes, wishing her to let me stand on my own feet, but she jumped me up and down with increasing enthusiasm. My mother had never made a plaything of her wee daughter. Remembering this I began to cry aloud.

They misunderstood the cause of my tears, and placed me at a white table loaded with food. There our party were united again. As I did not hush my crying, one of the older ones whispered to me, "Wait until you are alone in the night."

It was very little I could swallow besides my sobs, that evening.

"Oh, I want my mother and my brother Dawee! I want to go to my aunt!" I pleaded; but the ears of the palefaces could not hear me.

From the table we were taken along an upward incline of wooden boxes, which I learned afterward to call a stairway. At the top was a quiet hall, dimly lighted. Many narrow beds were in one straight line down the entire length of the wall. In them lay sleeping brown faces, which peeped just out of the coverings. I was tucked into bed with one of the tall girls, because she talked to me in my mother tongue and seemed to soothe me.

I had arrived in the wonderful land of rosy skies, but I was not happy, as I had thought I should be. My long travel and the bewildering sights had exhausted me. I fell asleep, heaving deep, tired sobs. My tears were left to dry themselves in streaks, because neither my aunt nor my mother was near to wipe them away.

II. The Cutting of My Long Hair

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling for its lost freedom, all was useless.

A paleface woman, with white hair, came up after us. We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. These were Indian girls, in stiff shoes and closely clinging dresses. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and shingled hair. As I walked noiselessly in my soft moccasins, I felt like sinking to the floor, for my blanket had been stripped from my shoulders. I looked hard at the Indian girls, who seemed not to care that they were even more immodestly dressed than I, in their tightly fitting clothes. While we marched in, the boys entered at an opposite door. I watched for the three young braves who came in our party. I spied them in the rear ranks, looking as uncomfortable as I felt.

A small bell was tapped, and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Supposing this act meant they were to be seated, I pulled out mine

and at once slipped into it from one side. But when I turned my head, I saw that I was the only one seated, and all the rest at our table remained standing. Just as I began to rise, looking shyly around to see how chairs were to be used, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and I had to crawl back into my chair again. I heard a man's voice at one end of the hall, and I looked around to see him. But all the others hung their heads over their plates. As I glanced at the long chain of tables, I caught the eyes of a paleface woman upon me. Immediately I dropped my eyes, wondering why I was so keenly watched by the strange woman. The man ceased his mutterings, and then a third bell was tapped. Every one picked up his knife and fork and began eating. I began crying instead, for by this time I was afraid to venture anything more.

But this eating by formula was not the hardest trial in that first day. Late in the morning, my friend Judewin gave me a terrible warning. Judewin knew a few words of English; and she had overheard the paleface woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judewin said, "We have to submit, because they are strong," I rebelled.

"No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!" I answered.

I watched my chance, and when no one noticed I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes,—my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going. Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my steps toward the corner farthest from the door. On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and cuddled myself in the dark corner.

From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by. Though in the hall loud voices were calling my name, and I knew that even Judewin was searching for me, I did not open my mouth to answer. Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Women and girls entered the room. I held my breath, and watched them open closet doors and peep behind large trunks. Some one threw up the curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light. What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled

like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do: for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

III. The Snow Episode

A short time after our arrival we three Dakotas were playing in the snow-drifts. We were all still deaf to the English language, excepting Judewin, who always heard such puzzling things. One morning we learned through her ears that we were forbidden to fall lengthwise in the snow, as we had been doing, to see our own impressions. However, before many hours we had forgotten the order, and were having great sport in the snow, when a shrill voice called us. Looking up, we saw an imperative hand beckoning us into the house. We shook the snow off ourselves, and started toward the woman as slowly as we dared.

Judewin said: "Now the paleface is angry with us. She is going to punish us for falling into the snow. If she looks straight into your eyes and talks loudly, you must wait until she stops. Then, after a tiny pause, say, 'No.'" The rest of the way we practiced upon the little word "no."

As it happened, Thowin was summoned to judgment first. The door shut behind her with a click.

