TEEPEE NEIGHBORS

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BY
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"Renown and grace are dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left."

MACBETH

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In admiration, respect, and expectation
this book is dedicated to the
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN INDIANS
the truest expression and the brightest
present hope of the Indian people.

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PREFACE

THE OBJECTION has often been made to these sketches that they are too sad. "People won't read such painful stuff," editors have said to me. Then I slowly look over and consider my pages. Am I justified in changing this, or that? There is only one response possible for me to make. "I'm sorry, but they're all true. I cannot alter them." And I gather up my manuscript with a sigh because I know so intimately and so well from my own personal experience as a near neighbor to the Indians that these glimpses of them are indeed accurate. Every incident, I think, and almost every character, I have drawn from my life and experience of nearly ten years spent with the Indians of Wyoming. Not everything, of course, happened just as it is set down, incidents and events have been combined, the sex and names of characters have been altered, but the whole has its basis in gloomy, even desperate fact; for I have seen and heard and handled, and my memory is stored with much harrowing evidence. For indeed one of the most appalling, even crushing experiences that can come to a person, is to live for a while in close touch with the Indians on a typical reservation—crushing and appalling, of course, vicariously and in direct ratio with one's interest in the Indians, for it

is a noteworthy fact that a great many people live long on reservations who, at the end, are far indeed from being either appalled or crushed.

I will try to elucidate a little this statement. In the first place the Indians are surrounded by white people mainly of two unfortunate attitudes of mind. The first is the man who hates the Indian. He lives generally across the boundary line of the reservation; he toils on his side while the Indian idles on the other; he pays his grudging taxes while the Indian exists free of charge; he sees loads of government freight driven into the agency for free distribution, and he envies. Of course this freight was bought with the Indians' own money, at the discretion of the government, not the Indian; without indeed the consent or even knowledge of the owner of the funds. His mind is full of the old evil stories of the past, told always from the side of the Indian's enemy. And he broods and he draws conclusions and he condemns. There are not many of him, but he talks and harrangues out of all proportion to his relative importance in size.

Then there is the far larger class of neighboring whites whose attitude toward the Indian is one of absolute indifference and uninterest. Familiarity of an entirely external sort has bred in them a kind of comfortable contempt. The Indian is tolerated only on account of his not inconsiderable by-products; free

house-rent, free service, a free automobile, almost free beef in these days of soaring prices; and so on, and principally because he offers a field wherein many indifferent and incompetent individuals may safely work a little and worry not at all, for in that field there exists no danger of competition, and once in it is almost impossible to be ousted.

Thus does the Indian know the white man; thus, and in the light of his own old evil stories of the past. It is not to be wondered at that he regards him as an altogether unadmirable individual. The sketch called *Civilization* is entirely typical of his mental attitude toward his white neighbor.

By far the most harrowing fact of reservation life is the great, omnipresent, overwhelming and constant nearness of death. Indeed, death is no more at home on the river Styx itself than within the boundary lines of the ordinary reservation.

The statistics tell us that the normal death rate among the whites of this country is annually fifteen per thousand. That means that in the little middle-western town in which I now live, we may look for about one hundred and fifty deaths during the year. Of course so many of these are among the very old people that the end comes generally as a normal visitation. Only now and then is the community shocked by the untimeliness of a death.

But among the Indians the death rate is a little over thirty-two per thousand. The difference stated in numbers does not appear as great, but actually it means that with the Indians death confronts one on every hand. *Not one Indian woman, young or old, of the hundreds I know, has all her children living.* I can recall mothers who even have borne nine, ten, twelve, fourteen, and have lost them all. When a baby is born to your Indian neighbor, you look at it with your heart in your eyes and wonder: How long? Nothing struck me more forcibly when I left the reservation—where I was married and where my first three children were born—and went to live in a white community, than the wonderful fact that almost every one of the babies born to my white neighbors lived.

And among the Indians not only the babies die, but equally the young and apparently strong,—the ones in whom should exist the hope of the race.

There are reasons for these conditions, of course. Reduced vitality from constant underfeeding due to extreme poverty is one of them—I wonder if white people generally realize that a certain proportion of their Indian neighbors die of actual starvation every winter? An almost complete lack of adequate or competent medical attendance contributes; so does superstition, resulting in the practice, unhindered by the government, of medicine men and of a certain class of

old women. When I lived in Wyoming a graduate osteopath might not receive a license to practice medicine in the state in his way, and yet on the reservation the medicine man might malpractice unhampered.

The Indian's attitude toward death is interesting. Personally I found it both illuminating and inspiring. He is not civilized; that is, he is not a materialist—for is not your so-called civilized Indian, the one who lives in a house rather than a teepee, and who has given up his paint and nakedness for store-bought clothes?—therefore he does not, as an axiom of conduct, use any and every expedient to keep the breath in his body—and this regardless of the state of decrepitude of that body—choosing life invariably rather than death. Indeed death is not to him the castastrophe it is to the ordinary human product of civilization. He is no fatalist like the Oriental, but rather he regards the coming of his last long sleep simply as he would the approach of night or winter with their added but normal rigors. With his native dignity he meets it fairly in the way. Nor is his mind compelled by fear. He is able to use his judgment in this greatest crisis as he would do in any other.

"If you have your leg amputated your life will be saved; if not, you will die." The doctor speaks; the interpreter, probably one of the sick man's own children, makes the meaning plain. The man addressed

smokes his pipe slowly, considering. At length he draws the stem from his lips and looks up. "I will die," he says. And from the moment of making his decision—a natural, though none the less painful, one to his friends—in his whole attitude of mind he abides calmly by his choice. His family do not try to deter him. The wisdom, also the finality of his decision, are undoubted.

No, the Indian has not the dread, the terror, the total aversion to death of the civilized man; and undoubtedly, as I believe, this is because the material side of life is not the one which he has been taught and encouraged to regard as pre-eminent. When he goes, he is not forever relinquishing so much of value. In the old days so far indeed was he from being a materialist that he failed to lay claim to the few necessities of his existence—what must be possessed belonged to his women-folk; the teepee, the robes, the travois, etc. As for him, save for his horses and his weapons, he stood as naked before God as did the pine tree. And like the pine tree he took with simple openmindedness the sun and the storms as they came. That attitude of spirit gave him another quality which is one of his greatest assets, that of poise. He can remain unruffled and unmoved in the face of the gyrations and panic of the mob. In fact I have never seen a man whose mind was so unaffected by objective influences as the

Indian's. As an individual, therefore, he comes very near to being a free and perfect whole. Undoubtedly in rejecting the Indian we have lost some valuable ingredients from our national melting pot.

But today, alas! the Indian is an individual harried and distressed. Unnatural conditions hedge him about. Artificial laws hamper him. His native values are discredited. His horizon has perhaps been enlarged—but at the cost of being lowered. And always at his elbow stands Death.

Two qualities, or attitudes of mind toward life as he knows it, are characteristics of the Indian. One is his universal and deep love of children. Each new baby comes as an event, hailed, welcomed, received with unclouded joy by family, kinsmen and tribesmen alike. Every baby is everybody's business. I once had a young father announce to me in this manner the birth of his first-born. "One more Arapahoe baby!" he cried, "My wife has a little boy." This intense love of childhood is a touching quality. It would seem as though each new little one came as a sort of symbol, of the rebirth of hope, perhaps, or of the resurrection of life.

The other trait is a certain child-like attitude in the face of the augmenting wretchedness of his existence, of patience, mixed with a degree of perplexity, best illustrated, I think, by a conversation I once held with an old woman who lived across the valley from us.

Six months before this talk took place a young woman had died, leaving a little girl of about three. I, knowing that there were no grandparents on either side to care for the little thing—the government makes no provision for Indian orphans—sent for the father to come and see me so that I might ask him for the child. According to Indian custom the child and its disposal belong exclusively to the mother. "I am willing enough," he replied, "but when my wife was dying she gave the little one to an old woman." (He named her. She is, by the way, the same woman who figures in the sketch called *Mothers.*) "I don't know whether or not this woman really wants her. Wait till they have stopped feeling so bad and then ask and find out."

I followed his advice. In time I sent one of the young men, who spoke English, over to the camp with the message. But the answer she sent back to me was that she did indeed desire to keep the child. Her own were long since dead. This one was all that remained to her. Presently she came across the valley to see me; to make things, if not clearer, at least more personal. She talked in signs and I understood her as best I could.

"I have had nine children," was what she said, "and they are all dead." Indeed her scanty grizzled hair was short from ceremonial severing, and the last joints of both little fingers were lacking, an old-fashioned and

extreme demonstration of grief. Then, with her old eyes on mine—pleasant eyes in a pleasant face, neither bitter, nor hard, nor desperate as with a sort of inward start I could not help remarking, but instead, noticeably sweet and patient—it is a fact of which I suddenly just then became conscious, that never, no matter what the provocation, have I heard an Indian indulge in self-commiseration—with a twist of the wrist she balanced her old mutilated hand back and forth. "Why?" she asked me in the sign language. "Why?"

We hear much these days of the "Indian Question." But on that day, talking to the old woman, there it seemed to me it was, with one twist of the wrist. The patient old eyes looked into mine and asked me the question which civilization has thrust upon the Indian people. Why? Why?

Why, the Indians ask, why must we and our children and our old people die for want of medicine and surgery, and food and nursing? We have millions in the United States treasury with which to pay for these things if only the government would put our own money into our hands. Why, for the same reason must we often languish in the jails, waiting perhaps as much as six months for the next term of our local court, because none of our friends have money to go on our bail? Why may an agent throw any one of us into the agency lockup and keep us there indefinitely

and without any process of law because he so chooses? Why may we not invest what money is allowed us, in teams or farming implements except at the discretion and by the direction of the agent and from the sources he selects? Why may we not cross the line of our reservation without the agent's written permit, given or withheld as he alone sees fit, and limited in time according to his judgment or wish? Why do many crimes of Indians against Indians go unpunished while small misdemeanors against agency employees receive the maximum sentence the law permits? Why are the soldiers who are stationed on the reservation, partly, we understand, to protect us, often the greatest menace to our women and girls? Why does the government place our children in the reservation schools where they must remain between the ages of six and eighteen, and yet take them no further in their studies than the fourth grade, where, we understand, little white children of eight or nine belong? Why, in this connection, do the big non-reservation schools offer no higher education to their students than the eight grammar grades, and then send them out into the world to compete with whites from the universities? And yet we hear of many non-government-educated Indians who are graduates of high schools and colleges.

