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# AUTO-BIOGRAPHY

OF

## MAJ. LAWRENCE TALIAFERRO.

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WRITTEN IN 1864.

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### PRELIMINARY NOTE.

Lawrence Taliaferro, whose characteristic account of his career as Indian Agent at Fort Snelling, from April, 1819, to January, 1840, accompanies this, was prominently identified with Minnesota history during that period. The Saint Paul Daily Pioneer, a few days after Maj. Taliaferro's death, gave the following sketch of him:

Maj. Taliaferro remained as Indian Agent at Fort Snelling a period of almost twenty-one years, being re-appointed six times by different Presidents, and resigning at last. His was a long incumbency for such an office as that, and shows that Major Taliaferro was active and faithful in the discharge of his duties. And such he certainly was, while in a position which many have used for their own aggrandisement. Maj. T. was scrupulously honest. No charge was ever made against him of malversation in office, for his own benefit. He labored to impress the tribes under his supervision with proper respect for the government, and by gratifying their penchant for "big talks," and ceremonies, kept them in pretty good order and obedience. He was sometimes ridiculed for his egotism, of which he had a good share, but he was careful, correct, and methodical in his business matters, and prided himself on his successful performance of them. With the Indian traders he generally managed to keep up a standing quarrel, however, and his official correspondence with the department was ponderous, but generally related to trivial matters. During his incumbency he maintained a wide correspondence with many eminent men in official and military life in the west. Their letters, hundreds in number, he afterwards gave to the Minnesota Historical Society, with a quantity of other valuable manuscripts. A careful and minute diary of events which he kept during his official career at Fort Snelling, has been used by Rev. E. D. Neill, in the preparation of his historical writings. After his resignation in 1840, he was out of service until 1857, when he was appointed military storekeeper at Bedford, Pa. In 1863 he was placed on the retired list, with the pay of his grade. He died at Bedford, January 22, 1871, aged 77 years. A half-breed daughter of his, subsequently married a discharged soldier at Fort Snelling, named Warren Woodbury and resided in West St. Paul a number of years.

The name of Taliaferro is both ancient and honorable. Some miles distant from Williamsburg, Virginia, near an old brick church may be seen the resting place of the old Colonial family of the Taliaferro's, Lawrence Taliaferro, deceased 1748, John Taliaferro, of Snow Creek, 1744. But to go further back in date, we come to the year 1637, when four brothers, John, Lawrence, James and Francis Taliaferro emigrated from Genoa, Italy, to England, and after five years in London, crossed the Atlantic and landed with other emigrants at Jamestown, about the year 1637 or shortly thereafter. From these brothers sprang a large connection. Some were officers and privates in the Revolutionary war; also in the war of 1812, the Mexican war and finally in the war for the Union, of 1861. Their descendants filled the highest stations in the gift of a free people. We now approach the name of one of this connection of whom we desire to take a brief notice: Major Lawrence Taliaferro, born at Whitehall, King George county, Virginia, February 28, 1794. He was the fourth son of James Garnett Taliaferro and Wilhilmena Wishart, an only daughter of the Rev. John Wishart, of Perth, Scotland, a lineal descendant of George Wishart, the last of the Martyrs for conscience sake. Of his early youth but little of interest can be recorded; with the best tutors, Hon. Samuel L. Southard, Samuel C. Lewis and others of New Jersey, he would play truant from school. His venerable mother knowing his habits and propensities, decided to let the wayward youth alone to his farming inclinations, knowing her own child best.

At the age of eighteen, the war with England demanded volunteers and soon found himself with four other grown

brothers duly enrolled, by the act of his patriotic mother, on the 5th of August, 1812, in a volunteer company of light infantry under Captain Meriwether Taliaferro, subsequently appointed to the 35th regular infantry. During his three months service, his animosity to England become so fixed and apparent, that his friends promised if he would go to a famous grammar school at Tusculum, in charge of Doctor Valentine Peyton, late of the U. S. Navy, for eight months, he should have a commission in the regular army. This proposition was cheerfully acceded to, and carried into immediate effect by his parents. At the close of the period indicated, his preceptor stated officially his English education to be perfectly satisfactory, and he was duly appointed an ensign in the first regiment United States Infantry, on the 2nd of June, 1813, and ordered to Belle Fontaine, in Missouri. On being promoted to a second lieutenancy on the 13th of August following, was directed to proceed to, and report to Colonel John Campbell, at Chillicothe, Ohio, for the recruiting service. This order was as promptly obeyed as a six hundred miles ride on horse back would allow. Here an order was given to repair to Cincinnati and open a rendezvous for recruits for his regiment. He met old officers of rifles already in this field before him. Nevertheless, nothing daunted, he applied to General Harrison for funds to go to work on. The general eyed the rough youth closely for a moment, saying, "you look young, sir, but I think you have spirit and energy." O'Fallon give the lieutenant a check on Pay Master Hunt, for five hundred dollars. In ten days another five hundred was estimated for, which seemed to surprise no one as much as the careful pay master, who said, "you use money fast, and I don't see

your name on the register." Perhaps not, was the reply; but you know surely the commanding general's signature. This ended further suspicion doubtless, as nothing more was heard from the gentleman.

There arose a jealous feeling and rivalry, between the infantry and rifles; the boy officer was going ahead too rapidly for the old veterans. The citizens enjoyed this rivalry in securing men, and the boy met great encouragement.

There arrived in Cincinnati in March, 1814, thirty-seven British officers, prisoners of war, destined for close confinement in the penitentiary, at Frankfort, Kentucky. Lieut. Taliaferro was detailed to guard these prisoners until they could be forwarded under a proper guard. This responsible and delicate duty was discharged to the satisfaction of General Harrison.

Early in March, the venerable John Cleves Symms died, the father-in-law of General Harrison, and his remains, escorted to North Bend, in a keel boat prepared for that purpose, and there interred in the family cemetery.

About this period, a court martial had sentenced a soldier to be shot for desertion. On the day indicated for his execution, the troops were paraded at Newport, the Frenchman escorted by the guard to the place indicated and placed on his coffin. Things looked serious and solemn, but at the moment of "ready," the reprieve came and all breathed free again; none more so than the pardoned deserter from his colors.

On the 4th of April, 1814, he received an order to turn over his recruits to Captain Bryson, and repair to Carlisle, Penn., and report to Major Clemson. On arriving at this point, found an order to proceed at once to Brunswick,



New Jersey, the headquarters of the first infantry. The journey from Cincinnati to this latter point of destination was performed by him and Lieut. Christy on horse back. Reporting to Capt. H. Johnson, superintending the recruiting service, was speedily ordered to proceed to Monmouth Court House (the old battle field of the Revolution) for the recruiting service. Here he unexpectedly met with violent opposition from the anti-war federalists, but he persevered manfully obtaining a few men. Immediately after the 4th of July was ordered back to head-quarters, and assigned to a company under Capt. Helm, with Lieutenants Stansbury and Harberger, and marched to Fort Erie, upper Canada, and joined Brown's second division of the army. After the siege was raised, caused by the sortie of the 17th of September, 1814, upon the enemy, and the battle of Cook Mills, on Lion Creek, fought and won under General Bissell. General Izard of the first division with fresh troops, relieved the second division, which crossed the Niagara and was marched to winter quarters at Sackett's Harbor, New York.

In November he was again detailed for the recruiting service and ordered to Brunswick, New Jersey, a few days after reporting again to Captain Johnson. The U. S. Commissioners at Ghent had been heard from, and in due season the news of peace reached the government, when our young soldier returned on furlough to his family home in Virginia. Stopping at Trenton to see his old friend and tutor, the Hon. Samuel L. Southard; he was urged by him to remain to witness the trial of the great steamboat question between Ogden and Fulton, before the legislature of the state. Here he saw and heard men of profound intellect—Thomas Addis Emmet, Sampson, Hopkin-

son, Ogden, Fulton and Southard. He saw Emmet take Southard by the hand with a most cordial shake, saying: "Sir, I congratulate you on having made the best speech in a bad cause that it ever was my pleasure to hear; you are a rising man." After this short delay he reached his home in safety but in impaired health from long and severe exposure in the line of his duty, yet with the high commendation of his superiors. The war having ceased, and the reduction of the army from 65 to 10 regiments effected, he found himself nevertheless retained with his full rank of First Lieut. in the 3d Regiment of Infantry, with orders to repair to Detroit, Michigan, where he joined his regiment under Colonel John Miller. While in camp at Spring Wells below Detroit, was selected for a separate command on Gross Isle, opposite Malden. While exercising this command, the frequent desertion of the Royal Scots to his Post during the winter of 1815-16, induced the British town mayors to impugn the conduct of his command, asserting that his Majesty's soldiers were enticed to desert by the American soldiers; which statement on his own responsibility induced this officer (Lieut. Taliaferro) to cross over to Malden and call on the town mayor in command of the British forces. He found several officers present, and at once made his visit known, and that was to say to his Britannic Majesty's officers in command that he found a number of the soldiers deserters from the American army in Malden, and some of these employed as mechanics in the shops of the town. He hoped that British officers did not connive at conduct so unworthy the enjoined observance of the two nations. Here was a poser. The Yankee officer had struck the

first blow, and "John Bull" had not a word in reply as to the desertion of a large number of the Royal Scots, His report of this ruse to Gen. McComb, in command of the department at Detroit, was much commended at the time. The approach of spring caused a disposition of the troops comprising the 3d and 5th Regiments of Infantry, in order to garrison the several posts on the upper lakes. Companies A and B, 3d Infantry, were ordered to Chicago to rebuild Ft. Dearborn, attached to B, Light Infantry, Capt. Bradley. He reached Chicago and landed with the command July 4th, 1816, and went into tents, throwing up precautionary breastworks, planting cannon, &c. Here as Asst. Quartermaster and Ordnance officer he superintended the reconstruction of the post which had been destroyed by the Potawatamies and other Indians in August, 1812, and nearly all the garrison massacred. So hostile were the Winnebagos and others that the Quartermaster had to move daily with an armed party for the security of the men engaged in felling and hewing timber for the post. By the spring of 1817 the troops were on half rations, but there was no complaint. In August of this year the Asst. Quartermaster (Taliaferro) was ordered to Chillicothe, Ohio, to recruit under Major Larrabee; but not long after complying with the orders was directed to march 130 men, in company with Lieuts. C. L. Cass and Evans, to fill up the 3d Regiment at Fort Howard, Green Bay. On the march to Sandusky, Lieut. Cass in command, the President of the United States being then on his tour through the West was met in the "Long Woods" beyond Mansfield. A consultation was to how the President should be received by the troops,

was called by Mr. Cass in command. Lieuts. Taliaferro and Evans said it was not a knotty point; all that was requisite was to form the men in line at shouldered arms, and as the President approached cause the music to play "Hail to the Chief" or "Hail Columbia," and present arms. This opinion seemed not to suit the pompous and self-conceited commander, who said he had no notice of the approach of the President and should not act in the matter. The rear guard being a separate command for the day under Lieut. Taliaferro, Cass consented to let him use his pleasure with the same, and the President, as he should have been, was duly honored with a prompt and hearty salute which caused his steed to shy, but the old Cocked Hat of the days of Trenton and Princeton was doffed with a low bow. Just following in the rear came General McComb and Governor Cass, when Lieut. Cass was made to feel his own inferiority in point of military etiquette. The detachment continued its march to Detroit. Here to the surprise of Lieut. Taliaferro Lieut. Cass turned over the command to him with orders to hire transportation and report to regimental headquarters at Green Bay. As the season was far advanced and no time to be lost in useless delay, the detachment was taken to Mackinac in the schooner Monroe, and later in the Jackson to Green Bay and Chicago, reaching the latter post on the 17th of November after a storm of three days in which the vessel was near being lost on the coast of Lake Michigan.