Judewin and I stood silently listening at the keyhole. The paleface woman talked in very severe tones. Her words fell from her lips like crackling embers, and her inflection ran up like the small end of a switch. I understood her voice better than the things she was saying. I was certain we had made her very impatient with us. Judewin heard enough of the words to realize all too late that she had taught us the wrong reply.

"Oh, poor Thowin!" she gasped, as she put both hands over her ears.

Just then I heard Thowin's tremulous answer, "No."
With an angry exclamation, the woman gave her a hard spanking. Then she stopped to say something. Judewin said it was this: "Are you going to obey my word the next time?"

Thowin answered again with the only word at her command, "No."
This time the woman meant her blows to smart, for the poor frightened girl shrieked at the top of her voice. In the midst of the whipping the blows ceased abruptly, and the woman asked another question: "Are you going to fall in the snow again?"

Thowin gave her bad password another trial. We heard her say feebly, "No! No!"

With this the woman hid away her half-worn slipper, and led the child out, stroking her black shorn head. Perhaps it occurred to her that brute force is not the solution for such a problem. She did nothing to Judewin nor to me.

She only returned to us our unhappy comrade, and left us alone in the room. During the first two or three seasons misunderstandings as ridiculous as this one of the snow episode frequently took place, bringing unjustifiable frights and punishments into our little lives.

Within a year I was able to express myself somewhat in broken English. As soon as I comprehended a part of what was said and done, a mischievous spirit of revenge possessed me. One day I was called in from my play for some misconduct. I had disregarded a rule which seemed to me very needlessly binding. I was sent into the kitchen to mash the turnips for dinner. It was noon, and steaming dishes were hastily carried into the dining room. I hated turnips, and their odor which came from the brown jar was offensive to me. With fire in my heart, I took the wooden tool that the paleface woman held out to me. I stood upon a step, and, grasping the handle with both hands, I bent in hot rage over the turnips. I worked my vengeance upon them. All were so busily occupied that no one noticed me. I saw that the turnips were in a pulp, and that further beating could not improve them; but the order was, "Mash these turnips," and mash them I would! I renewed my energy; and as I sent the masher into the bottom of the jar, I felt a satisfying sensation that the weight of my body had gone into it.

Just here a paleface woman came up to my table. As she looked into the jar, she shoved my hands roughly aside. I stood fearless and angry. She placed her red hands upon the rim of the jar. Then she gave one lift and a stride away from the table. But lo! the pulpy contents fell through the crumbled bottom to the floor! She spared me no scolding phrases that I had earned. I did not heed them. I felt triumphant in my revenge, though deep within me I was a wee bit sorry to have broken the jar.

As I sat eating my dinner, and saw that no turnips were served, I whooped in my heart for having once asserted the rebellion within me.

IV. The Devil

Among the legends the old warriors used to tell me were many stories of evil spirits. But I was taught to fear them no more than those who stalked about in material guise. I never knew there was an insolent chieftain among the bad spirits, who dared to array his forces against the Great Spirit, until I heard this white man's legend from a paleface woman.

Out of a large book she showed me a picture of the white man's devil. I looked in horror upon the strong claws that grew out of his fur-covered fingers. His feet were like his hands. Trailing at his heels was a scaly tail tipped with a serpent's open jaws. His face was a patchwork: he had bearded cheeks, like some I had seen palefaces wear; his nose was an eagle's bill, and his sharp-pointed ears were pricked up like those of a sly fox. Above them a pair of cow's horns curved upward. I trembled with awe, and my heart throbbled in my throat, as I looked at the king of evil spirits. Then I heard the paleface woman say that this terrible creature roamed loose in the world, and that little girls who disobeyed school regulations were to be tortured by him.

That night I dreamt about this evil divinity. Once again I seemed to be in my mother's cottage. An Indian woman had come to visit my mother. On opposite sides of the kitchen stove, which stood in the centre of the small

house, my mother and her guest were seated in straight-backed chairs. I played with a train of empty spools hitched together on a string. It was night, and the wick burned feebly. Suddenly I heard some one turn our door-knob from without.