Why may we not, because we are Indians, have recourse to the Court of Claims, as may all other peoples,

except by the consent of Congress? Why are laws relating to us not codified, so that we may have some way of finding out what is allowed us and what expected of us? Why have not the Indians, who are the first, the only native Americans, the inherent right of citizenship? Why, if not otherwise accorded us, does not the diploma of one of the government's own schools for us lead directly to it? Why must our eligibility for citizenship depend upon the favorable report of an agent, or on the findings of a "Competency Committee?" Why is the Indian Bureau, with its host of employees, still maintained by the government? Why will the people of the United States allow millions a year of their taxes to be appropriated by Congress to carry on the old, worn-out, debilitating, crushing reservation system which outgrew its usefulness at least a generation ago? All Indians now under forty, or forty-five, except on very remote reservations, such as the Navajo—though these people have always been self-supporting through their native industries—have attended the schools and speak English and know enough of civilized customs to give them a fair chance of making a living in the world. Why, then, must this elaborate paternal system be maintained to support our few remaining old people? Why?

Not, of course, that my old neighbor with the pleasant eyes dreamed of all these complexities, but the

burden and weight of them she, with the rest of her people, felt, though not discerning. But many, many of the Indians do dream of them, and their dreams are not roseate.

This Indian question is the Indians' question. It is time indeed that their white neighbors in general were taking it to heart and answering it.

G. C.

Oct. 6, 1916.

TEEPEE NEIGHBORS

THE MAN WITH THE AXE

It was one of those days in Wyoming, sharp and stinging past belief, when you go out with reluctance and only as you must. But the Half-breed, having something particular to say to me and wishing to impart it on the instant, had come forth for that purpose, regardless. His lean pony stood now at our hitching rack, its head low, one gaunt hip thrust up above the level of the other, while its master and I, sitting side by side before the stove, leaned forward, our elbows on our knees, our eyes glaring at each other. For we were arguing passionately. My friend was in a mood sardonic to the point of ugliness. He spared no one, his words were two-edged swords, he flung caution to the dogs.

"—everlastingly crammed down your gullet; everlastingly reminded that you're the under dog; everlastingly shown the way and then told with a curl of the lip that you're incapable of following it..."

He gesticulated with abandon, spoke as though he were declaiming. "There's not a white man living who hasn't that point of view, bar none."

He had to pause just an instant for breath, long enough at any rate to let me cry, shaking my finger in his face: "But look at me! Look at me!"

He looked. It was his lip that curled, though I was kind enough not to call his attention to the fact.

"You!" he cried. "Aren't *you* always sending the

white doctor to them? Aren't *you* always instilling 'white' ideas of hygiene into them? Aren't *you* the one who in winter buys arctics for them—fruit of this vaunted civilization? Isn't it *you* who advocates their going to law? Going to perdition, *I* say!"

"You say other things too. You cry down the medicine men as much as I do. You denounce the old unclean ways. You—"

"Yes, I do. I have. But now I say, if a man's got to die, at least give him the privilege of choosing his own poison. Your white man not only kills the Indian but wants to dictate the very manner of his death."

Then at last he took note of my efforts to stay the torrent of his words.

"I wish you'd be still for just one minute. I think there's some one knocking."

We both turned our eyes toward the door.

The sound being made against it was not exactly that of knocking, rather it seemed that an unfamiliar hand fumbled at the knob.

"Won't you see?" I said.

He crossed the room, seized the handle, flung open the door. The Half-breed was one who never did anything by halves.

A muffled old man stood upon the step.

"Come in," cried the Half-breed.

The old man, stamping and shuffling, made encum-

bered, noisy progress across the room. I offered him my visitor's vacated chair.

He was a very old man and very much wrapped up, his feet and legs were bound about with gunny sacks; his head and shoulders swathed, layer on layer, in strange, inappropriate materials. Finally his head was crowned with the folds of a pin "fascinator." The effect of his lined and wizened face peering from this roseate frame was indescribable.

He lowered himself safely into the proffered chair, peeled off a few of his enshrouding layers, stretched out his old hands toward the blaze, leaned back tentatively but with satisfaction against the softness of the upholstery.

"Do you think he wants anything?"

The Half-breed asked him in Indian.

"He says he is cold and as he was driving by he just thought he would come in."

"Oh! Well, tell him to stay as long as he likes and warm up."

The Half-breed found himself another chair and drew it near to mine. We endeavored, feebly, to continue our discussion, but in the face of those old searching eyes our efforts lacked spontaneity. Then we talked of incidentals; still at the sound of the incomprehensible words, the old man sat staring at us, detatched and somnolent.

At last his silent presence got upon my nerves.

"Surely he's warmed up now."

"Shall I ask him?"

"Of course not! He'll think I want him to go."

"Which you do."

"Well, but I don't mean that he shall know it."

"Don't think about him."

"He must be bored sitting there idle so long."

"I thought you understood Indians."

I shot him a glance. "I shall give him some pictures to look at anyway. It will be much better for his mind than so much vacancy."

The eyes of the Half-breed twinkled suddenly. "By all means," he cried, "civilize him! It's never too late for that, nor they too old. What missionaries the whites are! What apostles of progress! What—"

"Do you mind giving him this book and telling him it's got some nice pictures in it? Some of them are Indian ones."

The old man accepted the book, listened solemnly to the explanation. Then he settled the volume on his uncertain knees, opened it at the back, and awkwardly with a moistened thumb succeeded in lifting and turning its leaves. He bent laboriously to his task.

But he was, I soon discovered, even more disturbing when occupied than he had been idle. The Half-breed seemed to feel this also. After a while he went and

stationed himself behind the Indian's chair, looking over his shoulder at my vaunted pictures.

Then the old man paused and suddenly lifted his book. He slewed himself about, this way and that, to get it or his dim eyes more into the light. He peered closely at the exposed page. The Half-breed as well leaned a little forward.

"What's the picture?" asked I, curiously.

"It's a naked 'savage' on the ground, and a white man standing over him with an axe upraised."

In the depths of his old throat the aged Indian chuckled a little. Then over his shoulder he flung a remark to the Half-breed who listened, twinkled, then laughed.

I looked up expectantly.

"He says," said the Half-breed slowly, "that if an Indian had made that picture he would have had the white man on the ground."

GHOSTS

He was a little boy, a very little boy, but as naughty as he was small. In the autumn his people put him in the Government school, thus at a blow robbing him of his freedom, his tongue—for he might not speak Indian and knew as yet no English—his tastes, his instincts, his pursuits; of everything, in short, except his ingenuity. Above his sealed mouth his little, up-tilted eyes ranged and returned, sought and seemed to find; then his small round face from bearing the stamp of vacancy grew guardedly eager and finally satisfied to the point of being actually smug.

One day he was found bending absorbedly over the agent's back yard fence. On nearer approach he seemed to be fishing with rod and string and baited hook. His game, alas! was the agent's chickens! Lying on the ground at his feet and proving his prowess were several victims, sprawled in ruffled impotency.

At the sound of his discoverer's voices he turned, revealing a face alight with a sportsman's triumph. But the glow faded as a hand reached up and brought him to earth. Subsequently the same hand gave him a taste of this world's possible pains and penalties.

Sunday during the hour of service was a favorite time with him. He could so easily disappear beneath the pews to emerge only when and where he pleased. Hands grabbing stealthily at vanishing feet and coat

tails were seldom able to check his progress. The clergyman finally complained to the superintendent.

Nights in the dormitory were also enlivened by him. When bigger boys came to bed, shuffling, and muttering under their breath, he would wake up—the little boys had retired two hours earlier. Then when the lights were out and the door locked for the night from the outside, he would slip from under the red Government blankets, and, white-clad and noiseless, progress from bed to bed, stealing along, a shadow amongst shadows, till entrenched in a secure corner of cupboard or window or empty bed, safe from the reach of the longest arm, he would begin a series of weird, blood-chilling cries, unearthly, mournful. Clipped listening heads would duck beneath blankets, clutching hands seek the solidity of Government matresses; bedfellow would hug bedfellow; and the hearts of those sons of warriors would pound painfully. Finally—and valiantly—some boy would plunge from his bed, and in disgust kick the little ghost into silence; then the small disturber woud slink away through the shadows, fists dug into his eyes, and creep into the oblivion of his blankets, nestling himself against his bedfellow's warm if hostile back.

The next night he who had kicked was likely to receive, just before the wailing of the ghost began, a sudden, unaccountable and vicious pinch.

Of course, before long, rumors of these nocturnal disturbances reached the ears of those who had in charge the boys' dormitory.

Lickings were tried on the culprit but proved ineffectual. Other measures were resorted to, but without hope; felt beforehand to be inadequate. He was such a little boy and his naughtiness was so out of all proportion to his size.

At last in despair the superintendent put him in the guard house, the real guard house at the Agency, not the school lock-up, but the place for grown-up offenders, for malefactors, ever; the place where—breathlessly that night in the dormitory it was remembered—a visiting Ute medicine man, a madman, had been confined and had—*died* . . . . . And the superintendent had said that the boy was to be left there for the night.

* * * * *

It was dark in the guard house, and it was cold, and supper of water and dry bread is a thing soon forgotten. Also when you have a body that is uncomfortable and a head that is always daring you to perform just one feat more . . .

Sitting hunched in the center of the stone floor, listless, trying to acquire patience, suddenly he realized that his eye had begun to measure. Then up reached his

hand, following it. There was a very little opening in the wall above the door where the adobe bricks looked loose and through which could be seen a patch of vivid sunset sky... The situation seemed impossible—but the room was deep in shadows, its corners full of night, and somewhere without an owl cried weirdly...

The boy felt the spur of necessity, raised to his tiptoes, propped himself with a knee, strained, grasped, strove—and then suddenly, attained. The bricks were easy to pry out. As the sky darkened the opening in his wall widened. Behind him lay a well of shuddering darkness, before him the whole wide world...

With a thud he came down on the ground outside. He picked himself up. He looked about. At any rate there were no ghosts in sight, of medicine men or of others. But—he was outside the guardhouse when he had been carefully deposited within it; and he was in the midst of the Agency. It was nearly dark of course, but sooner or later he must be discovered, even if he went home—a dreadful ordeal to undertake in the night—or if he returned to the school, or if he sought out the agent's house and gave himself up. His quick little mind considered all the possibilities.

Somewhere about his clothes he had stowed away a wad of chewed gum. His hands, thrust into his pockets for warmth, suddenly came upon it. For comfort's sake he pulled it out and put it into his mouth...

* * * * *

Little uncertain fingers pecked rather than knocked at the agent's door. The agent looking up from his book at the sound was surprised to see no shadow against the lighted glass in the upper half of the door.

"Who on earth—?" he cried, and opened his door.

A little shaver, earth-stained, begrimed, hatless, stood at his feet looking upward obliquely from timid eyes. One hand was pressed against the side of his head.

"Why, it's Johnny!" cried the agent, and a kindly hand went out to the boy's shoulder. It was as though the image of the littlest, naughtiest boy of the school, who should have been cowering alone in the ghost-infested guard house, the image which all the evening had been obtruding itself between the agent and his book, had now suddenly become corporeal.

"Come in, boy. Come in here. Why, how did you get out?"

The little fellow obeyed, reluctantly it almost seemed. Inside, he crowded close against the agent's legs. He still held a hand to the side of his head. His little, uptilted eyes showed perilously near to tears.