Lieut. Taliaferro was noted for his proficiency in military tactics in the battalion and evolutions of the line, and so reported on the confidential inspection reports by Inspector

General Wood, in July, 1818, when he left his post on a four months sick leave for the Bedford Springs, in Pennsylvania. On his recovery, he passed on to Washington city, where he paid his respects to the President, his patron friend and connection. Here the President was pleased to say: "He wished Lieut. Taliaferro to resign his position in the army; he had heard a good report of him; he was above his rank; promotion was too slow; that he wanted his services in a responsible civil capacity, where he would have more command of his time; go home to your mother, and remain until you hear from me." He was gratefully and politely thanked. / On the 27th of March, 1818 following, the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, forwarded to his address at Fredericksburg the appointment of Agent of Indian Affairs at St. Peter's near the Falls of St. Anthony. The office was duly accepted, and he, after filing his bonds, left to join the expedition under Colonel Leavenworth, already ordered with his regiment, the Fifth Infantry, to take post at the junction of the St. Peter and Mississippi. The Agent, however, repaired to St. Louis, and reported to Governor William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and late companion of Lewis to the Columbia River. From St. Louis he keel-boated with the Winnebago Agent, N. Boilvin, as far as Prairie du Chien. Here falling in with a government boat, proceeded on this slow mode of conveyance, in company with an escort of Indians, headed by Tah-ma-ha—or, The Pike—sometimes called the "Burn," a one-eyed Indian, a great friend of the Americans in the war of 1812, who described many interesting scenes on the Mississippi, and on board the American gun boats. He possessed both cunning and much intelligence. His re-



marks upon the conduct of the Indians, and British traders who instigated them to acts of hostility against the United States, which confirmed the truth of much that had been previously stated in the public prints.

It may be remarked in this connection, that the new agent was not only apparently well received by the agents and traders, and citizens of Prairie du Chien, but rather obsequiously so by the former—in fact these felt their guilt being in the main yet British subjects. Among these was Joseph Rolette, agent of the American Fur Company, who seemed most desirous of feeling the pulse of the agent by many proffered acts of kindness and civilities, all of which was understood and properly appreciated.

The agent proceeded onward to his post—visiting the villages of Wabasha, Red Wing, at the head of Lake Pepin and Petite Corbeau or Little Crow, addressing the chiefs of each town as to the nature of his appointment and the reasons why the President had sent troops to erect a fort at St. Peters, and location of an agent to conduct the affairs of the Dakota nation, in connection with the chiefs of the “Seven fires;” that apparently their new father might seem to them young, but that he had an old soldier’s head, and an honest heart, determined to cause the Indian trade to be well conducted for their benefit on principles of equal justice to all.

Jean Baptiste Faribault and family, had gone through by land, in charge of Colonel Leavenworth’s horses and cows—an old trader licensed as far back as 1810, by General Wilkinson, in command at Mackinac. It was to this Canadian of Colonel Leavenworth, in August, 1820, in the name of his wife, Pelagie Faribault, Ritter’s Island was

conveyed in an unauthorized convention, as was 400 acres, including Mendota, to Duncan Campbell, and 400 acres to Margaret Campbell, opposite Fountain Cave. This convention, a truly unfortunate one, was clandestinely convened and held at camp "Coldwater," while the proper agent was in the quarters of the old cantonment west of the Minnesota. So injurious to the future tranquility of the post was this treaty viewed by the company officers of the army present and the agent, that he addressed the Secretary of War on the subject, and the result was, the President declined to lay the paper before the Senate, and the agent directed (in consequence of the President's decision), to notify those persons claiming reservation under the Leavenworth convention, that these would not be considered. Official notice was at once served by Scott Campbell on Pelagie Faribault, Duncan Campbell and Margaret Campbell. General Cass, in his tour through the Upper Mississippi, in August, 1820, seemed, after one council with the Indians, convened by the agent at his request, to understand the weakness of Colonel Leavenworth in desiring to be considered both commanding officer and Indian Agent, who stated to the agent that his, Leavenworth's, course would spoil the Indians. The reply of the Agent was: The Colonel will be soon relieved, when his self-conceited vanity will be at an end, which was effected by the arrival of that excellent officer, Colonel Josiah Snelling, who, on being presented to the chiefs and head men of the Sioux, said: "I am pleased to take you by the hand. I shall have much to do. You have an excellent agent sent you by the President, your Great Father. He is paramount in all things touching your nation. I

shall support him when he needs it. You may feel secure in his friendship and my friendship as long as your conduct shall merit it. My troops are all friendly to your people, tell them so." From this time forward there was great harmony of action and concert between the civil and military.

The agent went to work to neutralize British influence and to give efficient organization to the fur trade, and secure the confidence of the surrounding tribes of Sioux and Chipewas. A truce to their continued wars had also to be met in a manner least calculated to wound their martial pride. In conforming to the laws and regulations to which the attention of all persons then engaged or might be engaged in commerce with the Indians, it was apparent that the instructions of the President of 1818 to General Cass, *ex officio* Superintendent of Indian affairs at Detroit, were found to admit of a latitude of construction as well as misconception which caused the executive officers to feel the need of more stringent laws and more clearly defined powers. Yet, through all this mist of uncertainty, the agent moved on steadily in the performance of his arduous, responsible and delicate duties. The conduct of the Indians of Wabasha's band, in forcing a trader from Green Bay, (Augustin Grignon), from his trading post near Black River, was so gross an outrage that the agent, then at Prairie du Chien on a visit, Agent Boilvin being absent, engaged Thomas McNair with his horse and sled, and at once proceeded to the scene of difficulty to watch the movements of the agent. Alexis Bailly, a clerk, and a half-breed Ottawa, of Canada, was dispatched by Rolette, agent of the Sun Fur Company, to apprise J. B. Maynard



of his approach, and to *cache* any article contraband, and finally to be in all readines for the visit of the agents. Bailly had obtained a passport from Major Fowle, in command at Fort Crawford, but the agent paid no respect to this authority, but revoked it and ordered the clerk back to Prairie du Chien. It was evident that Joseph Rolette first instigated the chief Wabasha to acts of hostility against M. Grignon, an independent trader. It was at this date, February, 1822, that the agent was enabled to sound the depths of the true policy of the agents of the so-called American Fur Company.

The promptness of the agent on the expedition referred to, brought down the yelping of Tray, Sweetheart and Blanche upon his devoted head. He was called nothing but a foolish boy, hot-headed, and not fit to govern old Indians; it was a shame to send such a man to the country. This was British bile and British spleen, all for want of the monopoly of the fur trade, which the agents of the company were determined to have if it could be accomplished by the acts of intimidation; but within a few months it was found that their threats and falsifications had no effect on the agent, but he went on honestly and perseveringly in the discharge of every public duty. Again it was seen and felt that he was gaining the ears of all Indians most rapidly. It was objected that the detention of the traders at the entry of Minnesota, in the disturbed state of the upper country, was wrong, and suits would be brought for this unjust detention of their outfits. The main object of the agents and traders of the Fur Company meant more than this. The agent must be bribed to their views, or forced to it. The former was tried and failed; the latter

fell with it. The organization of the Columbia Fur Company by Tilton & Co., produced a flood of vituperation of the Agent, and of the views and acts of this Company in their commercial views and citizenship. Old British traders declared that the agent was licensing foreigners to trade for this new concern, that trading posts were secretly or clandestinely established for them, that forts were called by various names and traders forced to build in square stockades. All this, and more, was said than it is prudent to record. Junior officers of the army were appealed to at Prairie du Chien, feasted on fat things, with wine on the lees, until it was asserted by I. R., of John Jacob Astor's company, that any American officer could be bought up for less than a quarter cask of wine. Charges were preferred against the agent, the Government supposing where there was so much smoke there surely must be some fire. These charges, numerous as they were, were promptly met, and the designing knaves most signally defeated. Previous to these interested assaults, Gen. Cass was appealed to, to use his influence to have the agent removed or sent to some other station. The reply was: "Major Taliaferro has powerful friends at the head of the Government who have great confidence in his incorruptible integrity, and full faith in all his acts."

It is true the agent, while he did nothing as a man of honor to militate against the interest of any individual or company in the trade, he determined to put a stop to the introduction of ardent spirits into the Indian country, and hence the many seizures made and destruction of this contraband article. He had witnessed the barrels rolled out on various occasions at Prairie du Chien, and the conse-

quent murders of many of its citizens as well as of the poor Indian. After a lapse of years the intercourse laws became more stringent, and the officers of the Indian Department found themselves in possession of more power for coercion than was needful to suppress the introduction of whiskey. Traders were furnished printed copies of these new powers, yet Alexis Bailly determined, contrary to advice, to try the nerve of the agent to see if he dare seize his outfit of \$20,000 worth of goods and six barrels of whiskey for his outfits from New Hope then, (now Mendota). The seizure was made, and Mr. Bailly, though a good trader, refused a renewal of his license, the agent being made satisfied of the non-approval of Bailly's perverseness. The goods were subsequently released and the whiskey returned to the company's agent at Prairie du Chien. This action brought Ramsey Crooks up to the Agency, who could not but approve the agent's decisions, and he proposed to supply Bailly's Post by the appointment of Henry H. Sibley Esq. to the vacancy. This the agent acceded to at once, and cheerfully, as he knew the family formerly at Detroit. Mr. Sibley soon arrived and entered upon his duties at Mendota. After this there was no more questioning of the acts of the agent, at least by Mr. Sibley. It should have been before noted that as the war had not entirely ceased between the Chippewas and Sioux, and the Sacs and Foxes and Sioux, the agent obtained the sanction of the President in 1824 to take a delegation of Sioux, Chippewas and Menomonees to the seat of Government, led by the Chief Little Crow, a man of good mind and intelligence; the object being to cause a convocation of all the tribes at Prairie du Chien in order

to define more fully their respective boundary lines. Two of the delegation, Wabasha, Chief first of all the Sioux, and Wanata, of the Yanctons of Big Stone Lake, were prevailed on by the traders at Prairie du Chien to go no farther, that they would get sick and die. Then Little Crow, in a short pointed speech, said: "My friends, you can do as you please; I am no coward, nor can my ears be pulled about by evil counsels. We are here, and should go on and do some good for our nation. I have taken our father here by the coat-tail and will follow him into his great nation to see and take by the hand our Great American Father. My mind is made up, live or die." This Chief then turned to the agent, taking his hand in his, said: "Rise, let us be off to join the 'Red Head Parshasha' (General William Clark). The Mississippi being out of its banks and swift, St. Louis was soon reached, where the Superintendent had already convened the Sacs and Foxes, Iowas and Piankeshaws, and the whole departed for Washington. Below Louisville and near Salt River, Marcpee, or The Cloud, one of the Sioux delegation (who had a bad dream, as reported) let himself down from the stern of the boat and dropped into the river, was supposed to be drowned, but, to the surprise of all, made his way back to St. Louis, but only to be murdered at Bay Charles, Missouri, by some of the Sac Indians there encamped. This very unfortunate occurrence did for a moment impede the progress of the delegation. Washington was soon reached and a speedy interview with the President and Secretary of War had, and business put in train. It was here that a treaty with the Sacs and Foxes confirmed the grant of land in the fork of the

Mississippi and Des Moines Rivers to the half breeds of their nation. This grant was only to begin at the head of Des Moines Rapids, but cupidity with a latitude of construction, sets this line on point of beginning as high up as old Fort Madison. The delegation having speedily accomplished their business satisfactorily, the Sioux left for home by way of New York. Here the Chiefs wished to pay a visit with their interpreter, William Dickson, a son of the celebrated Colonel Robert Dickson, who headed the Indians against the United States in 1812. This was not objected to, but on the route homeward by way of the lakes, the Crow, on being asked how he had procured a fine double barrel gun and other nice things, said to the agent unreservedly that the Medicine Man (Peters), he went to see in New York, got him to sign a paper, gave him the articles he saw and further promised him a keel boat load of goods to be sent the next summer, 1825. That boat did arrive just as the preparations were being made for the great assembly of the tribes at Prairie du Chien, but only a box was left for Colonel Robert Dickson. The old Chief called on the agent expressing great disappointment, even mortification. The agent assumed the responsibility and opened the Colonel's box. There were a few pieces of goods, calicos, etc., sent as a present to the Colonel's highly esteemed lady (an old squaw), by a Mr. Peters. Looking further, his lengthy letter was discovered, also a parchment copy of the grant to Capt. Carver by the Snake and Turtle; no witnesses. The goods were forwarded to Mrs. Dickson, but the letter and grant held for future use. This letter of the Rev. Mr. Peters is still

among the official papers of the agent, but the parchment grant was sent to the Hon. James Barbour, then Secretary of War, for file in his department.