My mother and the woman hushed their talk, and both looked toward the door. It opened gradually. I waited behind the stove. The hinges squeaked as the door was slowly, very slowly pushed inward.

Then in rushed the devil! He was tall! He looked exactly like the picture I had seen of him in the white man's papers. He did not speak to my mother, because he did not know the Indian language, but his glittering yellow eyes were fastened upon me. He took long strides around the stove, passing behind the woman's chair. I threw down my spools, and ran to my mother. He did not fear her, but followed closely after me. Then I ran round and round the stove, crying aloud for help. But my mother and the woman seemed not to know my danger. They sat still, looking quietly upon the devil's chase after me. At last I grew dizzy. My head revolved as on a hidden pivot. My knees became numb, and doubled under my weight like a pair of knife blades without a spring. Beside my mother's chair I fell in a heap. Just as the devil stooped over me with outstretched claws my mother awoke from her quiet indifference, and lifted me on her lap. Whereupon the devil vanished, and I was awake.

On the following morning I took my revenge upon the devil. Stealing into the room where a wall of shelves was filled with books, I drew forth *The Stories of the Bible*. With a broken slate pencil I carried in my apron pocket, I began by scratching out his wicked eyes. A few moments later, when I was ready to leave the room, there was a ragged hole in the page where the picture of the devil had once been.

V. Iron Routine

A loud-clamoring bell awakened us at half past six in the cold winter mornings. From happy dreams of Western rolling lands and unlassoed freedom we tumbled out upon chilly bare floors back again into a paleface day. We had short time to jump into our shoes and clothes, and wet our eyes with icy water, before a small hand bell was vigorously rung for roll call.

There were too many drowsy children and too numerous orders for the day to waste a moment in any apology to nature for giving her children such a shock in the early morning. We rushed downstairs, bounding over two high steps at a time, to land in the assembly room.

A paleface woman, with a yellow-covered roll book open on her arm and a gnawed pencil in her hand, appeared at the door. Her small, tired face was coldly lighted with a pair of large gray eyes.

She stood still in a halo of authority, while over the rim of her spectacles her eyes pried nervously about the room. Having glanced at her long list of names and called out the first one, she tossed up her chin and peered through the crystals of her spectacles to make sure of the answer "Here."

Relentlessly her pencil black-marked our daily records if we were not present to respond to our names, and no chum of ours had done it successfully for us. No matter if a dull headache or the painful cough of slow consumption had delayed the absentee, there was only time enough to mark the tardiness. It was next to impossible to leave the iron routine after the civilizing machine had once begun its day's buzzing; and as it was imbedded in me to suffer in silence rather than to appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes could not see my pain, I have many times trudged in the day's harness heavy-footed, like a dumb sick brute.

Once I lost a dear classmate. I remember well how she used to mope along at my side, until one morning she could not raise her head from her pillow. At her deathbed I stood weeping, as the paleface woman sat near her moistening the dry lips. Among the folds of the bedclothes I saw the open pages of the white man's Bible. The dying Indian girl talked disconnectedly of Jesus the Christ and the paleface who was cooling her swollen hands and feet.

I grew bitter, and censured the woman for cruel neglect of our physical ills. I despised the pencils that moved automatically, and the one teaspoon which dealt out, from a large bottle, healing to a row of variously ailing Indian children. I blamed the hard-working, well-meaning, ignorant woman who was inculcating in our hearts her superstitious ideas. Though I was sulen in all my little troubles, as soon as I felt better I was ready again to smile upon the cruel woman. Within a week I was again actively testing the chains which tightly bound my individuality like a mummy for burial.

The melancholy of those black days has left so long a shadow that it darkens the path of years that have since gone by. These sad memories rise above those of smoothly grinding school days. Perhaps my Indian nature is the moaning wind which stirs them now for their present record. But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low voice of a curiously colored sea-shell, which is only for those ears that are bent with compassion to hear it.

VI. Four Strange Summers

After my first three years of school, I roamed again in the Western country through four strange summers.