At last in a thick uncertain whisper he spoke a single, all-elucidating word: "Ghosts!"

"You were afraid. I told the superintendent he was going too far in shutting you up in there."

The little head nodded.

"Why do you hold your head that way? Are you hurt?"

"Yes. Me hurt."

"Let me see."

The boy removed his hand and bent his head. It might have been noticed that he turned the injured side a little from the light.

"You've hurt your head. Right at the edge of your hair there's a great lump. Let me feel." The exploring fingers reached forth gently.

But the boy winced, dodging suddenly.

"No, no! Hurt!"

"Let me put something on it."

"No, no!"

"Just a little hot water."

The boy began to cry.

"There! There! Don't do that, I won't bother you. I won't touch it."

"Sure?"

"Of course. Quite sure."

The tears ceased tentatively, but the little up-tilted eyes were evidently on their guard.

The agent was stirred. Although it was evening he ordered his team pre-emptorily. While they waited for the buggy to be brought the boy sat on a chair, one hand to the side of his head, the other turning with carefully suppressed avidity the pages of

the comic supplement of the last Sunday paper. At length he lifted his eyes wistfully. "Hungry," he whispered.

"Why, of course. Old fool bachelor that I am!"

The man disappeared into his kitchen to return with plunder.

During the two mile drive to the school the boy munched contentedly.

"It was no place to have put a child."

"I suppose not," assented the superintendent ruefully. "It'll not happen again."

Together they carried the boy off to bed. Nothing would induce him to let them touch his head.

"Morning," he would cry. "Morrow. No tonight." Then he would burst into a paroxysm of grief.

"Poor little cuss! Frightened half sick."

In the morning the superintendent sent for him. A big boy brought him to the office. But he appeared a very wilted little fellow in the big one's hands. The sparkle was all gone from his eyes.

"And his head?" asked the superintendent.

As the big boy wheeled him around, and not too gently, it seemed as though his very knees bent beneath him. The big one turned to the man's view the space behind the little one's ear. It was exceedingly clean,

bore indeed the marks of recent and vigorous scrubbing; there was also a queer jagged cut up into his hair. That was all.

The big boy spoke. "Tell him," he commanded, sternly.

But the little one was past speech, sobbing, quite dissolved in tears.

"Then me, I tell him. Mr. Knight, he ain't got no bump. That thing behind his ear was gum, chewin' gum. He—"

"What?" cried the superintendent.

"He was scared after he got out that guard house so he took his gum and he stuck it—"

But the superintendent laid a helpless head down on his table.

The big boy stopped, astonished.

"What," he began gleefully, "what you goin' do to him *now?"*

There was a moment's silence, then the superintendent disclosed one suffused eye.

"Nothing," he said.

THE GIFT

THE OLD couple came in without knocking. It was nearly dinner time, the morning was very frosty. Though not tied, their lank, small horses stood by the hitching rack, their heads drooped in resignation. The man was old, but wide and powerful of frame, his wife was a large stately woman; she walked a little heavily. As I watched her fold her shawl about her ample bosom, the handsome marked lines of her face visible in profile, I remembered that it was said about the camps that once, in her youth, a man had been shot for her sake. They shook hands as with special meaning. They gave us searching looks, veiled smiles. Their faces were kindly; his decidedly aged.

Sitting uncomfortably on the edge of a chair the old man talked to us in the Indian sign language, using his gnarled, dark hands.

It seemed that he had brought a gift. We stood in front of him grasping at his meaning. Christmas was just past, and in the dance hall there had been the usual tree, laden with appropriate and plentiful gifts sent from the East by compassionate friends. A few years ago the tribe had had no trees, no gifts. It was wonderful, he thought, that these friends who now supplied them had never seen him nor his people. He understood that they lived very, very far away, and yet—they gave, and in the dark, as it seemed to him.

He thought they might as well have stood at the headwaters of some stream and flung in their possessions as to give thus strangely to unknown aliens. And see with what rejoicing their presents were received. He and his wife, for instance, were an old couple and poor; he was often sick, himself. Yes, it was his side that troubled him—and almost constantly, just here, a growth, he didn't understand it. But one day, to better it, he had sat down on the floor of his teepee, had stripped himself to the waist and taking out his knife he had—removed the excrescence. But the place had not healed well, it always troubled him more or less.

The old handsome wife, watching the talk, sighed a little, her eyes solicitously upon her man.

Well, to them these gifts had come as from above. He was grateful. He would never see the donors, he was an old man, he did not know even where they lived, but—he wanted to make them a present. Not knowing how to go about doing so he had brought it to us. It was not, he explained, an ordinary gift such as Indians love to make to each other, a compliment which must be returned by bestowing an equal gift. No, this was a free present. He made the sign which signifies "Nothing." "No return." We nodded, understanding.

Then he went down into his clothes, and from some

recess produced a little bundle wrapped in buckskin. Unfolding it he displayed a very ancient flint and steel. He looked at them long. His wife looked at them. They had been his companions no doubt in the dim, romantic days of his youth, the nomadic days of freedom and desire. Now of course he could get matches, much quicker and handier,—two boxes for a nickel—at the trader's. He did not depend on these as he once had done, but they were old friends . . . He cradled them tenderly in his hand.

Then smiling, and rising, he held them out to us. "For our friends," he said. And turning from us, his wife at his heels, he passed out into the frosty day. In the strong light of out-doors I noticed suddenly that both their faces showed grey and pinched.

I recollected at that moment that I was cooking our dinner and that I should not have let them go. The old man paused to break off a willow switch with which to urge on his dejected horses. The wife had climbed upon the wheel on her way up to the high seat of their lumber wagon.

Then I ran after them. "Come back," I called. "It's almost time for dinner. Don't go. Come back."

They came. There was no veiling of their smiles now. They were undisguisedly glad. They stood about the stove rubbing their old hands. They beamed upon me.

I spread a red table cloth on the floor for them and set upon it their dishes. They ate with a sort of weary hunger, as though their appetite was difficult to appease.

At last they got up. He wiped his hands on an old bandanna, she on some rag of her clothes. They shook us both by the hand. Then he spoke again. "We thank your wife because she gave us something to eat. We were very hungry. We have had nothing but coffee for nearly two days." He laughed a little, not wishing to seem to make too much of the statement. "Now we feel good. We are full. We have nothing to eat in our house, nothing." He dusted his fingers together, making that sign which means: "All gone." "We were just going up to the store to see if they would trust us once more. After a while when the snow goes out of the mountains I can haul wood and sell it at the Post, but now there is no way of earning money. The traders do not like to trust us. We are all asking for credit, but what can we do?" The sentence ended with that balancing gesture of the hand which denotes a question.

Tenderly I took up from the table the little buckskin package. "You might have raised some money on this."

He smiled at me, they both smiled. "This is for our friends," he said.

SHADOWS

THE GROUND was pale and barren with snow. In a bend of the river, on a stretch of low meadow land, where skeleton willows rustled and shivered, was situated the winter camp of the Indians. On the edge of the hill which formed the upper tier of the shallow amphitheatre surrounding the camp, stood a lone tent. It was perhaps an eighth of a mile distant from the main body of the camp. In it lived an old man and his blind wife.

Each day the never-failing Wyoming sun made strange sport of the grey-white tents. In the morning when it stood in the east, they seemed to bow in unison over their trailing shadows which reached toward the west; in the afternoon the figure would be reversed. Over their heads, continuously, these strange and stately dancers waved shadow scarfs, flirted and agitated them, signalled and beckoned with them. These were made of the smoke which issued from the projecting stove-pipes; evanescent, etherial. Day after day throughout the long winter, whatever the events, whatever the privation, whatever the painful patience within the tents, outside this queer posturing went on.

The tent which stood aloof also participated in the figure dance, but with less abandon, with less throwing of scarf, for the reason, indeed, that there came from

its stove-pipe a smaller quantity of smoke. Perhaps this was because the old wife was blind. It had been very hard for her man when, near the time of the birth of her last child—like his brothers before him, now long since dead—she had lost her sight. It had come suddenly, an unlooked-for visitation, the falling of an unattended shadow, which had engulfed even as it descended. Now the old man must needs do more than half her work. He must fetch the water, split the wood, which he was obliged first, of course, to drive up into the hills to obtain. He must do most of the cooking, and besides he must be continually watchful of her, for she accepted her setting aside rebelliously, and constantly would be found overtaxing her powers.

Twice in trying to cook for him she had burned herself badly. Several times she had lost herself outside the tent and had been brought back by him, towed at the end of a horizontally-held stick, laughing, but ashamed.

In the morning from off their bed she could fold up the blankets and in the evening spread them out again. She could cook a little, not forgetting her scars, and she could sew. When the women came into her tent to visit her she would sit by them sewing and smiling.

"Why do you work when we are here to see you?" they would say, and she, still smiling and holding

together with the tips of her sensitive fingers the edges of the seam, would answer:

"Because you are here to thread my needle for me."

But necessarily there were many hours when she must needs sit idle, her strong hands in her lap, her keen face listening. Sometimes when her man was long absent and the fire had sunk low, though she had replenished it with all the wood he had left inside for her, she would get up, a look of adventure on her face, and finding the tentflap, she would thrust it aside and slip out into the sunlight. With her eager hands she would feel about for more wood, for chips, anything. Once even, finding no wood ready, she attempted to split some with the axe. But though she slashed valiantly the axehead always fell into the snow. She could never strike the wood with it.

Coming home just then he had laughed at her and had led her back inside the tent. Even as he did so he felt that her hands were icy and that underneath her heavy blanket she shivered and shook. He meant to be very solicitous of her, but he was an old man, he liked his pipe and his game of cards, he liked the old men's talk of other days—and he sometimes forgot.

As for her, whether he remembered or forgot, her face was always animated with a sort of fiery patience which made it seem, old and sightless as it undoubtedly was, somehow young; as though in some recess of her

soul she were always crying out to Life: "You can beat me down, you can filch from me everything I have, but on me, on my true self, the essence of my being, you dare not lay so much as a finger."

But in the end, when she came to her last grim grapple with Death, he won, or seemed to win.

On a certain day those in the main camp noticed the old man out catching and bringing in his horses, then hitching them to his wagon, and finally, through the shining of the morning sun, while all in one direction the tents curtsied to their shadows, driving, rattling and clattering, away.

There were some who said that she was on the seat beside him, again there were others who maintained that he was alone. Subsequently appearances seemed to show that those latter ones were right, for throughout the greater part of the day a thin, wave ing veil of smoke, accompanied by its agitated shadow, showed above and about the solitary lodge. The tent door opened away from the main camp, therefore even if she were there and had come out through it to grope about in the snow for more fuel she would have been hidden from their sight. Of course she might easily have felt her way around the corner of the tent and, carefully avoiding the guy ropes, have followed along its side to the farther end and there, silhouetted against the snow, she might have called to them; an eighth of a

mile is no great distance to see or to hear...they thought of all this afterwards. But this old man and his blind wife were a couple who lived mainly to themselves: no doubt this was her doing, for in spite of all that she had lost she still clung fast to her pride, or however much of it her long dependence had spared to her. They were not people who very greatly encouraged visitors; she could not minister to them when they did come, could not cook for them even. And: "Better hide what may not be displayed," was, I suppose, the thought in the back of her head. Also they were not ones to ask favors.