The year 1825 was one to be long remembered, as it was one of trial and of incidents. The Chippewas, assembled too early by the traders of the North under the authority of Agent Schoecraft, would not proceed under Chapman, and Cole or Dingley, for twenty days. until the agent at St. Peter's had to furnish a safeguard down the river, which was done by sending confidential Sioux with each detachment. Noel, a half-breed Chippewa, was dispatched for the Flat-mouth on the Otter Tail lake. Others had men from Sandy Lake. Noel returned with other Indians, but the Flat-mouth, though weighing some 220 lbs., reported sick, and unable to perform the journey. The Sioux from lakes Qui Parle and Big Stone on the St. Peter's having arrived at the entry, the agent organized his delegation of three hundred and eighty-five Sioux and Chippewas, including the interpreters and attendants. This large body reached Prairie du Chien without the slightest accident or difficulty with the Chippewas, their old enemies, each remembering the pointed counsels of their agent. There was a halt before entering the town, at the "Painted Rock," where, after attending to their toilet and appointment of soldiers to dress the columns of boats, the grand entry was made with drums beating, many flags flying, with incessant discharges of small arms. All Prairie du Chien was drawn out, with other delegations already arrived, to witness the display and landing of this ferocious looking body of true savages.

Gov. Cass and Mr. Schoolcraft had arrived. The agent reported to the only Commissioner present, Mr. Cass, and was informed where he should encamp, that position had already been selected, and the Indians directed to pitch their tents near that of the agent and his interpreters.

Agent Schoolcraft, trusting to the traders, and not on his own personal exertions as above his dignity, found himself with only *one* hundred and fifty Chippewas, some hundred having returned home. General Clark and his staff soon joined, and after a consultation between the Commissioners, the place of meeting of the tribes in council designated, the work in hand began in earnest.

It was during this treaty the agent for the Sioux felt the inveterate hostility of the American Fur Company's traders from the North and elsewhere. The Chippewas especially—those who had known their friend from 1820, yearly visiting the post at Fort Snelling, kept the agent constantly informed of the secret councils called to detach them from his camp and join their friends, but all in vain—they would not be detached. Hence the unseemly and foolish attempt to control men who would not be controlled. Holiday, a drunken Scotch trader, was selected to *bully* and annoy the agent. He soon found the Sioux agent would neither be bullied nor annoyed by him nor any one of his associates.

General Cass was induced to summons the Sioux Agent before the Commissioners on the plea that a young Sioux had brandished his war club over the head of a young Chippewa near the Fort Crawford gate, and that one rash act might produce at once a scene of blood shed and you had better send the Chippewas of your camp to that of

Agent Schoolcraft. The agent summoned thus suavely, said in reply, "who is the man that brought this report, and where is the Indian threatened?" Response, "Mr. Holiday, and here or there is the Indian." In a moment the agent saw the ruse, and said, "Gentlemen of the Commission, you are here to treat with the several tribes present—that is the duty assigned you. My duty is to see the Sioux present on the treaty ground, morning and evening at the sound of the cannon. You shall not be disappointed, but as for changing the location of the twenty-eight Chippewa chiefs and braves from one encampment to another at the behest of Mr. Holiday—through his pliant tool—a sheer false pretense, set on foot, doubtless, by Agent Schoolcraft, for whom the Chippewas have no respect, for they seldom see him from his remoteness at Sault Ste Marie, and the Sioux Agent respectfully declines the change proposed and holds himself responsible for all consequences resulting from his decision."

The Commissioners on reflection found the Sioux Agent too well booked up on Indian affairs; that he knew what he was doing as a point of duty and self respect. So Mr. Holiday was foiled, both he and his falsifying tool.

Before the close of the treaty there were several natural deaths. The Sioux Agents expenses for his large delegation of 385 souls was \$812.00. That of Agent Schoolcraft with only 150 or 70 Indians was \$4,700—even canoes and paddles were charged for in which the Chippewas transported themselves to the treaty. Holiday, Cole, Chapman and Dingley, fur traders, well understood account—making against the United States, and Mr. Schoolcraft knew how to certify, etc.



Representations after this treaty to the department at Washington, very plausible, doubtless induced the Secretary of War, a new hand, to direct Thos. L. McKenney, Chief Clerk in the Indian office to instruct the agent at St. Peters, to have nothing to do with the Chippewas of the upper Mississippi and its tributaries, and to direct them to cease all visits to Fort Snelling, and adhere to the agency of Mr. Schoolcraft. The agent as in duty bound, informed the Chippewas in June, 1826, but these Indians said "yes," seemingly quiescent but still continued to dip their canoes in the Mississippi and drift down to the agency on the St. Peters; other mere positive instructions, and on the 27th of May, 1827, after a full explanation of department orders from Washington in council, many Sioux present, the Devil entered the latter and nine of the Chippewas were killed and wounded. So much for the thoughtless and unwise decision on a matter which had better have been left to the foresight and discretion of the Indians' best friend. It was known and frequently reported to Washington by disinterested military commanders of Fort Snelling, that the agent, however hostile the two tribes, held their entire confidence; a word from him to kill or let live was law with them. Indians like white men, will consult their own ease and convenience. The post of Ft. Snelling was located at a very important as well as convenient point in the Indian country for all the tribes. The Chippewas refused to visit the Sault St. Mary, because of its great distance from their homes; furthermore starvation stared them in the face going and returning with their families, whereas, 30, 40, 60, 80, 100 and 200 miles, mostly by water, landed them, passing good

fishing and hunting, speedily at the American Fort, for many were British frontier Indians.

Obequelle, the friend of Pike, on Red Lake, and Brusha, of Sandy Lake, often spoke of his having told them that the Americans would some day build a fort high up the Mississippi, and he told the truth, for they had lived to see it, in order to secure some degree of safety to the South Yancton and Wappacoota Sioux and others on the plains. The agent was directed to form a proper delegation of these people in 1830, to meet their tormentors, the Sacs and Foxes again at Prairie du Chien, in order to a more formal and definite line between their respective claims to ownership of soil, as a young Chippewa had been recently shot near Lamont's Trading Post, on the St. Peters. The Sioux were made by their traders, quite reluctant to accept the invitation of Colonel Taylor, deputed one of the commissioners; but as the agent, who was never known to make a promise, tell a lie or deceive his children in all his past eleven years with them, Col. Taylor was informed that he might expect the Indians and their agent within a few days. On reaching Prairie du Chien, the Colonel had left, substituting Colonel Willoughby Morgan, leaving with that officer a letter for the agent on his arrival, in which he said that which the agent was sorry he had known for years back, viz; "take the American Fur Company, in the aggregate, and they were the ——— greatest scoundrels the world ever knew.' They were not only at war with all independent traders, but set their faces sternly against all missionary effort to civilize, instruct and evangelize the benighted Indian, or the formation of agricultural farms for the poor, as game rapidly decreased. No, the Indians must hunt for their gain, and

their gain alone. The president of the American Fur Company, John Jacob Astor, had his medals struck similar to those of the respective President of the United States, for circulation among the Indian tribes with which the agents of his company were supplied to make, and recognize chiefs of their own, the object which the agent was at no loss to conjecture. He obtained one of these after seeing one suspended from the neck of Wah-ma-de-sapa, a sub chief of the Wah-pa-coo-ta Sioux. A remark from the agent caused him to take it from the side of the American medal, saying Alexander Faribault had obtained it for him. It might have been stated before that the Treaty of 1830, ceded the neutral ground on the Iowa from the Mississippi, twenty miles wide to the second upper fork on the river Desmoines; also a tract of land for the permanent home of the half-breed relations of the Medawa Kanton Sioux, extending from the "Basin" at Red Wing, below head of Lake Pepin, down the course of the Mississippi to Root river, thirty-two miles, and back in the country a distance of fifteen miles.

The agents of the company American at Prairie du Chien, with their usual pertinacity, pressed the Commissions to incorporate an article in this treaty for their benefit. Wabasha was the tool put forth to serve their cupidity, but they signally failed. The commissioners, honest men, could not recognize a palpable wrong.

A British officer, Captain Patterson, accompanied the agent from this Treaty to Fort Snelling; he had come from South America on his way to England, and desired to see what he could of our wild Indians of the northwest, that might enlarge his report to Lord Hill, Chief Commander of the British army. This officer did not tarry long but left

after a few weeks, seemingly gratified with his reception by Captain Gale, commanding, and attentions of officers and citizens of the Post. In 1831, the agent visited the upper Minnesota, holding a convention at Traverse des Sioux, at a very small cost, explanatory of the Treaty of 1830, which was without a word of dissent formally approved and ratified.

It was here that the services of Joseph Renville, of Lac qui Parle, and Colin Campbell, proved of inestimable value to the success of the expedition. A similar one and for a similar purpose had gone under Colonel Thomas L. McKenny, and Governor Cass to the Sault Ste Marie, which expended \$26,000 uselessly, as the result never proved beneficial beyond laborious verbose reports. The Indian country was more or less agitated east of the Mississippi, but west all was tranquil. In the midst of many perplexities, single-handed and alone, the Agent was consoled by many testimonials of well-done, good and faithful servant. He was secure in the confidence of all honest men. Jackson was at the head of the government and the agent had been one of his old soldiers. His Eagle eye saw all things, small, and great. His written message to the Little Crow, chief second of all the Sioux, showed he perfectly understood Indian wants and Indian character. "My Son, I have received your talk at the hands of your agent, Mr. Taliaferro. When he speaks, open your ears and listen, for you hear my words. You say truly 'we have both been warriors.' The war club is again buried deep in the ground. I am again your friend and the friend of your Nation—let us smoke the same pipe and eat out of the same dish. War is hurtful

to any Nation. Keep the 'Seven fires' of your Nation in peace and good order, and I will try and do the same with the twenty-seven fires of my Nation. Make your wants known to your faithful agent and you will hear from your true friend speedily."

Doctor John Gale, of the army, writing from Council Bluffs, on the Missouri, says: "The whole army on this frontier unite in the belief that the government has for once an honest, efficient agent for Indian affairs. You know, my dear fellow, that I am too proud to flatter any man—yet it is refreshing to see the Indian department rapidly brought out of chaos and made a highly respectable branch of the government. You need not be surprised ere long to see ex-Ministers, ex-Governors, ex-Judges and Members of Congress, seeking for admission into it. I tell you, my old messmate and friend, you are a most fortunate civil appointment for the government, though I was one among many that regretted the resignation of one whose turn of mind seemed so well adapted to the army. Colonel Kearney and other officers now en route for your Post, can give you an account of Indian affairs in this quarter—much *gas* but nothing real as to results."

Previous to 1835 the agent importuned the President to assign a sub-agent for the Chippewas of the Upper Mississippi and its tributaries, urging as a reason the remoteness of the Sault Ste Marie and the difficulties of the route. After some time a Mr. George Peterson, a Chippewa half-blood and brother-in-law of Henry R. Schoolcraft and agent for the Chippewas, was appointed and unfortunately located at Lapointe, Lake Superior. He

proved of unsteady habits, consequently his people had no respect for him. After him a Mr. Symon or Simon, a discharged soldier, secured the situation and he, like his predecessor, drank more whiskey than the Indians. Maj. Dallam was offered the appointment, but after an investigation of the general condition of the Indians and the character of their traders, declined to serve. Finally Miles Vineyard, of Illinois, accepted and entered on his duties. Notwithstanding these efforts to be relieved from the visits of these people they still kept up (at all risks) their habits of seeing their friend the agent and the Military Post at Fort Snelling.

