

Red Cloud, Chief of the Oglala Sioux, Was a Warrior, Patriot and Diplomat

Both on the War Trail and in the Council Lodge He Proved That He Could Hold His Own With His "White Brothers"

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

ONE night in the winter of 1821-22 a meteorite went hurtling across the sky over North America. That night an Indian mother named Walks-As-She-Thinks sat in her lodge which was pitched somewhere on the grassy plains of South Dakota between the Black Hills and the Missouri river. She was cradling in her arm her newborn son and, as the huge ball of fire blazed overhead, she looked up through the opening at the top of the lodge.

High above her she saw a fleecy cloud turn a brilliant red in the glaze of the blazing star. For a moment she clasped her little son fearfully to her breast. Then she laughed and, turning to her husband, Chief Lone Man, exclaimed: "It is a sign! His name shall be Makhiya Luta, the Red Cloud!"

Walks-As-She-Thinks little realized how great that name, thus lightly given, would become; how during the next 50 years it would be a name of terror to the white men who were then just beginning to crowd in upon the lands of her people, the Teton Sioux. George E. Hyde, in his recently published "Red Cloud's Folk," calls the westward drive of the Sioux from their ancestral homes in Minnesota to Montana "one of the epic migrations of history" and says:

"The Oglalas were the spearhead of the Teton Sioux advance, and from 1840 onwards they stood squarely in the path of that new immigration of pioneer trains, traders and the protective military, which threatened their newly-won hunting range on the northern prairies. In the historic struggle which ensued, white reverses revealed the real might of the Sioux . . . and during these years of heavy conflict, between 1865 and 1877, Red Cloud stood out as one of the greatest of the Sioux leaders."

Red Cloud had good reason to dislike the white invaders and to "stand in their path." He was left an orphan at the age of three, his father, Chief Lone Man of the Brules, dying from the effects of drinking too much firewater supplied by white traders. When he lost his mother soon afterwards, his sisters, who were bringing him up, took him with them to the camp of Old Smoke, a Saone Teton chief, near Fort Laramie and there Red Cloud grew into young manhood.

In 1855 Red Cloud learned his first lesson in "the white man's justice." It was when Gen. W. S. Harney won his famous "victory" at Ash Hollow, where he attacked the camp of Little Thunder, a friendly Brule chief, and killed 86 men, women and children.

It was such incidents as these, plus the grafting propensities of their agents, which made the Oglalas and Brules distrustful of the white men and as traffic over the Oregon Trail increased, certain bands of both tribes retired to the Powder river. Among them was the Iteshica or "Bad Faces," with which young Red Cloud was associated. He won renown as a warrior in more than one battle with the Crow and by 1865 he was rated as a "shirt-wearer" or head soldier. But he had yet to lift a hostile hand against the white man, although that was coming soon enough.

Avoiding Trouble.

Mainly due to the efforts of Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses, the principal chief of the Oglalas, these Powder river Sioux had avoided collision with the whites. They did this even though some of their tribesmen had joined the Cheyennes and Arapahoes in the war which had been raging south of the Platte.

In March, 1865, a great group of hostiles from the south joined the Powder river tribes. "The story these southern Indians told of the outrages the white soldiers had committed against them while they were still friendly and of the retribution they had exacted from the whites, the sight of the great numbers of captured horses these hostiles had in their possession and the plunder that filled their camps greatly excited the Powder river bands. It must have been at this moment that Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses, who had stood firmly for peace with the whites, began to lose his hold over his people. Indeed, there is every reason to suppose that the hostiles now offered a pipe to the Powder river Indians and that in a council the friendly chiefs were overruled and the pipe was accepted."



Red Cloud and the Sioux and Arapahoe chiefs who visited Washington in 1877. They are (standing, left to right): Little Big Man, Little Wound, Three Bears and He Dog; (sitting, left to right): Red Cloud, Big Road, Yellow Bear, Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses and Iron Crow. (From a photograph by Brady, printed in Harper's Weekly for October 20, 1877.)

Then followed the historic Powder River expedition, led by General Connor and Colonels Cole and Walker. This campaign cost the government \$2,000,000 a month and ended in disappointment for everyone except the hostiles whose "camps were full of cavalry horses and mules branded US and many good carbines which they had taken from the soldiers."

Having failed to whip the Sioux into submission the government next tried diplomacy. It sent out a peace commission to persuade the Sioux to be good and especially to allow a road to be built through their hunting grounds to the Montana gold fields. A number of friendly chiefs—"trader's chiefs," the hostiles scornfully called them—signed the treaty, but such real leaders as Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses and Red Cloud, who by this time was the principal leader of the all-important warrior class



RED CLOUD

in the Powder river camps, refused to have anything to do with such a document.