The day wore to its close. The sun set. The shadow dance ended.

The next morning those who said that she had gone with her husband pointed triumphantly to the lifeless tent.

"You see, there is no smoke."

"Can it be that he was going to ask some one of us to see her, but forgot to do so?" ventured a single voice. "Or had he meant to send some one from another camp to her? I almost think I shall go over there and see..."

"No, no. She does not like us to intrude."

"He did not ask me to go over."

"Nor me."

"Nor me."

"Well, we can wait till tomorrow."

It was growing cold, bitterly cold.

"If she were there alone without fire or food she would certainly call to us."

"Of course, of course."

The women, their shawls flapping, swung their axes stoutly. The men banked up the tents with snow. Children shivered about the stoves. One young woman who had her first baby that night came near freezing to death, and there was a great to-do to keep the little one alive after it was finally born into so inhospitable a world.

On the second morning it was still lifeless about the solitary camp.

By afternoon the weather grew a little milder. Then the wind sprang up and blew tempestuously, shaking the frail tents. The children ventured out to play. Their eyes, like the eyes of their elders, were forever turning toward the lone lodge and slipping hastily away again. The bravest of them strayed over toward it, fled back, looked, and strayed yet again. About it there were but few tracks. The children edged near. No sound issued from within, no boiling of kettle, no crackling of fire, no stirring, no voice, nor were there any familiar odors of cooking or of wood smoke. One very bold boy called her name gently, "Walks First! Walks First!"

A great gust of wind came, and wrenched and shook the flimsy tent, ridge pole and all. Then from within there issued a long, haunting, creaking noise, unearthly, disquieting. Again and again it sounded, diminishing as the violence of the gusts subsided. It was for all the world the sound that a new rope would make drawn taut over a ridgepole, straining and groaning as a dead weight bore it down.

Spell-bound the children listened, then, with their story, they fled back to the camp. They retraced their steps, followed by the women and by one old man. The people stood outside the tent, they walked about; there were plenty of tracks in the snow now. One or two of the women even called her name, gently, as had done the boy. But the only answer came when the wind blew and shook the tent, ridge-pole and all; and that weird, uneasy grinding, slow and prolonged, as though a dead weight were being heavily stirred.

The old man harangued the women: "Open the tent flap," he said. "Don't be afraid. Put your hands inside and untie the door strings. Go in."

But the women folded their shawls about them and bent a little from the wind. "We are afraid," they faltered.

And still the old man exhorted. And the wind

blew, and that heavy thing, which seemed to be suspended within the tent, creaked and protested.

The sun dropped low, shining full on the back of the tent. A little corner of the flap blew up, and then a strange blurred shadow lay outlined beneath the opening, and cast itself, writhing, upon the snow at their feet...

You could hear the hissing of the women's breath as they drew it in sharply. The old man was struck silent. At last he turned to a boy, that one who had been the boldest. His old voice shook.

"Get a horse," he said. "Ride as fast as you can. Tell her husband he must come back."

CIVILIZATION

It was I who brought the story home. I had been up at the Agency for mail and supplies and there I had heard it. On my return I found at the house a young Indian of the tribe. I hastened to divest myself of my wraps and to go and prepare some supper for all of us. When it was ready we sat down at the table. Then, with chuckles of unrighteous mirth, I told it.

At a "condemned sale" at the Post, a Mexican half-breed had, it seemed, bought a horse, but one which, sleek with Government care and full of Government oats, appeared mendaciously well. The man was said to have given less than ten dollars for it. Then for a few days he had ridden it, saddled sumptuously, around the Agency, till the covetous eyes of all the loafers about the store and offices knew it well. Noticing one old Indian of known possessions whose eyes seemed to rest with special intensity of longing upon his horse, the Mexican had approached him, making a tentative offer of trade. The result was that he had taken his old well-appearing horse to the man's ranch—he first frugally removed his saddle and bridle —and had walked back without it, driving before him a young cow and her calf, the worth of which must have been five times or more that of the horse for which he had exchanged them.

My story done, I laughed with unhallowed glee, and my husband, equally depraved, laughed also. Of course it was a contemptible thing to have done, but it was cute to have so cleverly overreached the dull old man. One considered the slow witted Mexican, the slower witted Indian; yes, it was funny...

I raised my eyes, and met the stormy ones of my guest. He was frowning heavily. His gaze was on his food, on the room, but not on us.

A troubled silence fell. Having seen the lack of sympathy in his face, we both became quiet.

Then he spoke. "That was a regular white man's trick," he said.

"BY ANY OTHER NAME"

THE SICK child lay in the center of the room, propped high with pillows. She was turned so that she faced the window, and the west; the oblique rays of the setting sun shone directly into her eyes, already glazing. Her bed which was raised but little from the ground, was composed of quilts, smeared, discolored, stale. Her long narrow pillows were stuffed to solidity, likely enough with the down of cat-tails, and covered with calico of colors sombre or vivid. They lifted her so high that she was almost in a sitting posture. Her hands, bent like bird's claws, sprawled upon the bed. Her matted hair was still more or less restrained in tight, dusty braids, doubtless plaited before her illness. Because she had been sick but three days, her arms and face—all that was visible of her above the covers—were not so very much wasted; but her eyes were heavy and dull, her lips parted to receive the gasping breath, her nostrils strangely chiselled and distended.

The white doctor pottered about her, breathing audibly. He was an oldish man, and stout. In the absence of the Agency physician he had been called in from the nearby town. This was almost his first experience of huddled, crowded, unsanitary cabins, of ground made beds, of dying children but lately relinquished from the hands of the medicine men.

The Government field-matron, a big, kindly, untidy woman, stood by the little window, arranging and rearranging the row of bottles given to her care by the doctor. The space of the window-sill being the only available shelf in sight, she had placed her vials there.

From time to time the doctor rose, bent down again; breathed, muttered.

By the stove the child's mother, a gaunt unhappy looking woman, imperturbably turned over the fried bread in the boiling grease. She wore the look of one who had already relinquished hope; who, because her hold on life still trammelled her, went ever stolidly on with her petty tasks; as would go a prisoner, or one caught in the ceaseless iteration of a tread-mill. She looked at you—when indeed she troubled to notice you at all—with the eyes of a fatalist.

About the room, in corners, on low beds, stood or sat people, Indians, many of them; old, young; even among them the superseded medicine woman. All were silent, all patient, all watchful, all resigned.

The doctor puffed and grunted as he moved and bent, his heavy slow breathing almost covering the sound of the child's, which was light and shallow and fearfully rapid.

The rays of the sinking sun penetrated the dingy panes of the window and shimmered in the fading eyes.

"Can't you hang something across that window?"

said the doctor. "Or, better, give me a hand here and we'll turn this whole contraption around."

The doctor seized one end of the bed, the field-matron the other. An old man strode forward, empty pipe held in one skinny hand—on his arrival the doctor had at once caused the smoking in the house to cease. He laid a detaining hand upon the pillows of the child's bed; with the other, the one that held the pipe, he motioned toward the sun. He spoke; but few only of his words were intelligible to the doctor. There existed an abyss of black misunderstanding between this physician and his patient's people, and few common words had they with which to span it.

It was clear that the old man objected to the moving of the bed.

The doctor looked at the field-matron, the field-matron at the doctor. Then the doctor turning to the old man pointed to the sun, then to the child, then laid a hand upon his eyes.

In answer the old man made a sharp gesture of negation. Apparently there was some connection other than material between the dying sun and the dying child; some potency, some desirable "medicine."

The cabin was full of the smell of ground-dwelling humanity, of the ground itself in the shape of the earthen floor, of the boiling grease and the frying bread.

The doctor, breathing stertorously, bent low above

the child. He took into his grasp one of her limp arms; his fingers touching, groping at the wrist.

"The whiskey, Miss Haines."

The field-matron seized from her shelf a spoon and a little bottle labelled "Whiskey," and extended them to the kneeling man.

But again the old man with the empty pipe strode forward. He looked upon the bottle disapprovingly; again his old hands fashioned a fierce negative gesture.

"What the devil—?" began the doctor.

The old man signalled to a young fellow standing back against the door. In the Indian tongue he spoke to him and with great brevity. Then the young man interpreted, enunciating with bashful faintness.

"My father he say that stuff no good. On that bottle that say 'Whiskey.' Whiskey that somethin' makes men crazy. That no good for that little girl. She sick. You a doctor you ought to know that, he say."

The doctor, still kneeling, listened, his eyes imperturbable; only his mouth twitched just a little.

"He don't want me to give her this whiskey even if I think she needs it?"

The old man, watching, waved his hand contemptuously toward the stove whereon dinner was cooking. He spoke.

"You might just as well give her coffee," the young

man interpreted. "That what he say. Medicine that what she want. Give her medicine."

"I see." With a grunt the doctor heaved himself to his feet. "I'll go outside and fix up some medicine. I'll—I'll throw this whiskey away."

The old man slipped back to his place, muttering gutturally.

The doctor, making a way for himself through the group of people about the door, left the room.

In a few moments he returned carrying conspicuously in his hand a larger bottle containing a small amount of amber-colored fluid. On its label was pencilled in large plain letters: Medicine.

The doctor knelt again. Carefully, with the tip of a spoon inserted between the parted lips, he gave the child of the "medicine."

His eyes, very solemn, were lifted to the face of the field-matron, bending above him and above the child. Her answering eyes were equally solemn.

He spoke, but softly in that hushed room. "It isn't as though you could change a good thing by merely changing its environment," he said. "A lesson in philosophy, Miss Haines; a valuable lesson in philosophy. Er—are you keeping something hot at the feet?"

THE BABY was sick and that was the reason I had not paid much attention to Damon the first time he came that afternoon. Saturdays they let out the boys from the Government Indian boarding school at one o'clock, and he had come down on foot to borrow my pony. He and I had taken to sharing the pony since the baby had interfered with my horse-back days. He came in with a smile on his nice boy's face, and asked where my saddle was. Then I forgot all about him in the baby's troubles. I suppose it must have been near four o'clock when he got back again. It was May, but chilly yet; at any rate, on the baby's account, I was keeping a fire in the living-room stove. I remember that Damon entered without knocking—that's the Indian way—and slumped down into a chair behind the stove. The baby's attack seemed to be over; he was nearly asleep. I sat on the sofa jiggling his carriage. I was still wipping an occasional tear from my own eyes, and the baby, poor lamb, every now and again shook all over with sobs.

For a long time the boy sat quiet, but after a while I heard little broken sounds coming from behind the stove, and snuffles. I made haste to emerge from the gloom into which the afternoon had cast me.