In 1837 the agent was instructed on the basis of a special report by him made in 1836 to the War office touching the purchase of all the lands owned by the Sioux east of the Mississippi, was directed to organize a full and well authorized delegation to be led by him to the seat of government, at any moment, to be indicated by General Henry Dodge, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Subsequent Miles Vineyard was despatched up the Mississippi to invite the Chippewas to a council near Fort Snelling, and the agent requested to see that a full delegation from all points should be present, and further, that he propose a site for the treaty, and be in readiness to receive the Commissioners, General William R. Smith, of Pennsylvania, and General Dodge, of Illinois. There was a busy time, for soon we had 1,200 Chippewas, and in the vicinity of the Post some 395 Sioux, the greater part being still out on the spring hunt. This unexpected convocation of Red Men brought also a host of expectants in anticipation of some benefit from the Indians, interested fur traders and

agents not a few. The Commissioner arriving with his staff, were quartered at the Agency, and a general table provided by the family of the agent. The treaty opened, and was closed, but not without some stirring incidents, and considerable excitement. The agent had business at his office, some seventy yards from the treaty grounds, when Hercules L. Dousman and a Sioux trader, entered the Agency office in seemingly great haste, asked for a sheet or two of letter paper on which to make an account. Dousman was pensman. The agent left, having taken his pistols, when in a few minutes Dousman came and laid the account before the Secretary, Mr. Van Antwerp. (It should be duly noted that the treaty had been written out *in extenso*, and ready for the signatures of the parties). Commissioner Dodge looked at this after-thought account of five thousand dollars, and told interpreter Peter Quinn to ask the Indians if that claim was just for the mills on Chippewa. The response was, No, we had no good of this mill—that the Sioux had had all the benefits of it, but the chief from the Chippewa River said, for peace, and to satisfy the men making the claim, he, the Commissioner, might give five hundred dollars. Hole-in-the-Day and others objected even to this sum, and asked if they were to pay the whites for the erection of a mill for their benefit. Nevertheless the \$5,000 was *interlined* in their treaty, and a plain fraud traded on the helpless Indians, for the same parties in the name of Bruner, who brought the mill iron from Cincinnati, held the mill and other improvements on a preemption right and pocketed \$5,000 in addition. Honest people seemed astonished at such palpable affrontery; but this was not all. After \$58,000 had been

embodied in the treaty to pay the indebtedness of the Chippewas to their traders, we heard loud shouts and yells in the direction of the Chippewa camp, near Baker's trading post at "Cold Spring." Word soon reached us that Warren, a trader, had marshaled a large body of the Pillagers, and were coming down like so many black devils to force the Commissioner to give to said Warren \$20,000. The weather was warm, the Sioux agent standing near the table on the Commissioner's right hand, Warren rushed in the arbor and seated himself by one of the supporters, fanning himself with his hat, when the Indians soon followed, rushing around and through the arbor. The agent drew one of his pistols, pointing it at Warren. Hole-in-the-Day said, "Shoot, my father!" "Hold," says General Dodge "wait a moment." "Very well, sir, I only hold for the first overt act of hostility, then I sell my life, if need be, after the fall of the dastard who has attempted to intimidate this Commission." But worse and more of it. Warren got this special sum of \$20,000 for himself, entered into the Dodge Treaty, much to the chagrin of the sensible thinking Indians and surprise of intelligent lookers-on, a sufficient sum having already been set apart for the payment of all just debts of the tribe to their traders.

This treaty over, the agent was directed by Gov. Dodge to select a proper delegation of Sioux, and conduct them to Washington City as soon as practicable. The agent had first to get clear of some 1,200 Chippewas without bloodshed, and though there were but 80 men for duty under Capt. Martin Scott, and many Sioux present, the Chippewas were sent off without much difficulty to their homes. After this happy result the agent was left to talk



freely with his own people on the invitation given by the President. Opposition was spoken of as coming from the agents of the Fur Company, and others in their employ, but the agent organized his party, a powerful one, to counteract the designs of these officiously interested men who eat of their dainties, wipe their mouths and say, "I have committed no sin." But the hour of trial was approaching. No Indians were to leave the Nation until a guarantee was given for the payment of their indebtedness to the traders.

The agent was firm, made no promises, but said the delegation will be formed and taken to Washington. The path was open for all interested claimants; he had nothing to do with the traders or their claims.

The agent had written and engaged a steamboat to be at the public landing on a certain day, when he would be in readiness with one-half of the delegation to take passage. Captain Lafferty was prompt, the traders and others astonished at the *coup de etat*. My interpreters and employes conducted their friends on board, and with steam up off glided the steamer down stream. Stopped for Big Thunder and his pipe bearers at Crow's Village, passed to the old village of Red Wing for Wah-koo-ta and his war chief, thence to the village of Wabasha for this chief and his friend Etuz-e-pah. Thus was the delegation of twenty-six trustworthy men and firm of purpose, secured, and the influence of the agent shown to be more solid than that of the fur traders, who had said the Government could not enter into any treaty with the Indian tribes without they used their influence. Gov. Dodge was met at Galena, with funds as before indicated while at St. Peter.

Here the Governor was told of the premature movement of the agent altogether too soon—true, much too soon for the wily expectants of great things. The Superintendent was asked to give the delegation a physician in the person of Doctor A. T. Crow. The agent flatly refused, saying the delegation from a combination was larger than was desirable, being composed of some thirty-five Indians, interpreters and attendants; that the action of the agent would in the sequel be fully sustained by the authorities at Washington; on this Governor Dodge might safely rely, who admitted the agent to be firm, brave, determined in the face of danger; he had observed it and his influence no man could doubt. So the delegation proceeded prosperously on their voyage, arriving in the city of Washington without accident. Mr. Secretary Poinsett was duly waited upon by the agent with his children, who were speedily introduced to the President, and on presenting to the Secretary a synopsis of such a treaty as might be acceptable to all parties, business was commenced. At Pittsburgh Dr. R. A. Wilson was added, as some of the Indians had become indisposed from change of diet and water. The Indians taking a particular fancy to Dr. Wilson, a gentleman of intelligence and high Christian principles, the agent put him forward together with their red friends, to settle all matters with Commissioner Poinsett, relative to the provisions of the treaty then going on. The interests of the Fur Company were represented by Henry H. Sibley, Alexis Bailly, Laframboise Rocque, Francois Labathe, Alexander Faribault and Oliver Faribault.

The treaty was signed on the 29th of September, 1837, the most liberal—yes, the most safe and beneficial act

they were ever permitted to subscribe to since—a most liberal provision being made for their indebtedness and for their half-breed relations, for agricultural schools, etc. Yet, at the moment of signing, Alexander Faribault and others left, hoping to stop the Chiefs from making their marks; but a word from the agent set them to thinking, and their treaty was promptly authenticated in presence of some four hundred spectators in Doctor Laurie's church. It was here and at this era that Samuel C. Stambaugh and Alexis Bailly pressed Secretary Poinsett to confirm to Pelagie Faribault, Pike's Island—or pay her \$10,000 for that which was not worth \$500, and to which she had no earthly claim. The Secretary was so informed by the agent, as was his duty, and this done he said nothing more, but the truth gave great offense to the fictitious claim agents. It has been said that Jean B. Faribault had been treated with severity. Not so. After Leavenworth's folly he went on to Pike's Island and erected his cabins, but the next spring found him washed off the island by the freshets. He crossed east of the Mississippi and again built his habitation on flat boats, and was again inundated for his want of a proper foresight—two hundred yards back from the river would have left him a permanent home with none to molest or make him afraid.

Mr. Faribault was the first to give the true signification of the name of the agent—*Mah-sa-busca*—Iron Cutter, to the Indians, by which he was ever after recognized throughout the tribes. Having said this much of the old Canadian traders, it is well to follow our delegation homeward. On reaching St. Louis the agent expended \$6,000 with Chouteau & Co., the goods for each assorted, packed



and plainly marked. After attending to this duty, a steamer, *Rolla*, was chartered, and we commenced our voyage north; all well, and in fine spirits. There was but one accident of note, and that at Pine River. In stopping and starting, a flue in one of the boilers collapsed, with a terrible report, killing one man and a horse, with other slight damage. It was most Providential that the boilers' head passed out in front; had it been the rear the whole delegation might have been scalded to death. After a little delay we ran up to Fort Snelling, with *one* wheel, the flanges of the other having been broken at the time of the explosion, and landed safely on the 10th day of November, 1837. Not a day too soon, for the ice made a few days thereafter. Major Plympton being in command, gave us a hearty welcome, saying: "I feared for you, and you were wise in all your plans."

In 1838, the agent left for St. Louis, in order to facilitate the fulfillment of the treaty. Stipulations—contracts for horses, oxen, cows, and farming utensils were made. Returning, blacksmiths were engaged and locations designated, as well as the farmers, seven in number, for the respective villages—promptness in action in all that concerned his responsible charge—gave assurance to the Indians that they had a friend. Commissioners W. L. D. Ewing and Colonel T. L. Pease, with Colonel Sperin, arrived, and found \$240,000 ready for their disbursement. The agent advised the payment of the several bands of Sioux at once, the traders and half-bloods thereafter, for the reason that the Indians seeing such a large amount of their money going into the hands of others would create an unpleasant feeling in the minds of those who did not understand its meaning; but

other interested counsels prevailed, and there was, as had been predicted, uneasiness, which caused the agent daily and almost hourly explanations, until the Commissioners completed their duties after a fashion, having made a palpably partial disposition of the \$110,000, *one hundred and ten thousand* to the half-bloods, under the treaty of September 29th, 1837. The agent, as soon as the annuities arrived, speedily paid off all the Indians in goods and cash, some \$20,000. Colonels Pease and Sperring were disgusted with the drunken, dictatorial conduct of their associate, General William L. D. Ewing, of Illinois. The Fur Company had tampered with this pliant gentleman successfully. When the agent declined his and Sam. C. Stambaugh's appeal to locate at the mills, at the Falls of St. Anthony, on the United States Reserve, west of the Mississippi (now Minneapolis), they became the agent's bitter enemies. So much so, that the said Ewing addressed a letter of charges against him to the President direct, saying: "Major Taliaferro had often talked of resigning his station as agent at St. Peters, and now, no matter what he had been, was wholly unqualified for the performance of duties satisfactorily to the Indians or the Government—asking at the same time the appointment of Samuel C. Stambaugh to the vacancy."

The agent having been called to Virginia on important private business, was at Washington, and on visiting the office of Indian Affairs on official business, was warned by a "worthy brother" of the fact of Ewing's communication to Mr. Van Buren, and that it had been by him referred to that office. The President was called on forthwith and

upon inquiry as to his reception and reference of such a missile, was very frankly told yes, but as there was a *design* in it, the paper had been referred to the Secretary of War, where it could be seen, but that the agent's character as an officer, in the department, was too well known, and avouched for integrity of purpose, a successful government of his charge for more than twenty years, hence, it would afford him, the President, pleasure to again send my name to the Senate for confirmation. This was done, and the agent received his *sixth* commission to the utter defeat of the machinations of his enemies and the astonishment of knowing traders, but to the joy and evident satisfaction of the Indians generally.

The system of Indian trade had been for years and still was more oppressive apparently than seemed needful. The price of goods of all kinds suited to the wants of the Indians were enormous, and when a hunter could not pay up his credit in full during the fall and winter months, in the spring his guns, traps, kettles, rat spears, and even his hatchets, were demanded of him. Of this hardship the Indians complained to the agent of these traders, and no wonder, for their unfeeling, heartless course of oppression deprived them of the means of supporting their families on their spring hunt. We do not think this course of action was general among the traders, for there were a few honorable exceptions. Francois Labathe and Jean B. Faribault both suffered from their harsh treatment of the Indians, both having had severe stabs in their broils with their hunters.