Red Cloud Stands in the Road.

Despite this fact, the peace commissioners reported that their mission had been a success and an expedition, commanded by Col. Henry B. Carrington, set out to build a chain of forts along the Bozeman trail to Montana. No sooner had he completed Fort Phil Kearney, his headquarters, than his troubles began. For Red Cloud, who had by now supplanted Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses as the big man among the Sioux, immediately began making good his threat to "stand in the white man's road."

All during the summer of 1868 not a wagon train went over the trail without the men in it having to fight their way through a swarm of hostiles. Moreover the Indians boldly pushed in close to the forts, running off stock and attacking every detachment of troops that ventured out. The climax came in December with the destruction of Fetterman's command. By this time the government was thoroughly convinced that the peace commissioners' mission had not been a success. Despite his warnings and appeals for reinforcements, Carrington was "made the goat" and relieved of his command. His successor was ordered to make a winter campaign against the hostiles but with the inadequate number of troops supplied him he dared not move.

The next spring another peace commission was sent out to Fort Laramie, but Red Cloud sent word that he was too busy to come in now, although he might

come in and talk with them next year. Then a third commission was sent out and after a long delay it finally induced Red Cloud to sign a treaty of peace. But he held out until he had obtained the thing he most wanted—not only the promise to abandon the forts along the Bozeman trail but the actual abandonment. Then he signed the treaty on November 6, 1868.

A Diplomatic Victory.

Great as had been his victories on the battlefield, this one in the field of diplomacy was even greater. He had defied the power of the United States and made a peace on his own terms. It is said that this is the only case in American history when this nation signed a treaty which gave everything that the other party to the document asked for without getting anything in return. True, the federal government did get peace for its citizens—so far as Red Cloud personally was concerned. But that did not mean that the troubles with the Sioux were over. Some of their leaders who signed the treaty led their people back to the Powder river country and remained there as hostiles until they were finally conquered and put on reservations at the close of the Sioux war of 1876-77.

Although Red Cloud later distinguished himself as a war leader against other tribes, notably the Shoshones, he kept his promise of refraining from war against the whites. But he continued to distinguish himself as a diplomat, as an ambassador for his people to the "Great White Father" in Washington. He was invited to come there in 1870 to confer with President Grant and the Secretary of the Interior when another war with the Sioux seemed imminent. A council was held at the Indian office and there Red Cloud was told that his people must go on a reservation.

"If Red Cloud had been impressed with the power of the United States by being taken about Washington, he did not show it at this council. He had come east to prevent a new war and to procure for his people the right to trade on the Platte. What was this talk about going on the reservation—to the Missouri? 'I have said three times that I would not go to the Missouri, and now I say it here for the fourth time.' . . . This was not the talk of a man who feared the power of the United States and the glum officials began to realize that dictating to Red Cloud was not going to work."

Editor's Note: The fourth Friday in September is celebrated in many states as American Indian Day "in recognition of the contribution of the red man to our national tradition." In this article, appropriate to the celebration of that day, is told the story of one of the outstanding Indian characters in American history. It is based upon the book, "Red Cloud's Folk—A History of the Oglala Sioux Indians," written by George E. Hyde and published by the University of Oklahoma Press in its "The Civilization of the American Indian" series. Mr. Hyde's book is the first comprehensive history of one of the tribes that made up the great Sioux or Dakota nation. It throws much new light on our government's relations with that proud people, especially in regard to the treaties with them which were quite as important as our wars with them, which have been the theme of most writers about the Sioux.

to be the easy task they had anticipated."

Nor did he go to the Missouri. The upshot of the matter was that the government gave in, the Oglalas were to have a reservation near Fort Laramie and Red Cloud was to be permitted to name his own agent and his own trader. (Incidentally, the government failed to keep its promise in regard to the latter.)

For the next five or six years Red Cloud, although settled on a reservation, still remained a power among the Sioux. His unruly Oglalas made life miserable for the men who were appointed to be their agents and he contributed to their unhappiness by his repeated complaints that they were grafting and cheating his people. Some of these complaints were only too true but others were inspired by scheming traders who had Red Cloud's ear and used him as a tool in their efforts to get their share of the graft.

The Oglala Disarmed.

The Oglala chieftain took no active part in the Sioux war of 1876-77. But charges that he was giving aid to the hostiles in the camps of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were used by the military to justify the disarming of his people and the seizure of all their horses by Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie in the fall of 1877. From that time on, the power and influence of Red Cloud waned.