"Why, Damon. Why boy! What on earth is the matter?"

Had I been Indian I should never have been so rude as to ask a direct question, but—well, it took him a long time to answer it. He, at least, was Indian enough. At last he got it out.

"Elk wouldn't sign for me."

"You mean to say you went way down to Goes-in-Lodge's, where Elk is staying, and that he wouldn't sign your Carlisle paper, though he promised you to do it today?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Damon, and snuffled again.

"But I don't understand at all why he wouldn't. He has always seemed willing enough for Mr. Knight, when he goes East next week, to take you with the other children. Why, boy, what on earth can you do now? Elk's surely the one who ought to sign for you. Why do you think he went back on you?"

There was a long pause. At last Damon managed: "John Pine, he died—" Then he stuck again.

Conversation between the naturally reticent Indian and the as naturally loquacious white man is very likely to impress one as does an overheard telephone talk; one man apparently doing all the work.

"Oh, John Pine's dead," said I. "Well, I knew he was going to die before long, of course. He came back about Christmas time, wasn't it, from that Kansas school, and with consumption? And now he's dead. So your uncle—"

"Yes, ma'am. Elk, he got scared, and he said what did I want to go off so far for, and couldn't I learn enough at this here school."

"And then what did you say?" I didn't want him to run down till I had got it all out of him.

"I just kept sayin': I want to go to Carlisle, I want to go to Carlisle."

"Well, there's Hubert. He's a kind of an uncle to you, too. He's been off at school. Maybe he could sign for you. Did you try him?"

"He was to Goes-in Lodge's too. But he just talked mean to me. He said, why did I want to go and try to learn to be a white man? He said I'd forget how to talk Indian, and I'd come back and marry one of them half-breed girls. And 'look at the ones that's come back,' he said, 'can they earn any more money than us fellows here? They ain't white and they ain't Indian. You better stay here,' he said, 'and this summer I'll take you out on my ranch with me, and maybe in the fall me and you'll have a little huntin' trip back of Black Mountain.' "

"And what did you say to that, boy?"

"Just the same thing. I kept sayin': 'I want to go to Carlisle. I want to go to Carlisle. There ain't never been one of us Northern Arapahoes graduate from Carlisle, and I want to be the first one,' I said."

"Well, Damon, there's your mother. Do you think anyway she could be made to do it?"

"No, ma'am," said Damon, and again he snuffled.

"She's old," said I, "and, being blind that way, it surely would be hard to make her understand. She'd just hate to have you go so far. To her it would be like sending you off to the moon. And she couldn't realize where the advantage to you would be. Let me see, you must have other relatives, plenty of them, who could sign that paper."

"No, ma'am," said Damon again. "Can't nobody sign for me but just Elk or my mother. That's what the agent told Mr. Knight."

"But last year anybody could sign for the ones who went. You know what a time your own cousin, Tabitha, had. Elk wouldn't give his consent to her going to Carlisle, and she got just a young man, a cousin, to sign for her, and she went anyhow."

"Yes, ma'am." said Damon dolefully.

He was young, but when you live on an Indian reservation you get your eyes open early to a good deal of pretty obvious irony. Last year, to further the interests of an employee who wished to travel East in charge of the children, and so at the Government's expense, the regulation requiring actual parents or guardians to sign their consent for the child to go away from the reservation to school had been waived. This

year, however, when a lesser govermental light was desirous of taking the children East, the observance of the ruling on the question was being more strictly adhered to.

Poor boy of fourteen! Vaguely, in his groping child's heart, he craved a little more education than the reservation school could offer, and he was fired also with a dim desire to see something of the outside world in this his one and only chance, living as he did in so remote a part of the country. Poor youngster! To be forced thus to fight for the chance a good government had meant to place within his easy reach, —on the one hand the indifference of self-seeking whites, and on the other the ignorance and stubbornness of his own purblind people. I wondered how, at fourteen, my boy, there in the cradle, would face a similar situation.

We seemed to be in a *cul-de-sac,* which is the French for box-canon, a horrid place in which to find yourself when all your desire is to be at the other side of the end wall of it.

Well, there I was in my box-canon, off the trail, no suggestions to offer. I told Damon to keep my pony all night and to come back tomorrow; and in the meantime to tell Mr. Knight, the lesser light, and the boy's good friend, all his difficulties. Perhaps, among

us all, we might be able to find some way out of the dilemma.

In the morning I saw a buggy drive through the ranch gate. The sun was shining, the baby smiling again. I remember I was just doing the dishes.

"Oh! leave your dishes and come along. We're going over to Wind River, to get Damon's mother to sign this paper if we can. This boy's just got to go to Carlisle, and we'll leave no stone unturned to get him there."

So I bundled up the baby and put on my linen duster and threw my heavy coat under the back seat. That's the way it is in Wyoming; the dust is always with us, and the cold generally. So we go prepared for anything.

The river was high, but we got through it all right. Government horses are big and strong. We turned north across "Dobe Flat," then a little eastward up the long divide between the two rivers. We always call it five miles to the summit; it's all of that, a long, heavy, gradual grade. At the top Mr. Knight pulled up the team to let them breathe, and we all turned back to look at the country behind us, the big sunny valley sloping up to the foothills and lined with little brush-bordered creeks, each one tracing its tortuous way back to its own cleft canon. Beyond we saw the mountains,

delicate, graceful, snow-sprinkled, and outlining the whole west of the world.

We stood there at the summit, the hill falling away from us both ways. You could hear the wind singing away off; you always can on the plains, no matter how still it is. There were a few cactus plants growing near us, and they were in bloom. The sage smelled good, that clean, primeval smell that takes you back to the beginning of all camping, of all life. Everything was sparkling in the sun, and, most of all, those mountains, so many of them, in such a wide, powerful line.

We started at a good clip down the other slope. The road wound through red, sage-covered, rolling country; down there, miles ahead of us, we could see the big river, marked by a wide band of cottonwoods.

The country through which we were passing, though looking most accessible, was in reality so completely the reverse that you couldn't help admiring the clever way the road nosed its passage between the little hills, down gulches and draws, along hogbacks, finding out and following the only possible ways.

At last we were nearly down. We passed through a narrow draw, all pinkish-red sand, very hard and ancient looking. There the sage grew as high as your eyes as you sit a horse. It looked gnarled, misformed, and old, as though it had been the very first thing of its kingdom created of God. As we came down that

sand-draw I turned my head to the left and hugged the baby close. You can't see it from the road, but just a little way back from it there's a box-canon, red and sandy and sage-covered, where the people over here on the river bury their dead. I have heard them up there "crying" at twilight, the age-old lament of grief.

At last we got to the river. Elk's camp stood right at the edge of the tall timber, within sound of the roar, if not quite within sight of the water. There stood three cabins, set at irregular angles, the most primitive form of human-built house; rough, dusty logs, the ends not so much as sawed off even, chinked with red mud, dirt roofs and floors, crooked door and window frames of hewn logs. There also stood at one side a tall teepee, graceful and free, compared to its squat house neighbors.

By the side of one of the houses a post was driven into the ground, and sitting in the dirt, facing it, was a woman. Her hands held the two ends of a wet cowhide, scraped of its hair, and which, to soften, she kept pulling back and forth around the stake. At the sound of the buggy she turned her face toward us, listening expectantly. We tied the team to the fence and all went over to her. Mr. Knight shook hands with her.

"How! Blind Woman."

I did likewise. "How! How! Blind Woman."

It never seemed to me either polite or considerate to call her that. But that was her name. We all used it.

Damon hung back.

"You'll have to interpret for us," said Mr. Knight to him. "There's no one else."

The boy came forward bashfully and stood in the sunshine by his blind mother. She let the hide slip from her hands. The ends lay touching her feet, within reach. She lifted her face to us, her blind face, which wore, as do the faces of so many of the Indians, a look of child-like sweetness and agelong patience.

Mr. Knight explained. Damon interpreted. I sat on somebody's saddle, which lay on the ground, holding my baby.

"Six days to get there?"

"Yes."

"And for five years?"

"Yes."

The light faded from the blind face.

"My husband is dead," said the woman. "I have but two sons. The other one, as you know, is sick. Five years!"

Damon interpreted on. Then a slow tear stole down the old woman's face, and another. She wiped them away with the palms of her hands. Tears ran down the boy's face also. A sudden sob shook him. They spoke quietly to each other; scantily.

At last Damon said: "She says to give her the paper, she will make her mark."

Mr. Knight handed it to her. He guided her hand. He and I witnessed the crude signature. Then we went down to the river bank to eat our lunch, leaving the mother and son together. I felt somehow as though I could not let the baby out of my arms.

On our way home we were all inclined to be quiet. The hills were glorious in the afternoon light, long shadows pointed back from the mountains—it was all so world-wide, so everlasting looking. It made you feel the way reading some parts of the Old Testament does, as though suddenly, mysteriously, you were in touch with the things that transcend time and space.

THE PASSING OF FELIX RUNS BEHIND

I DROVE two miles down the river to the ford we use in summer. It looked solid enough now, but snow lay in an undisturbed sheet over the ice. I urged my horse down close to the edge but stopped him there. I was afraid to venture on it. Last night there had been the first great freeze of the winter. The ice was so new, I quailed. But the cold was bitter. It gripped me. My feet ached. I remember I moved them awkwardly under the covers, hoping to quicken them a little. Then I fumbled with the lines. I even spoke to the horse, starting him forward, straight for the ice. But after all my heart failed me and I turned him short about and made him follow his own track back up the river. His trail was the only one in all that vast waste of snow.

The old horse went stiffly. I drove him to an upper ford. Here the water showed, running between rocks and the ice that clung to their edges. At least here there was some sound of water moving, not the deathlike stillness of the lower country. A hot spring above this upper ford kept the river "open" through the bitterest weather. I drove into the water. The little buggy crashed down off the edge of the ice into the current and rocked over the stones of the bottom.

Then it wrenched up over the ice along the other bank, creaking and straining. Again, I headed the horse down the river, we broke through fresh snow, our slender track making a faint line of bluish shadow on the virgin whiteness.

Saddle Blanket's camp lay a mile or more below us in the valley. A clump of bare and ragged cottonwoods stood over it. There were three squat, careless cabins, huddled together; there was a corral protecting a diminutive hay stack; there stood also an old wagon and a mowing machine. Smoke was pouring from a stove pipe which protruded at a crazy angle from one of the roofs.

Clumsily I freed myself from the blankets and let myself down to the ground. Cautiously, with stiff fingers, I tied the horse to one of the rear wheels of the wagon. His breath steamed in a cloud about me. In the extreme cold everything creaked uneasily. Here, at least, though, were tracks in the snow, moccasin tracks, dog tracks. In a tiny teepee made of gunny sacks and rags, a mother dog whined miserably amidst her blind litter.