An incident occurred between the soldiers of the garrison and Mr. Faribault, while on the island, which affected the

standing of the latter for a time. There was not a drop of whisky at the post, the 22d of February was approaching; it was hinted by some one that Mr. F. had a little. Sergeant Mann was sent over to feel the way as negotiator. He succeeded in getting all there was—*one gallon*, and for which *eighty* dollars was paid on promise of inviolable secrecy. The 22d arrived, the whisky produced, and, lo! it had been diluted with water. This the soldiers could not tolerate, and Mr. F., at all risks, was reported to the officer in command. It was in the power of the agent, however, to put matters at ease in Mr. F.'s dilemma—he had his *smiter* temporarily employed for the Indian department at Mendota, where Mr. F. finally built a permanent residence.

After many efforts of moral suasion, the agent was enabled to find himself at the head of the best organized agency under the Government, and this effected with much toil and but little support from any quarter, except such as was accorded by the military, when sought, which was seldom deemed expedient. Substantial and sufficient quarters for all purposes had been secured by the agent at his own cost, and thousands of his own private means expended in many an emergency, for want of sufficient public funds. At no time from 1819 to 1840, was the allotment for his agency over the average of \$800. Not a square inch of stroud cloth to each Indian in the nation. No wonder the agent was accused of great mystery in his management of Indian affairs, but in this apparent mystery, in the providence of an all-wise Creator, reposed his queer powers of control of the *heart* of the children of his care; he was protected amid dangers seen and unseen. In two

instances his life was preserved by an Indian woman, and at another period by Duncan Campbell, a brother of Scott Campbell, the United States interpreter, a man of great worth and efficiency, a true friend to the Americans, but badly served in the strange decision made in the treaty of September 29th, 1837—his family is justly entitled to \$8,000, granted by his nation in that treaty. It was necessary to visit the Presbyterian Mission at Lake Harriet in company with Philander Prescott.

Towards evening we left in our wagon for the agency; on the way met the Rev. Samuel William Pond on the prairie, who seemed agitated, saying to us: "You had better hurry on as the Sioux intend mischief to the Chippewas at Baker's Trading Post." Whip was put on the horse at once and speed made; met some females running who said: "Hurry on, Father, or you will be too late." We wanted no urging, for the horse was dull at his best speed. We reached the scene of trouble just as the sun went down. On jumping down from the wagon the firing on the Chippewas commenced, and so vice versa. The flashes from the guns were so rapid that for a moment the agent closed his eyes; but soon seized the Red Bird by the hair, saying: "You dog, be off." My voice was soon heard and the Sioux made off in all haste, leaving one Chippewa killed and two young Sioux mortally wounded; these fell from exhaustion in Capt. Boon's dragoon camp, just beyond Minnehaha, the soldiers conveying them to their temporary encampment a little further on. Dr. I. I. B. Wright, surgeon of the army being present, was requested to ask for a detail of soldiers to convey the body of the unfortunate Chippewa



to the Fort, which request Major Plympton in command, promptly complied with. The next day the instigators of this outrage on the Chippewas. (old Hole-in-the-Day, whom the agent had instructed in the office of chief at the request of his people, being present), were delivered, upon demand of the agent, and confined in the Fort to await future action. The murdered Indian was decently interred in the public burying ground near the remains of "Little Crow" and "White Buzzard," Sioux chiefs. The agent had satisfactorily shown not only on this occasion, but in 1827, clearly to all men that he required not the use of military aid in enforcing his authority, the military interference doing more harm than good. Could the military authority bring in offenders five hundred miles off on the plains? No, but the agent could, and did effect this, when it was asserted that the Indians would laugh at the demands of their Father.

We now come to the year 1839. The murder of Ne-ka or Badger, near the Mission of Lake Harriet, by three of the pillagers of Leech Lake—such was the popularity of this Sioux—that this deed of wanton cruelty set on fire of revenge all the neighboring villages. It proved a most unfortunate murder, as the Indians were off in pursuit of revenge before the agent was apprised of the movement. They pressed rapidly up to Rum river and before the agent's messenger reached the village of Little Crow, the young men crossed overland to the St. Croix, and there were conflicts on the same day. It was a severe retaliation, for the Sioux returned with ninety-five scalps. Human foresight could not have changed this truly unfortunate result. Towards the close of the year the agent

had fulfilled all treaty stipulations and the Indians coincided with and dismissed them. He was asked for another meeting in council. This was conceded, not aware, however, of the object, as the agent had finally arranged in presence of the chief of towns with their approval full estimates for the ensuing year. Several chiefs, at the hour designated, entered the agency office. Shortly thereafter John C. Fremont, Henry H. Sibley, also Alexander Faribault, and others of the American Fur Company. At this moment also a note from Mr. P. Prescott, as to the true object of that council, which was to accuse the agent with authorizing the "Bad-Hail" to cross the Mississippi and drive Henry C. Menck, a British convict, from his whiskey shop and put fire to his cabin. This Indian, a very bad one, whom the agent once confined in the guard house at the Fort for mutinous conduct, was the tool selected by the traders and whiskey sellers to fasten a foul and malicious charge against these long tried, and unwavering friends. The "Bad-Hail," it is true, had consulted the agent as to these pests of the post; asking permission to drive them off before the day of the annuity payments. He was emphatically told to go home to his village; that neither the Indians nor the agent had any business with these bad men. That the chief of the soldiers, Major Plympton, would at the proper time drive those men off and burn their cabins. But he chose, it seems, to take this responsibility upon himself, as one of the soldier's, and run Mr. Menck out of his house; but not by the agent's order, for this was contrary to all his counsels for more than twenty-one years. Nevertheless, a writ was obtained of the sheriff by James R. Clewett, a foreigner,

he deputizing Henry Menck to serve it, another foreigner, who found the agent in a sick room. There was no waiting; a canoe was in readiness and sick or well, —drawing a pistol at the same time—“you shall go to Clayton Court House.” The agent coolly said: “Put up your pistol, Mr. Menck, or whatever your name is. I wish only time to send a note to the Fort previous to leaving.”

Mr. Menck was greatly astonished in a few minutes to find himself a prisoner in the hands of a military guard and shipped across the Mississippi, and told to keep out of the country or he would be sent to Missouri for entering the Indian country without a passport.

Thus terminated this farce. The officers of the post were greatly incensed at such an infamous violation of law. The agent had asked to withdraw his resignation for a few months in consequence of this attack, and other suits at law brought by Alexis Bailly and others for enforcing the intercourse laws, but his appeal was not granted and Amos J. Bruce was appointed. This was well, for he well knew that the time would come when all his efforts to do good would pass into oblivion and the nationality of the noble Sioux be completely destroyed, and the nation become extinct. The Indian Department had failed to sustain their agent, and were lending a listening ear to the agents of the American Fur Company. Honest men had to return from the Indian service in disgust, as the most faithful, honest and persevering officers of the Department could not convince the general commissioners at the seat of government how necessary it was to give prompt attention to all estimates under treaty

stipulations, and to conform strictly, article by article, to these estimates, the agents alone being held responsible by the Indians for the correct and faithful application of their funds, which should leave no room for comments by interested traders as to the quantity and quality of the goods procured by their money.

The factory system of trade with the Indians was abolished in opposition to the wishes of all the agents, officially expressed. Had the system been continued under a more thorough organization, and losses made up whenever a treaty for cessions of land was made with the Indians, an end would have been put to the wiles of the American Fur Company, no wrongs perpetrated on the ignorant and helpless, no perjury, no bribed commissioners at the making or fulfillment of treaties with the Indians, and the general peace among the tribes more easily enforced and maintained.

All the disgrace for years back, attending our Indian intercourse may and can be traced, not to the agents proper, but to the acts of the commissioners and other persons deputed by the Government to frame treaties with the tribes and returned upon the poor Indians to make a mock fulfillment, calling in the aid of more than willing tools to rob the helpless by forcing their unwilling signatures to base frauds upon them. O, white man, what degradation has your thirst for gold brought upon the poor savage! The curse of God and the finger of scorn pointed at you by all Christian men, and unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish, for the wicked now walk on every side while the vilest of men are exalted. Nevertheless, man being in honor abideth not; he is like

the beasts that perish. Such were the reflections and experience in Indian affairs of the agent at St. Peter's, who had always tried, faithfully and honestly, to do his duty fearless of consequences.

In the early occupancy, by the civil and military, of the Indian country on the Upper Mississippi, it was found indispensable to peace and good order, to keep a tight rein over a wild and mixed population, composing those not subject to law and order, but self-willed and arrogant. A controlling influence became necessary, and was mildly but firmly enforced.

Murder, theft, purchase of soldier's clothing, introduction of whiskey, fraud and drunkenness, met with prompt punishment, but few examples were found expedient. Emigration from Pembina to the interior of the United States did not commence for some years after the establishment of Fort Snelling, but the failure of crops by the inundations of rivers and myriads of locusts, compelled the settlers to petition for passports to a large amount, which were at once granted by the agent. Many arrived at various times at the entry, were fed by the government and sent onward to Iowa and Wisconsin, the Scotch founding a settlement near Dubuque called New Scotland. Among them the agent recognized the name of Wishart, and purchased his carts, cattle, etc., and gave him a boat to descend the river with his family. A Frenchman, by name Perry, with his family, remained, and became a great cattle raiser; so much so that the commandant requested him to change his location to Carver's old cave, six miles below the Fort, east of the Mississippi, which he cheerfully did. Here, it may be said, small things often

decide our locality for us. Mrs. Perry was a celebrated accoucheur, and this fact coming to the knowledge of the ladies of the post, there was no withstanding their appeal by the commanding officer, Col. Snelling, hence the Perry family became a permanent fixture. When any of his large herd of cattle were killed by the Indians, the agent had him promptly paid.

The military sometimes brought charges against the Indians. One of those complaints, being officially made by Lieut. Eastman, will only be noted. It was for the killing of his pointer dog by a young Indian while out on the prairie. The case was soon investigated. The Indian at once acknowledged the fact of killing the dog, but disclaimed any hostility to the complainant. The dog came up to him as he lay on the prairie. He seemed a good mark; he raised his pistol and fired, and the dog fell. Had he seen the officer, knowing him well, he would not have fired. He was ready to settle the difficulty by giving Mr. Eastman his horse, and hoped he would not be hard with him as they were relation. Mr. Eastman was officially informed of the result, and that the horse was in readiness should he accept the indemnity proffered. There was no response, but the hostility of this gentleman to the agent, of which he took no notice, as he had performed his duty as far as any honorable man could reasonably expect, was plainly visible.

Officers had familiarized themselves with the Indians after the fashion of the traders, and there were many living evidences of the fact. Orders had to be issued by the respective commanding officers of the post excluding *Indian ladies* from daily and nightly visits to their friends in the

Fort. The traders would make a detective of the agent if practicable. All thefts on each other were reported to the agent for justice. Deserting boatmen (fed on corn and tallow) must be forced to proceed up the St. Peter's with their outfits for the trade, right or wrong. Every ox, cow, calf or hog lost by persons on the Indian lands, the agents were expected to find the culprits or pay for these often fictitious losses. Drovers of cattle passing the plains, including sheep to Red River Colony, were deserted on the head waters of the Minnesota. Gibson, the contractor, appealed to the agent, and, after much trouble, being fully authorized, some \$900 of the loss was transmitted to Gen. Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and paid over to the claimants.

The winters were generally severe. That of 1824-5 was more mild, the steamer "Rufus Putnam," Captain Bates, passing Lake Pepin and reaching the fort April 5, 1825, and returned again on the 5th of May with goods for the Columbia Fur Company, passed up the Minnesota to their post at "Land End." This was the first boat passing through its waters, as the steamer "Virginia" was the first to land with government stores at Fort Snelling.