During this time I seemed to hang in the heart of chaos, beyond the touch or voice of human aid. My brother, being almost ten years my senior, did not quite understand my feelings. My mother had never gone inside of a schoolhouse, and so she was not capable of comforting her daughter who could read and write. Even nature seemed to have no place for me. I was neither a wee girl nor a tall one; neither a wild Indian nor a tame one. This deplorable situation was the effect of my brief course in the East, and the unsatisfactory "teenth" in a girl's years.

It was under these trying conditions that, one bright afternoon, as I sat restless and unhappy in my mother's cabin, I caught the sound of the

spirited step of my brother's pony on the road which passed by our dwelling. Soon I heard the wheels of a light buckboard, and Dawée's familiar "Ho!" to his pony. He alighted upon the bare ground in front of our house. Tying his pony to one of the projecting corner logs of the low-roofed cotage, he stepped upon the wooden doorstep.

I met him there with a hurried greeting, and, as I passed by, he looked a quiet "What?" into my eyes.

When he began talking with my mother, I slipped the rope from the pony's bridle. Seizing the reins and bracing my feet against the dashboard, I wheeled around in an instant. The pony was ever ready to try his speed. Looking backward, I saw Dawée waving his hand to me. I turned with the curve in the road and disappeared. I followed the winding road which crawled upward between the bases of little hillocks. Deep water-worn ditches ran parallel on either side. A strong wind blew against my cheeks and fluttered my sleeves. The pony reached the top of the highest hill, and began an even race on the level lands. There was nothing moving within that great circular horizon of the Dakota prairies save the tall grasses, over which the wind blew and rolled off in long, shadowy waves.

Within this vast wigwam of blue and green I rode reckless and insignificant. It satisfied my small consciousness to see the white foam fly from the pony's mouth.

Suddenly, out of the earth a coyote came forth at a swinging trot that was taking the cunning thief toward the hills and the village beyond. Upon the moment's impulse, I gave him a long chase and a wholesome fright. As I turned away to go back to the village, the wolf sank down upon his haunches for rest, for it was a hot summer day; and as I drove slowly homeward, I saw his sharp nose still pointed at me, until I vanished below the margin of the hillocks.

In a little while I came in sight of my mother's house. Dawée stood in the yard, laughing at an old warrior who was pointing his forefinger, and again waving his whole hand, toward the hills. With his blanket drawn over one shoulder, he talked and motioned excitedly. Dawée turned the old man by the shoulder and pointed me out to him.

"Oh, hani!" (Oh, yes) the warrior muttered, and went his way. He had climbed the top of his favorite barren hill to survey the surrounding prairies, when he spied my chase after the coyote. His keen eyes recognized the pony and driver. At once uneasy for my safety, he had come running to my mother's cabin to give her warning. I did not appreciate his kindly interest, for there was an unrest gnawing at my heart.

As soon as he went away, I asked Dawée about something else.

"No, my baby sister. I cannot take you with me to the party to-night," he replied. Though I was not far from fifteen, and I felt that before long I should enjoy all the privileges of my tall cousin, Dawée persisted in calling me his baby sister.

That moonlight night, I cried in my mother's presence when I heard the jolly young people pass by our cottage. They were no more young braves in blankets and eagle plumes, nor Indian maids with prettily painted cheeks.

They had gone three years to school in the East, and had become civilized. The young men wore the white man's coat and trousers, with bright neckties. The girls wore tight muslin dresses, with ribbons at neck and waist. At these gatherings they talked English. I could speak English almost as well as my brother, but I was not properly dressed to be taken along. I had no hat, no ribbons, and no close-fitting gown. Since my return from school I had thrown away my shoes, and wore again the soft moccasins.

While Dawée was busily preparing to go I controlled my tears. But when I heard him bounding away on his pony, I buried my face in my arms and cried hot tears.

My mother was troubled by my unhappiness. Coming to my side, she offered me the only printed matter we had in our home. It was an Indian Bible,³ given her some years ago by a missionary. She tried to console me. "Here, my child, are the white man's papers. Read a little from them," she said most piously.