I stepped over the complaining snow and knocked at the home-built door of the house from which came the smoke—I have never been able to accustom myself to the Indian way of entering without announcement. A voice from within called out something to me. I

turned the handle, pushed the door, but finally had to force it with my knee before I managed to open it.

"How!" They cried at sight of me. "How! How!" They used my Indian name as they spoke to me. At least it was warm within. A woman slapped back a couple of half grown dogs from before the little sheet-iron stove and made a place for me. With my teeth I pulled off my gloves and held my aching fingers above the warmth. I stamped my feet, clumsy in arctics, upon the dirt floor.

It seemed very dim in the cabin after the glare without. I looked about puzzling out the faces. There were a lot of people there, old ones mostly. They sat on the floor along the walls, smoking, and talking in low voices, the accent guttural, the words to me incomprehensible. But it was easy enough to find the sick man, the one I had come to see. He was stretched on a bed in the corner away from the door, on an iron bed which had, in all probability, been condemned and thrown out upon the dump behind the Government school. It was mended and propped with boards from some store packing-box. He lay back, supported by pillows and blankets, a veritable death's head, but alive, looking, knowing, suffering, speaking even. He was quite horrible. By the foot of the bed, in the dirt, sat his mother, a blind woman. Except indeed the sick

man, I saw no one in all the roomful who knew English and so could interpret for me.

When the pain in my hands left me free to think, I stepped over the ubiquitous puppies to the bed and reached for his hand, the hot nerveless thing of bones he held out to me.

"I heard only yesterday that you were so sick, Felix—"

"I can't hear," he croaked to me. His eyes devoured me.

I repeated my words in a louder voice.

When they turn deaf that way it is near the end. I have seen enough of consumption to know that. He indeed was at the very end; one look at him, one breath of the tainted air, told you that. There was red paint on his cheeks, on his forehead, "medicine" paint, sacred. He was anointed for his passing.

"Can you think of anything I might do for you?"

The low Indian voices had ceased. It was hard to speak so loud in that still place. You felt Death waiting, sinister, implacable, just outside the home-built door.

"I'm hungry!" rasped that dreadful voice. "I'm hungry!" The skeleton hands repeated the words in the Indian sign-language; the whole body said it, the eyes burned it into me.

"I'll go home," I cried, "and bring you something to

eat." My heart was full of a sort of joy that I had found one definite thing to fix on, to do for him. "What shall I bring you, Felix?"

"Meat," he said, "meat. You cook it, in the oven, and no salt; will you?"

"And oranges," I said, "and bread, shall I bring you them?"

"No," he croaked again. "Meat, just meat, I'm hungry."

A lean woman sitting against the opposite wall, spoke to him, said something in a loud voice. He turned his death's-head toward her so that he might the better hear.

"She says bring the bread and the oranges," he got out, hoarsely. Then he coughed and let his head fall back upon the pillows.

I looked at the hungry greedy eyes of the lean woman. I knew her well for a "medicine" woman, the keeper of the Sacred Pipe, an adherent of the old heathen ways. She had children by her as she sat, a little ragged girl and dirty boy. I saw their worn moccasins and matted hair, their eager eyes and pinched faces. I saw indeed the greediness of her look but also I saw in her that most miserable thing, a mother of hungry children.

"I will bring them," I said. I spoke to her with the signs of the Indian "hand talk."

I stood with my hand resting on the iron of the bed's foot, waiting for Felix to revive and speak to me again. After a little, without lifting his head, he asked, in Indian, for something. An old woman, taking a short, black stone pipe from her mouth, got up and brought him water in a tin cup. He drank noisily, the cup shaking in his hand. When the old woman had sat down again, he opened his eyes and turned his face towards me.

"Felix," I said, "would you be willing to let me bring you the doctor? There is a kind young doctor at the Post now. I think he could give you something so that you would not suffer so much. May I bring him?"

His face brightened. He made as if to acquiesce, but half a dozen voices from the other side of the room cried him down. He heard them but could not, I suppose, distinguish the words. Then the lean woman got to her feet suddenly and said something angrily, and apparently to me.

He smiled up at me deprecatingly. "She says no," he said. "She's curing me herself. When I get so I can walk then I'll go up to the Post with you and see that doctor."

I smiled back at him some way, what else could I do? "Very well," I said, "We'll leave it that way."

I saw it all, of course. A free doctor who helped might be a menace to the prestige of a medicine woman

demanding pay and who—well, didn't help. I understood something of the situation in which this blind woman and her dying son were placed. There had been trouble recently between them and Elk with whom they habitually lived. Elk, their relative, was a hard, imperious man, and had, so it was said in the camps, turned them both out of his home. They had then been forced to take refuge where they could, at least during the bitter winter time; and it was, of course, not for nothing that this lean woman with the wild eyes was taking the scanty scraps of food for them from the mouths of her own children. I knew well, bitterly well, how it must be. All the possessions of these two refugees had not yet been converted to the healer. They two must be kept a little longer. Some starving cow or pony, some quilt or piece of bead work, was still to be got hold of. The Indians are not by nature a grasping people, but when you are a mother with hungry children at your knee necessity drives you with a double goad.

Therefore I smiled, promising to drive up at once for the meat, the four or five miles from the camp to the Post, cook it in my oven,—without salt—and bring it to the dying man tomorrow. My hand was still resting on the iron foot of the cot. Then I felt creeping fingers, and a hand, an old hand, closed gently over

mine, pressed, seemed to caress. I had no need to look. It was the blind mother who thus groped for me.

Yes, I understood it all, understood that she realized what I had been thinking of, the attitude toward her of her hosts, and that she recognized also friendship when it came to her. At length I slipped my hands from under hers to take again Felix's in parting. Oh! the horrid, pitiful touch of that hand, soiled and sick.

"I will come tomorrow," I cried, in the loud voice I must needs use. "Tomorrow, tomorrow." I repeated in Indian the one word of the sentence that I knew in that language.

The next day was mild. A "Chinook" wind blew strongly from the distant ocean. It cut into the snow, making it look ragged and unnatural.

When I drove this time to Saddle Blanket's, I took the baby with me. I laid him in a little bed,—improvised from the top of an old canvass "telescope"—at my feet, on the floor of the buggy. He could be warm and covered there, and at the same time leave my hands free for driving. This time there were people about outside the camp. An old man came up and tied my horse for me. I lifted out the baby and carried him on one arm, my panful of things on the other. I fumbled at the door. The lean woman from within opened it. The room was less filled, the air mercifully fresher. Felix was better, you could see it. There was hope

in his face. The medicine paint was gone. He was even making out to sit up, after a fashion, still propped by the litter of blankets and dirty pillows behind him. He had on a clean shirt, a light one, it was buttoned decently over his skeleton chest, whereas yesterday his miserable nakedness had been half disclosed.

I came in stumbling, laughing a little, so encumbered was I. The blind woman, still sitting on the ground at the bed foot, turned her face to me. The baby made a little gurgling sound. The mother heard it. She reached out her old arms. Then I let the baby slip, all bundled and hooded as he was, into her lap. Her hands found everything: the knot of the capstrings, his rounding cheeks, his little bent fingers. She nestled him under her shawl, spoke endearingly to him. He answered her in his own way.

I was talking at the bedside to Felix, showing him the food, explaining. He sat with his shoulders bent, his bony hands resting on the quilts, his long braids falling forward in the hollows of his chest.

"Thank you!" he cried, "Thank you! That's good. I'll eat good."

It came into my mind just then that they had told me that at the mission school he had attended he had been one of the Sanctuary boys, one of the servers of the Mass. Well, he would "eat good" and die a little less hungry, perhaps, because of my meat and bread.

The lean woman emptied my food into dishes and pans of hers and handed me back my things. The children played about with the puppies. Everything today seemed easy, relaxed. Perhaps, after all, he was not as near gone as yesterday he had seemed to be. Consumption is so deceptive.

I went, at last, taking the baby from the reluctant arms of the blind woman. I promised to return in a few days with more food. The mother followed me to the door and stood outside in the sunlight against the grey walls of the house, smiling and turning toward me her listening face.

It was two days after that, that my baby was taken suddenly and seriously ill. He would not eat at all. We, on that ranch remote from neighbors and help, hung over him impotently, watched, feared. It had turned very cold again, but in despair we wrapped him up, and drove with him the long nineteen miles we must needs go to the one town of this ranch region and the only place where medical help of much use might be had. My husband left me there with the baby, returning the next day to the ranch and his duties. He bought food in the town for Felix. My last words to him were as, bundled to the ears, he sat gathering up the lines and whip, "The first thing in the morning, you'll go down to Felix, the first thing. You won't put it off an hour, will you?"

When he came back at the end of the week he told me about it. He had gone with the meat and things only to find the camp deserted. The cabins were there, squat and wretched under the ragged cotton woods, the corral still contained the scanty hay stack, the mowing machine stood blocked with snow. But the wagon was gone, and the dog teepee. The place was empty of all life. A short log of wood resting against the door of the cabin where Felix had been, signified, in the Indian way, that the place was to be considered locked. Looking in through the window it could be seen that the sick man's bed was also gone.

You take the signs for what they mean, of course. It had happened; evidently, was over; on some rocky ledge, in the scant, frozen earth of that wilderness of snow and sunlight stretching back from the river, they had buried him. His skeleton, racked body, the long hair smoothed and anointed, the face painted ceremonially, dressed in all his best—which for this even the cupidity of the lean medicine woman had spared to him—beaded moccasins on his feet, wrapped in new quilts, many, many of them, a great, stark motley bundle, they had laid him in that freezing bed, and on top of him, as he lay, they had placed the cup from which on the day of my first visit the old woman had given him to drink, the dishes and pans which had held the food I had brought him, his pillows and dingy

quilts. The iron bed mended with boards no doubt was thrown dismembered at the side of the grave.

I could see it all; the blind woman standing in her scant rags, and thin, torn shawl, perhaps the blood streaming from her legs, which, in her sorrow, she had gashed with knives, her hair falling loose, her half-uncovered flesh shivering in the bitter cold; and wailing —wailing, half a song, half a cry. Other women had dug his grave: She was blind! Other women had swaddled him for his long sleep: She was blind! Other women had seen the last flicker in his eyes, the look of love meant for her: She was blind. But she might cry for him, standing, swaying and uncertain, by the grave, hearing the heavy, creaking steps of those who bore him.

Afterwards she must needs go patiently back to life, must take up her lonely, stumbling burden, until she also should be borne to her shallow grave. Back she must creep, shorn of her son, naked of her goods, a public care, a never ceasing burden on her tribe.

It was nearly a year before I so much as set eyes on her again. In our wandering Indian world it is often that way; long distance, long time, may separate those whose hearts have for a moment beaten in friendship.

I remember also, that when my husband told me that Felix was gone, with a heavy heart, seeking soft words, I sat down to write to Damon, his young brother away at school, my sorry news.