To show how very unfortunate the government was in the selection of commissioners to close the Winnebago treaty of 1837, the funds for the payment of the half-breeds, some \$85,000, was so long delayed that Mr. Broadhead, of Pennsylvania, and others bought up the claims of these poor ignorant creatures for one fourth and one-half. After this the commission, finding the money still not arriving, left by steam for St. Louis (the agent at St. Peter's being in company), met some forty miles be-

low Prairie du Chien a steamboat with the long-expected funds, which Quartermaster McKissac immediately, in person, returned with to St. Louis. Here application was made by Commissioners Murry and Cameron for the cash. Military District Agent Hitchcock, on consultation with the St. Peters agent, refused to pay it over, very properly. An appeal was taken from the military disbursing agent's decision to the War Department, and afterwards to Senator Buchanan, of Pennsylvania.

An able pamphlet was written by Major Hitchcock, and published; the St. Peter's agent's certificate embodied in it. So plainly was gross fraud shown, that the War Department sent another agent with funds to see the half-breeds and settle with them, allowing said Broadhead and others, the sum of fifteen per cent. only for the outlay of money. This transaction only went to confirm the official reports to the office of Indians of the disgrace which these temporary appointments entailed upon the agents proper in the Indian country. It seemed as if the department had no confidence in commanders, officers of posts, and their agents near the same, to settle and adjust all treaty stipulations. Had this policy been adopted, full satisfaction would have been secured at a trifling expense to the government. Being a man of simple habits, looking at things as he found them, the idea of politics or political aims controlling men and traders had not been for a moment his study. He was a child in such matters, he believed himself honest in all things; deeming every other man whatever his station equally so. But a lapse of time after a close intimacy with all descriptions of people, the human heart seemed deceitful above



all things and desperately wicked. Eagerness for gold and places of honor in the councils of the nation being fully inaugurated, and unblushingly pursued as trade, it became plain to his mind, painful as the bare idea was, that the final rulers of this great and growing nation would destroy it, as all ancient history in the early ages of the world had shown.

Spurning the common wish of help,  
I loved my country for itself.

The winters of Minnesota have been merely touched upon. The severity of these was often fatal to both whites and Indians on the plains. Martin Macleod \* lost two companions beyond Lac qui Parle, in passing from the Red River settlement to Fort Snelling; this is not the only occurrence of the kind. On one particular occasion, in the winter of 1826-7, a band of thirty lodges of the Sisseton, and other Sioux, in passing from one hunting district to another more favorable for game, were overtaken by a snow storm, and encamped on a large prairie some ten miles from wood land, supposing the storm would not prove of long continuance. Yet the storm continued to rage for three days and nights, until the snow fell over three feet deep, with intense cold. Here were seventy-five men, women and children, soon without wood or food of any kind. This party had but seven pair of snow-shoes, and the strongest men left for the nearest trading post, one hundred miles off. Days were lost in going to and returning with assistance to their doomed friends. The traders sent four Canadians with what provisions they, and the Indians could carry. After great

\*Macleod spelled his name thus in his own signatures. On our state map, and statistics, it is spelled *McLeod*.

toil these reached the scene of distress and woe, for the greater portion of the Indians were dead. The most revolting of all this calamity was, the living were subsisting on the dead. A mother had eaten her deceased offspring and a portion of her father's arms. A very few were rescued, among them the poor unfortunate woman that had been forced to subsist on her own child. She made her way to the agency in early Spring, but was a lunatic. At lucid intervals the agent tried delicately to get what information he could of the disaster, but the heart of stone could not have witnessed her ravings without the shedding of tears. Poor Tash-u-no-ta, so young and lovely in person. She asked Capt. Foote, on visiting the Fort, in the presence of several persons, if he knew which was the best portion of a man to eat, taking him by the collar of his coat at the time. His astonishment was so great at the bare idea, that for a time he could not speak, after a while he said, no. She said, the arms. All was done for her that sympathy could suggest, but a few days thereafter she was found above the entry of St. Peters, dead from the act of drowning, and she was decently buried. Poor Tash-u-no-ta, she has gone to the "spirit-land." The first murder of one Indian by another, was caused by the giving of a bottle of whiskey to the old "White Buzzard," by Colonel Leavenworth at Cold Water Camp, which was productive of some very sharp correspondence between the commanding officer and the Indian agent.

In order to enforce morality as far as practicable, being the highest officer at the post, he induced many traders with growing Indian families to legitimize their children

by marriage. There being no minister in the country, he officiated as a justice of the peace, and united many, among them was Oliver Cratte to Miss Graham, James Wells to Miss Graham, daughters of Duncan Graham: Alpheus R. French to Mary Henry, of Ohio, closing with the union of Dred Scott with Harriet Robinson—my servant girl, which I gave him. The only colored woman purchased was by Alexis Bailly of Major Garland. The agent in after years gave freedom to all his slaves. If estimated by others it would be a gift of twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars; but there was no outside influences touching the decision of the liberators; it was a solemn act not influenced by any earthly powers.

Indians thought much of negroes—called them black men, or black Frenchmen, Wah-she-che-sappo—would place their hands on the agent's boy's head, and laugh heartily. The agent at Traverse des Sioux found it expedient to punish his servant for giving too much whisky to several young men, which placed the agent for a time in an uncomfortable position. When brought up for castigation, and a blow or two had been inflicted, the Indians prayed the agent to forbear. "Well," said the agent, "if you will all hit him with your pipe-stems for his bad conduct he may go." This was acceded to at once, but it was not known if they had inflicted any blows on William.

The war with England had been the means of dividing the largely populated villages into small communities—these having medals, flags and silver gorgets, presented by Colonel Robert Dickson, to each war chief sending a squad of Indian allies for the British service, induced these young men at the close of the war to assume the

station and prerogatives of chiefs — the authority of the old chiefs put at defiance. This was the status of things when their new agent assumed the direction of their affairs; hence it required time and prudence to consolidate these off-shoots and give confidence and more authority to the hereditary chiefs. It was necessary in aid of this effort to secure as fast as possible a delivery up of all these foreign marks—so much esteemed by their possessors. Success attended the efforts of the policy silently adopted, and the agent, in two years, received thirty-six medals of George III; twenty-eight flags and eighteen gorgets. Of American medals and flags, he replaced only such as might enhance his own influence with his people.

It was some length of time before he could induce the Indians to respect the Sabbath-day — all days being alike to them. It so happened that hundreds of important peace conventions were made and confirmed by the hostile tribes on the Lord's day. But time and patience brought them to reason, and for years they respected the white man's great "medicine day." The sign given for the day of rest was the agency flag floating from the flag-staff, at the agency council house.

For a time it was deemed pardonable to apparently give in to their various superstitious ceremonies—appear to be interested in all their dogmas of religious ceremonies—initiations into the medicine family, dances, songs, etc. The agent in the winter, February, 1846, witnessed the initiation ceremony on Pike's Island, when Little Crow's grandson—Little Crow, and two young women became members of the medicine family. The Grand Master, Little Crow, a venerable chief, officiated. He advanced to

the inclosure, asking the agent how he liked the ceremony. "I would invite you within, but it is against our rules." Of course he was told that it was grand and sublime, for I was a mason and could comprehend much that the uninitiated could not. He said: "at this time we could not make you a brother member of our order, but at another time if you wish it, though no white was ever permitted to unite with us; but if you were to apply it would be hard to refuse you; you are as good as an Indian in our minds."

The agent was at the height of his usefulness at this period, with not only the Sioux—his special charge—but the Chippewas, from Chippewa river to the Pillagers of Otter Tail lake. When chiefs died, and others were to be installed, the parties were uniformly compelled to designate their choice by a simple process. The committee were given a full suit of American uniform, and told that the chief selected in council by the band, on reporting to the agent with that uniform on would at once be recognized, and respected by him. This course of action uniformly gave entire satisfaction—if not, it was no fault of their friend. As to displacing or making chiefs of towns, the agent well knew would prove an unpopular assumption of power and affect his standing with all the tribes. Not one man in five thousand understands the savage heart; to soften this and control it for good, his power must be given him from on high. That power enables an humble instrument to face all dangers, to stop war parties, often from three hundred to eight hundred strong, to bring offenders to justice hundreds of miles off—all by the aid of a moral

influence, which they did not resist. All evil influences brought to bear on the minds of the Indians by the traders and others, were promptly met, and foiled in a manner that they could not comprehend. As the agent had his spies upon their conduct as well as theirs upon his.

Messrs. Samuel and Gideon Pond, two young christian men from Connecticut, and to whom the agent gave his quarters and encouragement, were of inestimable service. So was the Rev Dr. Williamson, Dr. Riggs, Mr. Stevens, Gavin, and others of their respective missions; also the Rev. Alvan Coe, who suffered much in the Chippewa country. We would gladly pass over the name of the Rev. A. Brunson of the Methodist Mission, without comment, but it must in truth be said, he gave both the Indians and the agent trouble with his complaints and demands the most unreasonable. The Government could not be induced to permit the agent to use funds applicable under the treaty of 1837, to schools and missions—in this his hands were tied, after an expenditure for these important objects, of only \$1,500. But few unbiased living men know of the fiery ordeals through which he had to pass, from 1819 to 1840. Volumes of official and other correspondence shows more than the world will, perhaps, ever know; and, finally becoming satisfied that serving to the close of his sixth term would not only endanger his reputation, but his life, from the influx of bad men into the country, and this for his incorruptible devotion to his charge and the true interest of the government, he left with sorrow his doomed people, with the hearty concurrence of his friend, I. N. Nicollet, who said: "You have

done your best fearlessly, devotedly, nobly; you are among thieves and murderers; the Indians are a doomed race; save your reputation."

Thus closed the life of the agent among the several tribes of Minnesota. In 1856 he was in Minnesota, and present at the laying of the corner stone of the St. Paul Historical Society. He found none to know him—not an invitation did he get to "break bread" with any of the poor, made quickly rich, nor could he get the agents of the American Fur Company on their bond indemnifying and forthcoming, drawn by Joseph Rolette and witnessed by Henry H. Sibley, to free him from the cost of a suit brought by Alexis Bailly, their agent, for six barrels of whiskey, seized in 1834—was referred to Hercules Dousman as a put off—no redress, hence the remark of General Z. Taylor becomes applicable: "Take the American Fur Company in the aggregate, and they are the greatest set of scoundrels the world ever knew." After a lapse of years the late agent re-entered the army of the United States in March, 1857, was ordered to San Antonio, Texas, then to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, thence to Pittsburgh, Penn., where he lived some four years. At the opening of the rebellion, with the approbation and approval of his superiors, the President was pleased, on the 27th of August, 1863, to have his name placed on the retired list of the army, with his pay proper. Republics have been pronounced ungrateful, but now, at the full age of seventy, he is an exception.

The upper Mississippi became a place of considerable resort during the spring and summer months, after steam navigation became fairly to be safe and expeditious. No

only our citizens from the States, but from foreign countries, England, France, Italy, Russia, Switzerland, visited the Falls of St. Anthony, Minnehaha and beautiful surrounding country. Among the latter was Capt. Marryatt, of the Royal Navy, a famous author, a rough, self-conceited John Bull. He visited the nearest trading post to see the Indians, announced himself an Englishman to them, through quite willing interpreters; spoke of their great nation; that he was going through their country as their friend; that their great British father had never forgotten them. This interview of the sailor was of course at once made known to the agent, and it was delicately intimated to the captain that his exploration of the country closed at Fort Snelling. And "Snarleyow or the Dog Fiend," or rather, its author, left soon for the lower Mississippi.