I took it from her hand, for her sake; but my enraged spirit felt more like burning the book, which afforded me no help, and was a perfect delusion to my mother. I did not read it, but laid it unopened on the floor, where I sat on my feet. The dim yellow light of the braided muslin burning in a small vessel of oil flickered and sizzled in the awful silent storm which followed my rejection of the Bible.

Now my wrath against the fates consumed my tears before they reached my eyes. I sat stony, with a bowed head. My mother threw a shawl over her head and shoulders, and stepped out into the night.

After an uncertain solitude, I was suddenly aroused by a loud cry piercing the night. It was my mother's voice wailing among the barren hills which held the bones of buried warriors. She called aloud for her brothers' spirits to support her in her helpless misery. My fingers grew icy cold, as I realized that my unrestrained tears had betrayed my suffering to her, and she was grieving for me.

Before she returned, though I knew she was on her way, for she had ceased her weeping, I extinguished the light, and leaned my head on the window sill.

Many schemes of running away from my surroundings hovered about in my mind. A few more moons of such a turmoil drove me away to the Eastern school. I rode on the white man's iron steed, thinking it would bring me back to my mother in a few winters, when I should be grown tall, and there would be congenial friends awaiting me.

VII. Incurring My Mother's Displeasure

In the second journey to the East I had not come without some precautions. I had a secret interview with one of our best medicine men, and when I left

his wigwam I carried securely in my sleeve a tiny bunch of magic roots. This possession assured me of friends wherever I should go. So absolutely did I believe in its charms that I wore it through all the school routine for more than a year. Then, before I lost my faith in the dead roots, I lost the little buckskin bag containing all my good luck.

At the close of this second term of three years I was the proud owner of my first diploma. The following autumn I ventured upon a college career against my mother's will.

I had written for her approval, but in her reply I found no encouragement. She called my notice to her neighbors' children, who had completed their education in three years. They had returned to their homes, and were then talking English with the frontier settlers. Her few words hinted that I had better give up my slow attempt to learn the white man's ways, and be content to roam over the prairies and find my living upon wild roots. I silenced her by deliberate disobedience.

Thus, homeless and heavy-hearted, I began anew my life among strangers. As I hid myself in my little room in the college dormitory, away from the scornful and yet curious eyes of the students, I pined for sympathy. Often I wept in secret, wishing I had gone West, to be nourished by my mother's love, instead of remaining among a cold race whose hearts were frozen hard with prejudice.

During the fall and winter seasons I scarcely had a real friend, though by that time several of my classmates were courteous to me at a safe distance.

My mother had not yet forgiven my rudeness to her, and I had no moment for letterwriting. By daylight and lamplight, I spun with reeds and thistles, until my hands were tired from their weaving, the magic design which promised me the white man's respect.

At length, in the spring term, I entered an oratorical contest among the various classes. As the day of competition approached, it did not seem possible that the event was so near at hand, but it came. In the chapel the classes assembled together, with their invited guests. The high platform was carpeted, and gayly festooned with college colors. A bright white light illumined the room, and outlined clearly the great polished beams that arched the domed ceiling. The assembled crowds filled the air with pulsating murmurs. When the hour for speaking arrived all were hushed. But on the wall the old clock which pointed out the trying moment ticked calmly on.

One after another I saw and heard the orators. Still, I could not realize that they longed for the favorable decision of the judges as much as I did. Each contestant received a loud burst of applause, and some were cheered heartily. Too soon my turn came, and I paused a moment behind the curtains for a deep breath. After my concluding words, I heard the same applause that the others had called out.

Upon my retreating steps, I was astounded to receive from my fellow-students a large bouquet of roses tied with flowing ribbons. With the lovely flowers I fled from the stage. This friendly token was a rebuke to me for the hard feelings I had borne them.

³Selections from the Bible had been published in Dakota as early as 1839. The reference is probably to *Dakota Wowapi Wakan*, translated

by Thomas S. Williamson and Stephen R. Riggs and published in 1879.