THE POT AND THE KETTLE

SHE THUDDED into my room, grunting a little and closing the door behind her noisily. Then she flung the solid, square bulk of herself into a chair, with rough abandon shaking back from her face her grizzled hair. When I came in to salute her she was grumbling under her breath.

"How!" said I. "I'm glad to see you. But what are you doing here? I thought you were washing for the trader's woman."

"Yes. Me wash."

"Well, it's dinner time."

Her keen little eyes shot me a glance. "Yes. Me hungry."

"Well," I began, "I suppose the trader's folks eat dinner, don't they?"

She hitched her shawl, settled herself back into the chair with a jerk, cleared her throat, spat into the stove. "Yes, heap cook. Big one, black woman. Me no like um. No good!" Her big hand leaped from beneath her shawl and was thrust out to one side, the fingers opening in that derisive, unmistakable gesture which means indeed "No good!"

The old woman laughed with her big coarse voice, eyeing me sharply.

"You kimme dinner," she said. "You clean. Black

woman, that dirty. No good! No good!" Her hand proclaimed disgust.

Her grizzled locks straggled stiffly about her neck, short and shaggy and unbraided. So often had she hacked them off in mourning, so often worn them veil-like about her weeping face, that now, as with her "white" sisters, many long-time widows or the mothers of long-since dead children still wear black, so she never gathered her hair into even a semblance of that order which had proclaimed her once happy state. Her checked outing flannel shawl—a bed sheet in reality—was soiled and grimy; where lately she had stood at the tub her dress was splashed and wet, her moccasins also were sodden.

She grumbled on. "You kimme eat. All day, heap work, no eat. No good! No good!"

I had gone back to my duties in the kitchen but I could hear her flinging herself about in the chair.

"Dirty. Dirty. Heap work. No eat. Buffalo-soldier-woman."

I peeped at her through the door-way. Back and forth before her bulky middle she drew the edge of her hand, saw-like, in the "hungry" sign.

"Hungry. You kimme eat. She dirty. No good. But you my friend. You clean."

Again she spat into the stove, wiping with a corner of her grimy shawl the sweat from her fat face.

MOTHERS

THEY CAME in the middle of the afternoon, an old bent woman with ragged clothes and hair; her sleeves hanging open—in the way old people make their dresses—afforded a glimpse of withered discolored arms; and with her a young woman, neatly braided and shod, a little carmine paint on each rounded cheek. Entering they went to the baby carriage and bent above it. The younger woman, holding back with slender pointed fingers her shawl, leaned down over the baby.

"Is he sick?"

"Yes," I said. I was stupid with weariness. Half of the night before we had been up with him, and added to that physical strain there was the constant wearing of anxiety.

The younger woman interpreted for the old one. Together they stooped above the child, speaking to each other in low voices.

I offered them chairs. "Won't you sit down?"

They did so. Absently the old woman held out her fingers toward the stove. The air was full of the chill of spring. I talked to them a little but with effort. They must have noticed.

"And how many children have you, Katherine?"

She looked at me a little heavily. "Three," she said.

It is so seldom that you see an Indian mother sep-

arated from her children that I suppose I must have stared at her in surprise. At any rate she explained.

"Two are dead," she said. The words were spoken with a faintly breathed sigh.

"Oh!" I said, "Oh!"

No doubt the old woman guessed what we were saying, for she turned to me, and, half behind the girl's back, made with her hands certain signs. I looked hastily at the younger woman. She smiled at me a little out of the corners of her eyes.

"And one isn't born yet," she went on.

I smiled too, that sweet intimate smile that women know.

"When?" I asked.

"In June, I guess."

"Then you'll be happy again."

She rocked her arms suddenly in her shawl and a vague tenderness crept into her eyes. She smiled at me again.

Then they sat, each on her chair, talking to one another occasionally in low tones, their eyes straying over the pictures that hung on the walls, drifting back to the baby.

I was alone on the ranch that afternoon and was due to be so all the evening.

"Your man away?"

"Yes."

She interpreted to the old woman.

"When he come back?"

"About bedtime, I think."

At last I got up and, I am afraid with reluctance, went to cook them some supper. I had not intended to do so for just myself; a little bread would have sufficed me. But I remembered that it was the hungry time of the year when money was gone and credit stretched to the breaking point. I knew they must need my food.

They sat on the floor to eat. Chairs did very well for ordinary use but when it was a question of enjoying the sparse carnal pleasures of life, borrowed customs could not be allowed to stand in the way of one's gratification. They devoured the food almost voraciously. But very soon the old woman ceased eating. With her old dark hands she took the meat from her plate and some of the bread and tied these fragments of food in a corner of her shawl. The young woman looked at me uncertainly.

"She say she take that home to her man."

"Oh! that's all right."

Then it was that I noticed that the old hands, fumbling with the corner of the shawl, were marred. The last joint of each little finger was missing. You never see young hands thus marked, but the old ones are often so. It is an ancient custom, that of maiming

one's self in token of mourning, of slashing and severing and scarring one's self.

"She has no children living, has she?"

"No," answered the girl.

"I wonder how many she has had."

According to Indian etiquette one must hint rather then question.

The young woman spoke to her gently, then looked up at me. "Nine," she said.

The old woman raised her hands, nine of their fingers elevated. Then she spread her hands upon her lap and stared at them strangely, with who knew what of pain and recollection in her rheumy eyes.

I shook my head deprecatingly. There seemed to be nothing adequate to say.

The girl gathered up their empty dishes. "Shall I put them in the kitchen?"

"Do, please."

I thought then that they would surely go. I wanted to be alone. I wanted to look at my baby, to listen to his breathing; I wanted to hoard the sight of him. But their presence and their talk continually intervened.

"It's getting late."

They looked at the baby, at the darkening windows, at the baby again.

"Yes." They smiled at me faintly.

And still they sat.

An owl across the river cried out dismally. I stole a furtive look at them. The Indians believe that the owl's cry is that of some vagabond marauding ghost. To them it is the wail of the dead. They made no sign, and yet I knew that they had heard.

After that there was silence. Twice the young girl looked at the clock. I had never previously had any of my Indian callers stay thus into the night, braving a return through the haunted dark.

And still they sat.

"Is anyone at your camp?"

"Her man, he's there."

The windows grew quite black. Again the owl broke forth in his sudden mournful melody. Then the old woman spoke energetically to the young one. The girl turned toward me.

"She says, 'ain't you 'fraid here?' "

"Oh! no," I answered.

"But—alone?"

"No."

"You not 'fraid to stay here till your man come home?"

I shook my head, smiling. The girl interpreted. Then they both looked at the baby. With a little grunt the old woman got up, gathering her shawl about her. The other followed her example.

"She say, then we go home. We think maybe you

'fraid. Her man, he hungry; there ain't much to eat over there."

There was no doubt but what they went with relief, you could see it in their stride, in the set of their shoulders. They covered their heads with their shawls and, one behind the other, they drifted silently away into the night.

"Goodbye," I called after them.

And they cried back something to me out of the dark.

I closed the door to sink down beside the carriage.

Then again, forlorn and sweet, from out of the night, sounded the cry of the owl.

Tap, tap, tap.

I sat up in bed with a jerk. "Wake up!" I whispered, "Wake up! There's somebody knocking." I shook my husband a little by the arm.

He opened a sleepy eye. "Can't be," he grumbled. "Why, it's the middle of the night. I never heard of anybody coming into the ranch at this hour."

Then fumblingly, tentatively, it sounded again: *tap, tap, tap;* and ended faintly, as with an apology.

"By Jove!" he cried, and jumped out of bed.

Through the high, scantily-curtained window the moonlight poured in a flood, half revealing the familiar objects of the room, a little distorted and metamorphosed.

He opened the door a crack. No one lived near our place except the Indians, so we seldom locked up of a night. Then followed a sound of talking. A voice as timid, as deprecating, as had been the knocking answered my husband.

He turned back into the room. "It's one of the boys from the Government school," he said. "He lives way off down the river and they're letting him go home early, though the regular vacation doesn't begin till the end of the week. He says he stopped at the hot springs for a swim and his horse got away. He doesn't know

very well any of the Indians who live up this way and asks if we will let him come in here and sleep for the rest of the night."

"Why, of course. Which boy is it?"

"It's that youngest son of Island Woman's, Herman Island, I think they call him. He's just a little shaver, twelve or so, I should say. Is the spare-room bed made up?"

I answered that it was. He got into some clothes and disappeared to conduct our nocturnal guest to it.

"That was sensible of him to come here, wasn't it?" I said when he had returned. "I never knew one of the boys to do that before, yet I'm sure I always try to make them feel at home when they drop in."

"He seems a plausible kid, but shy, I couldn't get much out of him."

We settled down to sleep. But I was struggling with a thought. Though it seemed an unworthy one it very much wanted to escape in words.

"Are you asleep? Do you—do you suppose he could be running away?"

He turned over suddenly. "I thought of that," he said.

"They've had so much trouble with the big boys lately that way. I hate to suspect him, but—"

"Oh! well; go to sleep. We can call up the superintendent in the morning."

"The boy may be gone by the morning. But still we couldn't get the school in the night, there'd be no one in the office to answer the phone. If he stays for breakfast and hangs around and just acts natural I shall conclude that everything is all right."

"Oh! I guess it is. Go to sleep before the baby wakes up again."

Morning disclosed our boy sitting on the flat rock that served us for a step at our living-room door. He was imperturbable, and unhurried. "Well, Herman; aren't you sleepy after being up so late?"

He lifted his eyes to me. Soft eyes, they were, for an Indian's, a little wistful, inclined to be pathetic, very shy, almost furtive.

"No, ma'am." He turned from me with his little drooping smile.

"Weren't you afraid of ghosts, running around in the night that way?"

He shot me a shy glance. "A little bit."

"Well, they didn't get you. I don't believe they bother good boys. Are they letting you go home early because you live so far away? How far is it to your place? Forty miles? Fifty?"

"It's a long way. I don't know how far. My mother, she sick. I just hear it yesterday."

"Oh! I'm so sorry. But where do you think your horse can be?"

He pointed to the low hills opposite. "I guess he joined some bunch over there. I find him easy, I think. I know his tracks."

Inside the house the baby whimpered a little. I went to her. "Herman, would you mind holding her for me while I get breakfast? I can do it so much quicker if you will."

He settled himself more solidly upon the door step, lifted a face lit by a young, sweet smile. "I hold her," he said. Then, shyly, "My mother, she got a baby, a boy though."

I brought the baby, tied up Indian way in her little blanket, and handed her down to him. He stretched up his short, boy's arms to receive her. The clothes he wore were of the regulation government variety; iron grey, patched, not too clean, misfits. The coat and shoes were two sizes too big for him.

While I cooked, and set my table, I could hear great conversation in progress on the door-step, gurgles and little squeals, interspersed with soft encouraging words. No one seemed to be in a hurry for the meal.