C. G. Beltrami, was an Italian passenger with the agent from Pittsburgh to Fort Snelling, in the steamer Virginia, Captain Pemberton, with stores for the army contractor, and this was the first boat that had had the temerity to make the effort. On the route up the Father of waters, the agent and a fireman were on the hurricane deck, one fair day, firing with a rifle at a mark, 25 cents per shot. western frontier fashion, when friend Beltrami arrived at the scene, and soon a scene followed. The Italian, while my opponent the fireman was adjusting the target for my shot in turn, picked up the rifle, struck the breech suddenly on the deck and off it went, the ball cutting through his right whisker. No further damage, but his rage was terrible. He was about to hit my friend the fireman, but my arm interposed. "Man-ny," said Jones, "If you had



hit me with that gun I would have given you the worst beating you ever had in all your born days." This brought the exclamation "Too much king in America! too much king!" The response was, "Yes, sir, we are all kings here, no distinction." The Count's better nature soon prevailed, when he apologized to the fireman for his rashness, who said, "Stranger, it's all well, but if you had of hit me with that gun you would have wished you never had." After this episode we passed to our destination through a brilliant light many miles of the way, for the bordering hills were all on fire.

Shortly after Beltrami domiciled at the fort, Col. Long with his scientific expedition arrived, composed of Mr. Calhoun, Prof. Saye and Mr. Seymour. Mr. B. asked and obtained leave to accompany the expedition to Pembina. I gave him my noble steed "Cadmus" with full equipments and provisions for the journey overland. He left in good spirits but finally quarreled with Colonel Long, separated from his party, and alone started in quest of the sources of the Mississippi. He has in his letters to his "dear Countess" given some facts of his tour, interspersed with ideal egotistical fiction: Yet he was a man of talent and deserves credit for the information imparted to the country as far as it goes. He knew but little of Indian habits or character. His temper could not brook the tardy movements of this people. He could not let patience have its perfect work, and so he and *Cloudy Weather*, a Pillager sub-chief well known to the agent, and under whose safe guard he then was, hundreds of miles off, had a falling out, so that the Cloud had to *strike* the Count with his *pipe stem* to keep him quiet, and

our Italian had sense enough to take the hint. After this Cloudy Weather with a few young men escorted their charge in safety to Fort Snelling.

Beltrami speaks truly of his ardent reception on his return, but he kept dark as to his troubles with the Cloud. But the old man gave the agent all the particulars. "When I met him," said the Cloud, "and he mentioned your name—pointing down the Mississippi—I determined to see him safe to your house." The chief was thanked and rewarded for his fidelity.

The most interesting explorer to the upper Mississippi was I. N. Nicollet, a distinguished French astronomer, a gentleman of general scientific information. He had landed at New Orleans from France and while there fell through the observatory breaking two of his ribs. He was known to Chief Justice Catron, and kindly taken into his family and cared for until able to move without pain, when he, with letters from the Judge, wended his way to St. Louis. Here he was given letters of introduction to the agent at St. Peter and his lady, who invited him to their residence, furnished him with pleasant quarters and a place at their table, Virginia fashion, a call six months, a visit one year.

Soon many questions were put as to the probable accomplishment of the object of his visit to St. Peter's. Could he go to the settlement of Selkirk? Yes. Could he go to the source of the Mississippi? Yes, sir. "Well," said he, with a pleasant smile, "you American beat de dev. Suppose I say can I go to h—ell, you say yes." Here his friend Mrs. T. remarked, "None of us will send you that route if we can prevent it." "Well, then,

madam, change my route to the upper Mississippi." And with the aid of Benj. F. Baker, a teacher at the post, and the agent, he soon had his bark boat, crew and proper stores and left us in good spirits, with his load of scientific instruments for his tedious exploration. He succeeded well and returned with a map of the country, and though drawn with a pen, presented a beautiful picture of lakes, land and rivers. This original map was presented to Mrs. Taliaferro after he had finished it at the agency in the fall and winter of 1836-7.

It was deemed of great importance after this, by the agent, that we should get Mr. Nicollet to explore the country generally to the north and west in Minnesota, and the Missouri. The Indian agents sounded Mr. N. on this idea. He responded quickly: "I have received so much unexpected kindness and hospitality from the people of the United States thus far, that if requested he would not say no. This was enough and Maj. Taliaferro at once addressed the Secretary of War, Mr. Poinsett, on the vast importance of a more perfect knowledge of one of the finest and most productive portions of our vast territories. The proposition was met in due season and Mr. N. with his associate John C. Fremont, entered upon the great exploration and survey, and the result of their labors was a large and correct map of Minnesota, Dakota, &c.

The long and dreary winters spent by Mr. Nicollet in the family of Maj. Taliaferro at the agency were relieved in the long nights of some 16 hours duration, by music, (Mr. N. was an accomplished violinist, Mrs. T. on the piano,) for hours each night. On closing them came his

last supper of wild rice, mush and milk, then to his rest in the storehouse.

When Mrs. T. left for her home in Bedford, Pennsylvania, Mr. Nicollet and Mr. Fremont were entertained by Mr. Sibley at Mendota, his trading post, near the entry of the Minnesota River. Mr. N., when low spirited, did not forget his sister, as he called her, Mrs. Taliaferro, as he found her at Bedford and passed the winter with us; and it was well he did, for he had to be carefully nursed and had the best medical attendance, Mrs. T. dressing his blisters and acting faithfully the good Samaritan.

On the opening of spring we all went on in company to Washington city, there to renew his official labors. The small map presented to Mrs. T. was found indispensable to the completion of his large map, and this was promptly given him, but after his death was never recovered. This map I desired, of all things, to put in the archives of the Historical Society, at St. Paul, as also a copy of the grant, on parchment, of Carver's claim, signed by Snake and Turtle.

We visited Mr. N. at St. Mary's College, Baltimore, where all his geographical specimens and other specimens were stored; also at Dr. Ducatel's, in the same city, where he found in the person of the doctor's lady another sister. Never was any foreign gentleman more esteemed than was Mr. N. by all who ever knew him. He was a man of fine heart, congenial, winning companion. When last in Washington we visited, at his request, the French Minister, M. Pontiva, and on being introduced by Mr. N. was forced to sit in his chair of office. The minister was very profuse in thanks for the many kind

attentions to his esteemed countryman's wants. He was informed that I had done nothing more than was my duty. "And nobly did you perform that duty," said the minister. "Well," said I to the minister, "I can this night say what no other man can say." "What is that?" said several voices, for the room was full by this time. "I have been Secretary of State of the United States and Minister Plenipotentiary from France to the United States." "How is that?" "Easily explained, gentlemen. When I was a green second lieutenant in the army my father gave me a letter to James Monroe, Secretary of State. On delivering this letter I was asked to take a seat, and, ass like, I found myself in my confusion in a large red morocco chair, his state chair; now I pay my respects to the Minister from France and he forces me to take his chair of office." The point was seen, and produced some merriment. Nicollet said, "You are a bad boy; you will pass, however."

It was the earnest hope of Mr. N., often expressed as his health failed him, that he could live to finish his great work, and out of gratitude dedicate it to the people of the United States. Into whose hands his papers fell I know not, though application was made to the office of topographical engineers. Of mementoes of this distinguished man, more than one remain in the family of Major Taliaferro, and whose memory is affectionately cherished and will continue as long as they live.

Of Mr. Featherstonhaugh—a long name—but little can be said as to his explorations of the Minnesota. His report does not give evidence of a master mind, as it was made up mostly from construction and not from actual

observation or geological research. He was obviously not flattered with his reception at Fort Snelling, or in the Indian country. He attempted to pass current for that which he possessed not—superior talent and modesty in his profession. Lieut. Mather, of the army, his associate, was of a different stamp. Solid, clear-headed, scientific, with a modest, unassuming gentlemanly bearing, he should have led the English gentleman into one of the finest fields for topographical research in any portion of the world. The notes of Lieut. Mather on this expedition were filed in the office of the topographical engineer at the seat of government.

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#### APOLOGY.

My age is now—April, 1864—over three score years and ten. So afflicted and nervous, attended with severe pains at times and general debility, that I fear these seventy-five pages, so full of omissions, mistakes and bad chirography and worse orthography—this portion, for it is only a portion—will prove of but little interest to my kind friend and brother in Christ.

LAWRENCE TALIAFERRO,

M. S. K., United States Army.

REV. EDWARD D. NEILL,

Sec'y Historical Society, St. Paul, Minn.

P. S.—Should a large number of autograph letters of distinguished persons bearing on Indian affairs be needed as reference for authority, you can have them.

OMISSIONS NOT BEFORE NOTED ON INDIAN AFFAIRS, MILITARY OFFICERS, INDIAN TRADE AND TRADERS, LAWS OF CONGRESS, FOREIGN POPULATION, HABITS, ETC.

Fresh from the army, the school of honor, and thrown at once into a new sphere of action, a young man of acknowledged military tact and firmness, it became his duty in his important, delicate and dangerous position as agent for Indian affairs at the Falls of St. Anthony, for the northern and western tribes of Indians, to learn their habits, manners and customs practically by a full and free intercourse with all that could be reached. He found the old Indian department without form or councilings, but chaotic, rotten to the core. British influence had kept for years the minds and bodies of the poor Indian, by evil councils, in entire subjection, hence the officials of the United States, especially before and during the war of 1812, found their efforts for good worse than useless to the government. It was left for the year 1819, to stay the tide of "John Bull's" supremacy over the various tribes, not only within the new territories, but also throughout our entire Indian country.

Joseph Rolette, Col. Robert Dickson, Duncan Graham and others active in marshaling the Indians to join with England, had been proscribed the country. Congress had passed laws too tame for the times; arrogance and presumption of old British traders had not been sufficiently checked. Agents had granted at Mackinac, a general license to the American Fur Company, under which sub-licenses were signed in blank by George Boyd, and these were filled

up in the Indian country by traders, for trade at any point selected by them. This completely neutralized the law which designated points at which the trade should be conducted. Hence, the agent at St. Peter's for a time had to respect the action of the agent at Mackinac as to the granting indiscriminately licenses for trade on the Mississippi and River St. Peter's. All this had to be met and corrected however, censured by the fur traders. All the acts of the new agent were carefully considered and faithfully and truly reported to the government. As early as 1820, the officers of Fort Snelling, in an official form, unanimously approved the action of the Indian agent, and their entire confidence in his ability to continue, not only the Indian tribes, but the fur trade and traders. Subsequently, the fact that British influence had received a heavy blow.

In due course of time it was found that the persons proscribed at an early day, might be permitted to join their families in the Indian country. The War Department was consulted. The agent gave a letter to Col. Robert Dickson for the Secretary of War, and a note also to the British minister, Mr. Canning, as to Col. D.'s honor and faithfulness, the minister paid him his pension of £300 sterling, the last he ever received, and the president after an interview with Dickson, directed the Secretary of War, J. C. Calhoun, to leave the case of the old Scotchman entirely to the direction of the agent at St. Peter's, as he alone was responsible for the conduct of his agency. Of course the old offender had full permission to join his family at Lac qui Parle. This act of the agent gave some offence to his venerable superintendent of Indian affairs, General Wm. Clark, but the agent not only assumed this responsibility but he recalled Duncan



Graham, and others, admonishing Mr. Rolette, who seemed astonished at the decision made so speedily after the former decisions of the government. It was fortunate for the official harmony of the country, as the agent by his decided action made hosts of friends speedily. It was at this period that he received an additional name, Chunta-topah, or the Four hearts, French, Scotch, Sioux, American; also Muscoe G. Taliaferro, sub-agent, a younger brother, was named Mah-za-su-tah, or "Strong Iron," and quite popular with Indians generally, being an M. D. Medicine man. After Colonel Leavenworth came Colonel Snelling, Colonel Morgan, Major Fowle, Colonel Case, Colonel Bliss, Captain Gale, Captain Vail, Captain Martin Scott, Colonel Taylor, Major Jouett, Major Plympton; of traders licensed from 1819 to 1840, these were Alexis Bailly, J. B. Faribault, Philander Prescott, Wright Prescott, Jos. Renville, Louis Provincaille, Daniel Lamont, Benjamin F. Baker, Duncan Campbell, Alexander Faribault, Hazen Mooers, Alexander Culbertson, A. Ryzane, Laframboise Rocque, Ezekiel Lockwood, Jean Baptiste Mayrand, H. H. Sibley, Rix Robinson, Duncan Graham, Joseph R. Brown, James Wells, Joseph Laframboise, Joseph Snelling, Francois Labathe, Augustin Grignon, J. P. Tilton and others. Most of these traders, and many of their hands, had the use of Indian women as long as it suited their convenience, and children were born to them. In purchasing women from their parents, a price more or less had to be paid by the clerks of the respective companies. Their women must be dressed, and most of this extravagance charged on a per cent. of their hunters, as lost credits on making their returns to their agents.