Later, the decision of the judges awarded me the first place. Then there was a mad uproar in the hall, where my classmates sang and shouted my name at the top of their lungs; and the disappointed students howled and brayed in fearfully dissonant tin trumpets. In this excitement, happy students rushed forward to offer their congratulations. And I could not conceal a smile when they wished to escort me in a procession to the students' parlor, where all were going to calm themselves. Thanking them for the kind spirit which prompted them to make such a proposition, I walked alone with the night to my own little room.

A few weeks afterward, I appeared as the college representative in another contest. This time the competition was among orators from different colleges in our State. It was held at the State capital, in one of the largest opera houses.

Here again was a strong prejudice against my people. In the evening, as the great audience filled the house, the student bodies began warring among themselves. Fortunately, I was spared witnessing any of the noisy wrangling before the contest began. The slurs against the Indian that stained the lips of our opponents were already burning like a dry fever within my breast.

But after the orations were delivered a deeper burn awaited me. There, before that vast ocean of eyes, some college rowdies threw out a large white flag, with a drawing of a most forlorn Indian girl on it. Under this they had printed in bold black letters words that ridiculed the college which was represented by a "squaw." Such worse than barbarian rudeness embittered me. While we waited for the verdict of the judges, I gleamed fiercely upon the throngs of palefaces. My teeth were hard set, as I saw the white flag still floating insolently in the air.

Then anxiously we watched the man carry toward the stage the envelope containing the final decision.

There were two prizes given, that night, and one of them was mine!

The evil spirit laughed within me when the white flag dropped out of sight, and the hands which hurled it hung limp in defeat.

Leaving the crowd as quickly as possible, I was soon in my room. The rest of the night I sat in an armchair and gazed into the crackling fire. I laughed no more in triumph when thus alone. The little taste of victory did not satisfy a hunger in my heart. In my mind I saw my mother far away on the Western plains, and she was holding a charge against me.

1900

Why I Am a Pagan¹

When the spirit swells my breast I love to roam leisurely among the green hills; or sometimes, sitting on the brink of the murmuring Missouri, I marvel at the great blue overhead. With half closed eyes I watch the huge cloud

shadows in their noiseless play upon the high bluffs opposite me, while into my ear ripple the sweet, soft cadences of the river's song. Folded hands lie in my lap, for the time forgot. My heart and I lie small upon the earth like a grain of throbbing sand. Drifting clouds and tinkling waters, together with the warmth of a genial summer day, bespeak with eloquence the loving Mystery round about us. During the idle while I sat upon the sunny river brink, I grew somewhat, though my response be not so clearly manifest as in the green grass fringing the edge of the high bluff back of me.

At length retracing the uncertain footpath scaling the precipitous embankment, I seek the level lands where grow the wild prairie flowers. And they, the lovely little folk, soothe my soul with their perfumed breath.

Their quaint round faces of varied hue convince the heart which leaps with glad surprise that they, too, are living symbols of omnipotent thought. With a child's eager eye I drink in the myriad star shapes wrought in luxuriant color upon the green. Beautiful is the spiritual essence they embody.

I leave them nodding in the breeze, but take along with me their impress upon my heart. I pause to rest me upon a rock embedded on the side of a foothill facing the low river bottom. Here the Stone-Boy,² of whom the American aborigine tells, frolics about, shooting his baby arrows and shouting aloud with glee at the tiny shafts of lightning that flash from the flying arrow-beaks. What an ideal warrior he became, baffling the siege of the pests of all the land till he triumphed over their united attack. And here he lay,—Inyan our great-great-grandfather, older than the hill he rested on, older than the race of men who love to tell of his wonderful career.

Interwoven with the thread of this Indian legend of the rock, I faint would trace a subtle knowledge of the native folk which enabled them to recognize a kinship to any and all parts of this vast universe. By the leading of an ancient trail I move toward the Indian village.

With the strong, happy sense that both great and small are so surely enfolded in His magnitude that, without a miss, each has his allotted individual ground of opportunities, I am buoyant with good nature.

Yellow Breast, swaying upon the slender stem of a wild sunflower, warbles a sweet assurance of this as I pass near by. Breaking off the clear crystal song, he turns his wee head from side to side eyeing me wisely as slowly I plod with moccasined feet. Then again he yields himself to his song of joy. Flit, flit hither and yon, he fills the summer sky with his swift, sweet melody. And truly does it seem his vigorous freedom lies more in his little spirit than in his wing.