After he signed the treaty of 1868 Red Cloud's policy, according to Hyde, was "to remain on good terms with the whites as far as possible, to obtain help from them, but above all to hold stubbornly to the old roving and hunting life and never to give it up. For an Indian, Red Cloud was an able man, but it is to be doubted if he ever had the breadth of vision that Spotted Tail sometimes exhibited. This Brule chief realized after 1865 that the old wild life was doomed and tried to lead his people to accept the inevitable changes in their way



SPOTTED TAIL

of living. Red Cloud could not see this, and he remained 'non-progressive,' as the exasperated Indian office officials put it, until the day of his death."

That day came in 1909 when Red Cloud, blind and bowed with the weight of his 87 years, died at his home on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. The newspaper dispatches which carried the news of his death told of his great deeds on the war trail. They gave no mention of the fact that he was great in other ways, too—as a patriot, fighting a losing battle against the power of a more numerous race, and as a diplomat who more than once had defeated the men of that race in the council as well as on the battlefield.

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When King George Received the Big News from America

Samuel Morse, inventor of the electric telegraph, had only one ambition as a young man and that was to become an artist. He studied under Washington Allston, then the greatest painter in the United States, and with Allston went to London in 1811. There he met Benjamin West who, although an American, was president of the Royal Academy, and a great favorite with the king, who later made him Sir Benjamin West.

West was actually at work on a portrait of the king when the latter was handed the Declaration of Independence. Morse heard the piquant story from West himself, says Ernest Greenwood in "From Amber to Amperes." Here it is—as related by Morse:

Turning to the picture of the king, Sir Benjamin West said:

"Do you see that picture, Mr. Morse? Well, sir, the king was sitting for me when the box containing the American Declaration of Independence was handed to him."

"Indeed!" I answered, "and

what appeared to be the emotion of the king? What did he say?"

"Well, sir," said West, "he made a reply characteristic of the goodness of his heart," or words to that effect. "Well," he said, "if they can be happier under the government they have chosen, then under mine, I shall be happy!"

Morse stayed four years in England where he achieved considerable success as a portrait painter. Then returning to his native country, he afterwards became president of the national academy and an eminently successful painter, his sitters becoming so numerous that he was unable to meet and fill all of his orders. It was during his return voyage to America in 1832, following a second visit to Europe, that Morse got his conception of the telegraph. Twelve years later—May 24, 1844—he gave a public demonstration of his invention, sending a message from Washington to Baltimore.

The rest is well known history. —Kansas City Star.

The Scales

WHAT goes up must come down. Or if you wish to put it in more scientific language: Action is equal to reaction and in the contrary direction.

This is the law of compensation. It is the one fixed, immutable law of life and it applies to everything, everywhere. It cannot be evaded or avoided. The working of it may be immediate or it may be a matter of centuries, but if we keep ourselves aware of it we may be saved disappointment and disillusion.

The extent to which we try to restrict that law is absurd. We speak of balanced budgets, balanced rations, and the balance of trade; but we quite ignore balanced lives and balanced sociology; so, in the end, Nature takes the job off our hands, with the consequent upheavals and disturbances.

We work or play to excess, we indulge our appetites and our senses to repletion, perhaps to gluttony, and when we suffer during Nature's work of restoring balance, we rail at fate.

In monarchy and republic we allow our thirst for power and for money to overbalance our lives, both individually and socially, then blame God and man for the chaos which attends the restoration of balance.

In all the affairs of life we may evolve philosophies and devise systems; but just so long as they are out of balance, individually, socially, industrially or governmentally, just so long will the scale teeter up and down to our discomfort.

If as individuals our lives are out of balance, the structure as a whole must also be out of balance; and in time that balance must be restored—by us or by THOSE WHO FOLLOW.—Ray S. Ayers in Detroit News.

A Worthy Object

WILL power is the mental experience exercised in bringing about a desired end. Therefore, I say that a man must necessarily have a worthy object in view to bring out the best in him—that a man must see more than a salary to be more than a salaried man. A man must see the position of ownership, partnership, management, or increased award, in order to awaken his will power.

The man who does good to another does even more good to himself.

Funster Ought to Have Recognized His Fellow

Jones de Vere Jones decided it would be fun to spend a day in the country. Back to Nature, and all that.

Meeting a farmer in a field he thought to have some fun with him.

"Good-morning," he started. "I must say I admire your part of the country."

Then he noticed a scarecrow in the middle of the field.

"And is that one of the oldest inhabitants?" he went on, pointing to the scarecrow.

"Naw, zur," came the slow reply. "That be no oldest 'habitant. Just a visitor like yourself."



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