The traders licensed at Mackinac by George Boyd and

Henry R. Schoolcraft for the Chippewas on the upper Mississippi lakes and rivers, were Wm. A. Aitkin, the father of twenty-five Indian children, Morrison, Holiday, Chapman, Cotee, Dingley and Warren. It was in this section that traders from below met the most strenuous opposition, decreed all goods as dirty, thin American goods, blankets, only fit to dart straws through; theirs were British goods from England, heavy, strong and cheap, their guns would not burst. This was only one of a hundred devices to prevent Indians from obtaining credit from their competitors. Stealing each other's credit was a common occurrence, deemed no discredit in the nature of their business, only sharp practice overreaching cunning. The British naturalized traders let loose their venom on the presumption of the authorities at Fort Snelling; the vilest abuse being of the innocent agent at St. Peter's. He was called all sorts of names by Aitkin and others, in their councils with the Chippewas, all of which was yearly made known to him by the chiefs, and had men visiting annually at his agency. All this folly made no difference in the line of his duty, but he pursued a fearless and independent course of action both public and private which put to shame his maligners. One great difficulty in the way of an honest adjustment of Indian claims under special treaties from beginning to end, was the treaty making power in the superintendency of General Cass. A precedent was established, the most fatal and dishonest, that of granting Indians and whites, reservations of land under treaty stipulations and recognizing the claims of traders for lost credits. In their dealings with the Indian tribes, no commercial in-

terest on earth was so recognized or guarded. It seems wonderful to honest men that the President, and Congress could not, or would not at once reject such palpable bare faced frauds, but so it was, and so it continued to be the rule under several successive administrations of the government. The efforts of several agents to correct these palpable acts of injustice to both the United States, and the Indians proved powerless. Political advancement of certain ordinary men in the west, proved finally sufficient to become identified with the cupidity of the fur traders and land speculators. This was made their pecuniary interest. Hence the interest of the government, and the Indian tribes had, as it were to go to the wall. Indian agents that could be influenced proved recreant to their several charges. The Indians finally lost confidence in all white men, and well they might, in reference to Indian treaties, and their fulfilment. Under solemn stipulations the heart of the honest man is made sick. However, there lies in all wrong a germ of retribution, that will punish the wrong deed sooner or later.

But for the treaty of 1857, the Sioux bands of the Dakota nation would have been a peaceable, and thriving people, but the wrongs perpetuated by white men under that treaty, mainly caused the murder of many innocent people in 1862. The Crow, and his Indians realized their fate in 1858, at Washington, at the last treaty with the government; they were as children led to the slaughter, no man seemed to care for them, and they became desperate. The young men could no longer be controlled, their lands were sold and the traders got the proceeds through the connivance of men called respect

able citizens by evil doers. Contracts for the removal of Indians was among the number of stupendous frauds practiced on the government. Some commissioners of Indian affairs, either knaves or fools, entered into the wildest contracts, one as a sample of the rest. Commissioner Brown, contracted with some one, for the removal of the Winnebagoes from Iowa reservation to the Crow River, beyond the Falls of St. Anthony, for one hundred and five thousand (105,000) dollars. H. H. Sibley, said he would perform that duty for twenty-five thousand (25,000) dollars. Commissioner Brown resigned his office because of being overreached, or with a well lined pocket. A proposal was also made after the treaty of Sept. 29th, 1837, to remove the Sioux from the east of the Mississippi to the west, for the sum of \$50,000. Fortunately the agent was in Washington, he called at the Indian office, and prevailed on the secretary of war to postpone action in this case until he could return to his agency and make to the department his report. The agent lost no time, and on the 15th of June, 1838, reported that he had called the few Sioux east of the Mississippi, to a council west of "Olive Grove," and for less than \$500, secured their full consent to remain west, and they faithfully adhered to our agreement. The department could not but commend this prompt action of their resident agent, but he gained no friends by thus summarily thwarting designing knaves.

At a later period had the government used the experience and influence of their first old agent, either as a commissioner or council, Minnesota would have had long peace and prosperity; the Dakotas said as much more

than once. Not until after the year 1840, did the government become unfortunate in the selection of their agents for Indian affairs. Previous to this date, men of distinction had sought perseveringly a position in it; ex-ministers, governors, members of congress, and other citizens of high standing. The office of Indian affairs had grown from two rooms to thirty, so rapid was the increase of official intercourse with the various Indian tribes.

It may be as well here at the close of this sketch of the experience of Major Taliaferro during some twenty-two years as agent for Indian affairs in Minnesota, and after he had returned to the army in 1857, March 14th, to record the remarks of Little Crow, and confirmed by Wabasha and Shakopee, *The Six*, in June, 1858, at Washington City. These chiefs and the boys with them, called at the quarters of their old friend and Father, at the corner of 112 E street, with their interpreter, Joseph Campbell, eldest son of Scott Campbell, the faithful interpreter of the United States, at the agency at St. Peters, from 1822 to 1840. The Little Crow said: "My old Father, we have called upon you; we love you; we respect you; we are here none but children; our old chiefs are all gone; we don't know what to do; they want us to divide our lands and live like white people. Since you left us a dark cloud has hung over our nation. We have lost confidence in the promises of our Great Father, and his people; bad men have nearly destroyed us. You took my grandfather with you to this great city in 1824; you took my father also to this city in 1837; he did good for our people; he made a good treaty, because you stood by him; he told me so, and that I must always mind your talk

for it was good and true. 'No sugar in your mouth;' the nation had no better friend. My grandfather repeated the same words to us—in my ears. I loved you from my youth, and my nation will never forget you. If ever we act foolish and do wrong, it is because you are not with us. How is it. You counceled our nation for more than twenty-one years, and since you left we have had five agents as our Fathers; a man took your place, A. I. Bruce, he was a *fool*, and had to leave soon; then came another. and so on. We failed to get a friend in any one like you; they all joined the traders. We know your heart, it feels for your old children." Wabasha followed, confirmatory of the Crow's remarks, and asked, saying: "My Father, I am, as you know, a man of few words. My friend has spoken my mind, the mind of all present here this day. How is it that J. R. Brown, an old trader, is in your place? We are Indians, but we have no confidence in Mr. Brown. I hold your hand for the last time." My poor, helpless friends were advised to make the best treaty possible, and try to live in peace with the whites near them, for their own sakes, and more especially for the peace and security of their wives and helpless children. To go to war with the whites was of no use in redressing supposed or real wrongs; that war would surely destroy their nation forever; on this they now had the solemn word of their old friend—one that had never deceived them, and never would; bear all things, hope all things, and the Great Spirit will never leave you in the hands of bad men long.

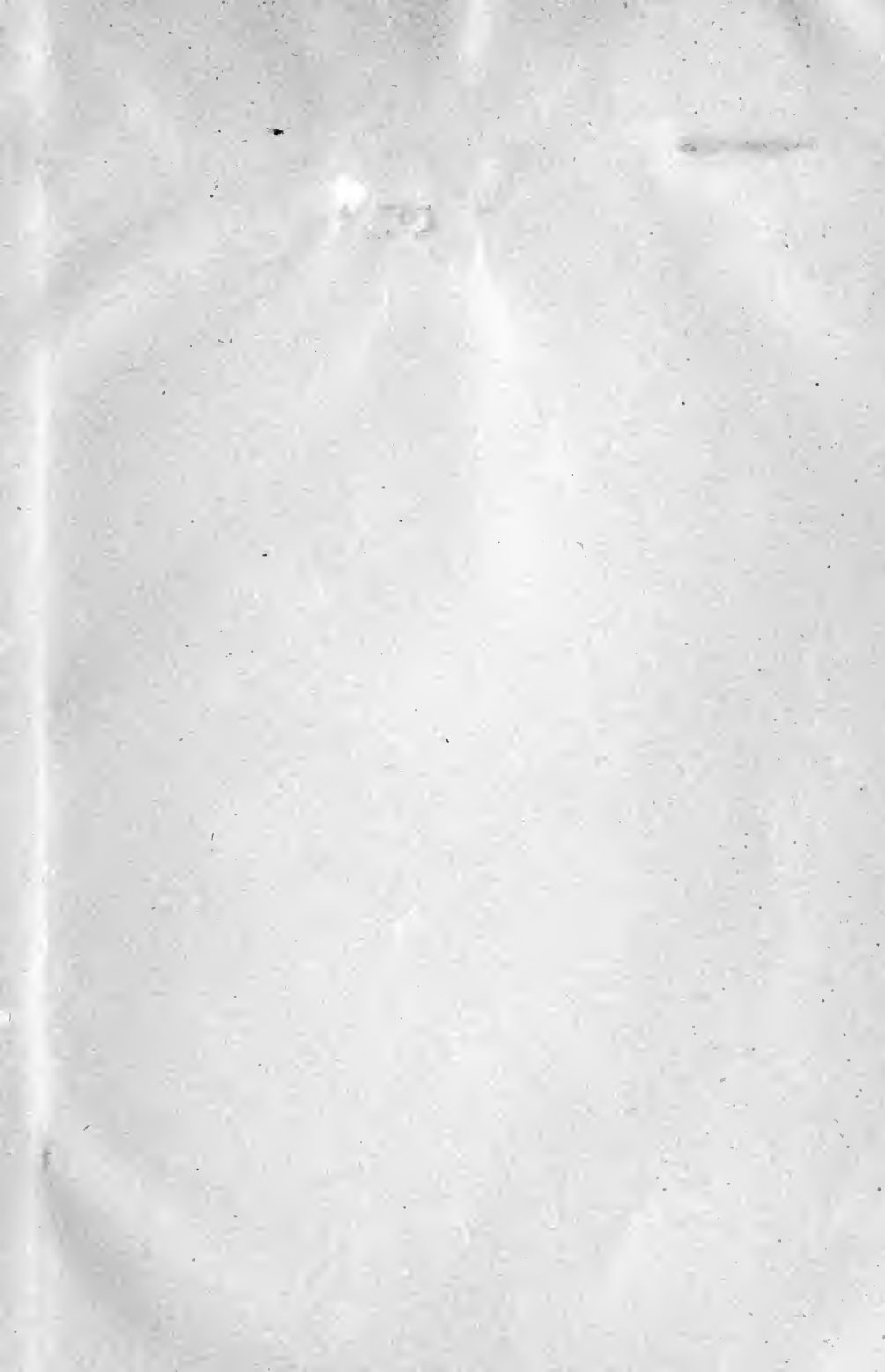
The Crow, in a speech at Redwood, in sparing the lives of one or two families, Mrs. Woodbury and children being

of the number, said: "I did not wish to go to war; but my young men forced me to it; we have begun and must do the best we can. I spare the lives of some of you for the sake of our good old Father, *Mah-sa-busca*: his words are this day in my ears; had he been here this war would not have been." Mrs. Woodbury is our authority for the Crow's remarks, when all supposed that they would be murdered.

We bring this imperfect sketch of one that uniformly tried to do his duty to God and his fellow man, to a close, only adding that neither in war nor peace had he a serious personal difficulty with his mess mates; is a member of the order of F. and A. Masons; a Deacon in the "Old School Presbyterian Church," of Bedford, Pa.; in good standing; and now in his seventy-first year, placed by the President, in August, 1863, on the retired list of the army, for long and faithful service to the Republic.







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