With these thoughts I reach the log cabin whither I am strongly drawn by the tie of a child to an aged mother. Out bounds my four-footed friend to meet me, frisking about my path with unmistakable delight. Chän is a black shaggy dog, "a thorough bred little mongrel" of whom I am very fond. Chän seems to understand many words in Sioux, and will go to her mat

¹This essay appeared in *Atlantic*, 90 (December, 1902), 801–803.

²Stone Boy, or Inyanhokisla, possessed of supernatural powers, was a popular figure in Dakota lore.

even when I whisper the word, though generally I think she is guided by the tone of the voice. Often she tries to imitate the sliding inflection and long drawn out voice to the amusement of our guests, but her articulation is quite beyond my ear. In both my hands I hold her shaggy head and gaze into her large brown eyes. At once the dilated pupils contract into tiny black dots, as if the roguish spirit within would evade my questioning.

Finally resuming the chair at my desk I feel in keen sympathy with my fellow creatures, for I seem to see clearly again that all are akin.

The racial lines, which once were bitterly real, now serve nothing more than marking out a living mosaic of human beings. And even here men of the same color are like the ivory keys of one instrument where each resembles all the rest, yet varies from them in pitch and quality of voice. And those creatures who are for a time mere echoes of another's note are not unlike the fable of the thin sick man whose distorted shadow, dressed like a real creature, came to the old master to make him follow as a shadow. Thus with a compassion for all echoes in human guise, I greet the solemn-faced "native preacher" whom I find awaiting me. I listen with respect for God's creature, though he mouth most strangely the jangling phrases of a bigoted creed.

As our tribe is one large family, where every person is related to all the others, he addressed me:—

"Cousin, I came from the morning church service to talk with you."

"Yes?" I said interrogatively, as he paused for some word from me.

Shifting uneasily about in the straight-backed chair he sat upon, he began: "Every holy day (Sunday) I look about our little God's house, and not seeing you there, I am disappointed. This is why I come to-day. Cousin, as I watch you from afar, I see no unbecoming behavior and hear only good reports of you, which all the more burns me with the wish that you were a church member. Cousin, I was taught long years ago by kind missionaries to read the holy book. These godly men taught me also the folly of our old beliefs.

"There is one God who gives reward or punishment to the race of dead men. In the upper region the Christian dead are gathered in unceasing song and prayer. In the deep pit below, the sinful ones dance in torturing flames.

"Think upon these things, my cousin, and choose now to avoid the after-doom of hell fire!" Then followed a long silence in which he clasped tighter and undraped again his interlocked fingers.

Like instantaneous lightning flashes came pictures of my own mother's making, for she, too, is now a follower of the new superstition.

"Knocking out the chinking of our log cabin, some evil hand thrust in a burning taper of braided dry grass, but failed of his intent, for the fire died out and the half burned brand fell inward to the floor. Directly above it, on a shelf, lay the holy book. This is what we found after our return from a several days' visit. Surely some great power is hid in the sacred book!"

Brushing away from my eyes many like pictures, I offered midday meal to the converted Indian sitting wordless and with downcast face. No sooner

had he risen from the table with "Cousin, I have relished it," than the church bell rang.

Thither he hurried forth with his afternoon sermon. I watched him as he hastened along, his eyes bent fast upon the dusty road till he disappeared at the end of a quarter of a mile.

The little incident recalled to mind the copy of a missionary paper brought to my notice a few days ago, in which a "Christian" pugilist commented upon a recent article of mine, grossly perverting the spirit of my pen. Still I would not forget that the pale-faced missionary and the hoodooed aborigine are both God's creatures, though small indeed their own conceptions of Infinite Love. A wee child toddling in a wonder world, I prefer to their dogma my excursions into the natural gardens where the voice of the Great Spirit is heard in the twittering of birds, the rippling of mighty waters, and the sweet breathing of flowers. If this is Paganism, then at present, at least, I am a Pagan.

1902