Breakfast over, I supplied Herman with a stereoscope and pictures while I took the baby into the kitchen to give her her bath. Presently the boy followed me; the splashing and laughing allured him. He crept in at the door, a little drooping, altogether shy,

almost furtive. He had no eyes for me. His sweet winning smile was turned toward the baby.

"How big is your mother's baby?"

He smiled reminiscently. " 'Bout like this one, I guess." He looked up at me suddenly. "He got teeth," he said, "two."

We laughed together over the teeth. I wouldn't for the world have called up the superintendent.

After a while: "Well, I guess now I go look for my horse." He got his hat, sidled toward the door. At the last moment he smiled back at me shyly. "Thank you," he said.

"Oh! You're welcome. It was very sensible and nice of you to have come. I do want you boys to feel that we are always your friends." I was waxing sentimental. "Goodbye, and be sure you stop again."

I watched him, in his ungainly clothes, trudging toward the lower gate.

"I wonder . . ." I said, "I wonder . . ." The baby had fallen asleep on my lap. "That's not at all the direction he said the horse was in."

The next time I saw the superintendent was at the end of the short vacation. What he said to me caused me to cease wondering suddenly. I began to tell him the story of our nocturnal visitor. Half way through he wheeled about on me: "Why on earth didn't you call me up?"

I looked at him blankly. Could the thing that he implied be true? I remembered those wistful eyes, that sweet, sweet smile, the short, boy's arms held up for my baby. I remembered how little and misformed he had looked trudging toward the wrong gate. "It was Herman Island," I ventured.

"Herman Island! Oh, I know! Pulled out that night somehow. Must have gone by the window, for the dormitory door was locked. Hadn't any more horse than a jack-rabbit. And the nerve of him to stop at your place! Knew well enough no one would look for him there. The other children, the whole two hundred of them, are back from their holiday, but we can't find hide nor hair of him."

"He said his mother was sick."

"Likely enough. She's a frail sort of woman. Sometimes when he runs away she brings him back. Oh yes! he's a chronic case; gone half the time. This trip we've had half the Indian police out after him, but nobody seems able to locate him. Shucks! I wish you'd called me up."

"I—I really couldn't have anyway, he was so sweet with the baby."

He withered me with a look. "You'd have saved him a licking, for I tell you I won't do a thing to that boy when I get him back, not a blame thing—"

"Such a little boy, and such glib lying. My goodness!" said I.

"That's why we've got him here at the government school. They couldn't hold him at all at the Mission. We don't seem to be doing much better."

A few weeks after that I drove in to the school grounds. The boys, drawn up in a long row graduated according to size, were standing to salute the flag, which at sunset was being hauled down. I stopped to watch them. At the end of the row, quite out of his proper place, stood a boy of twelve or so, his coat and boots several sizes too big for him. The line wavered and broke, the boys scattering in all directions; only the misfit boy walked alone. He halted strangely in his gait.

The superintendent came out to me. "How d'ye do?" he said. He pointed to the slow-moving boy. "See Herman? Yes, we got him back. It took a couple of policemen and the agent in person to do it. I licked him till—well, I licked him good and proper, I can tell you. But—do you know—we caught him that very night sliding down the rain pipe. Oh! He beats anything I ever saw. That's why I put the ball and chain on him."

"The—what?"

"Ball and chain. I suppose that if an inspector caught him with it he'd give me something to remem-

ber, but by Jove! the agent's always after me for not holding that boy. What am I to do? I wish some of those cocky inspectors would stay awhile and tackle one or two of our chronic cases. They just come and take a look and slip away to some other field. We have to do all the devising." He turned toward the retreating figure of the boy. "Hey there, Herman! You hurry up and get those chores done, d'ye hear?"

The slow-moving boy lifted patient unsmiling eyes, dropped them again, toiled haltingly on his way.

"How long shall you keep it on him?"

"Oh! till I think he's reformed. But you can't tell. He's a sure slick one."

The next time I went to the school I asked for the boy. The superintendent shot me a side-long look. "Gone," he said. "That ball and chain business got on my nerves—"

"It's been on mine!" I interrupted.

"—so I took it off. I declare I hadn't got it stowed away yet before he was gone." He looked at me whimsically. Then we both laughed.

"What next?" asked I.

He shook his head. "A long vacation for Herman, I guess. I think I'm at the end of my resources."

It was three days later that wishing to send a telegram I drove to the school to use their phone, which connected directly with the telegraph office in the sta-

tion at Rawdon. Our phone at the ranch was only a local one. There was a sound of talking in the office. I went in tentatively.

The superintendent sat behind his desk. In front of him on a straight-backed chair was an Indian woman. She was thin to emaciation. Her lean, lined face wore an harassed expression. Her bony hands held together the folds of her blanket which supported the weight of a sleeping child. Her moccasins, made obviously of the denim of old overalls, were ragged; her hair straggled untidily. Backed against the wall, hat in hand, head drooped, stood the listless figure of a boy. The superintendent was speaking. I paused, listening. With a ruler he tapped his desk, emphasizing his words.

"No more lickings, no more lock-up, no more ball and chain. But, understand, the police of this reservation have something better to do than to hunt up the same runaway all the time. Herman, I shall keep you in school and just as free as the other boys. But this I say to you, the next time you go, I shall send directly down to your camp, and your mother," he made a little gesture toward her, "shall go straight to the lock-up. Your mother, you understand, not you. . ."

The boy jerked suddenly, lifted a startled face.

"Interpret," commanded the superintendent inexorably. "Tell her just what I said."

Without looking at her the boy spoke; his voice, pronouncing the guttural Indian words, was low and halting.

The woman made a faint inarticulate cry, looked quickly from the boy to the superintendent, and then back to the boy. She spoke to him suddenly in an eager voice. He shook his head.

"Does she understand?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Well, you may go. That's all."

The boy made a sign to his mother and turning sidled out of the office. The woman gathered her shawl more securely about the baby and followed him.

When I finished my telephoning and went out, I saw them sitting side by side and close together on the edge of the board walk. As I passed them she got up. Stooping, she lifted the sleeping baby to her back and balanced it there, its little face against her neck, while, with hands extended behind her back, she drew her shawl up over it and gathered the folds tight across her breast. She bent down still further and kissed the bowed face of the boy. Then, rising, she walked away from him, striding a little with her long, flat-footed steps. He sat where she had left him upon the edge of the walk, a huddled bunch of misfitting clothes.

"And did he ever run away again?" It was the next

year at the school Christmas tree that I asked the question.

The superintendent beamed upon me. "Never!" he said.

Santa Claus, of orthodox shape and costume, standing on a chair, reached down from the tree a big bundle and handed it to the superintendent, who turned it over to read the name on it. Holding it high, and with a smile on his not unkindly face, he called out over the hubbub of murmuring children and crackling peanut shells: "Come up and get your stuff, Herman Island."

THE DEAD BIRD

I STOPPED the horses before the Government school, for I always found it hard when the children were out in front playing, to drive callously by. The girls—for I was on their side—in their blue "hickory" aprons sprawled or sauntered over the short alfalfa lawn, or from the edge of the terrace or the board walk dangled feet shod with clumsy "Government" boots. Although there were many of them—over a hundred I should say—they made but little noise. Like fawns slipping amongst tree trunks, they frolicked, something a trifle furtive always in the eyes of the boldest of them, a shred of silence forever enfolding them. They walked, even the very youngest ones, with shoulders and heads a little bent, as though constantly they supported invisible shawls. Their steps were long and a little shambling, as are the steps of those who go habitually without heels, and who are never forced to hurry. Their aspect implied a sense of endurance, of reserve, of patience invulnerable. They walked—even the big girls who spoke fluent English and had put in their ten or twelve years at the school—but most of all they played, as do children in a familiar house made suddenly strange by mourning. They frolicked indeed, but with just a touch of inadvertence, as do those who take what amusement they can find rather than what they would have chosen. In fine, they seemed to be what

they were, the children of an ancient, enduring overpowered people. One lifted one's eyes from them to the chain of mountains walling the western sky and felt that some way those mountains and these children, despite the Government blue, were of kindred stock; that the roots of the one reached down, groping, toward the roots of the other; and that only one's self in the store-bought buggy and the clothes that suggested remote civilization was an alien. One was overpowered suddenly and strangely by the sense of being an outsider in one's own land.

Then there came from some place out of sight around the corner of a building, a drawling sound of singing. An old familiar hymn—though one had to force one's self to recognize it—rose and fell in sing-song, toneless voices; garbled words, uncertain rhythm.

To the ring of shy and smiling faces vaguely encircling me I turned.

"Why, what's that?"

The smiles deepened, the eyes were upon me attentively. But—it is difficult to speak out before many listeners. No one seemed able to overcome her diffidence.

Then a little one—Bridget, she was inappropriately called—ceased suddenly from scrutinizing the worn boot on her twisting foot. She slipped down from off the terrace wall. Like a leaf impelled by a gentle

current she drifted to my side. She lifted one foot up on the step of the buggy, raised herself till her eyes were almost on a level with mine, found a hold for her other foot, slipped a small chapped hand into mine.

"Well, Bridget," said I, encouragingly.

The little brown face was tilted downward, away from too close scrutiny. The sound of her voice, deep for a child's, and very soft, crept to me as might have come, trembling yet allured, some half-wild thing that one had fondled.

"It's a funeral. Them girls"—her child's lips, pouted, indicated in the Indian way the direction whence came the singing—"they bury a bird. They find little bird out here, dead, all draw up; his hands, this way." The small chapped brown hands twisted and distended themselves to imitate the pitifulness of the dead claws. "Bessie, she take her doll rags, she wrap him all up. Then Miss Jones, she give them box. They put box in that hole. Now they have funeral."

All the furtive smiling eyes of the circle were upon me, and from me strayed to the side of the building where the group of little, blue-clad figures enjoyed the expression of their mock grief.

In a corner of the steps, her back against the railing, her eyes upon her lap, so little that she was more than half obscured by the smiling, "hickory" dressed circle,

sat a small thin girl; a limp bit of self-absorbed childhood.

"Who's that little thing?"

A big girl shambled over to her and gathered her up in her arms.

"This is a new little girl. Come and shake hands, Nancy, will you? This is High Eagle's wife's little girl. I guess you know her mother.

"But what ails her?"

The big girl looked down at the bent black head with its tight, ribbon-tied braid, at the little figure pressing against her side.

"She's homesick, I guess," she said.

She brought the child to me. Lifting one apathetic hand in hers she extended it to me. I shook it gently. The child's big brooding eyes, strangely sombre in their depths, were for just an instant of awakened interest raised to me. Then they drooped back to a wan scrutiny of the ground.

"Did you ever see such big eyes! And she's gettin' so thin—" The little bird claw of a hand still rested inertly in mine—"I guess maybe they'll let her stay home after Christmas. She's not six yet and she wouldn't be here only her mother's so poor. The agent thought it was best to put her in the school. All the people say her folks don't never have enough to eat."

"But you said she was fat when she came and she's thin enough now."

"Yes," said the big girl, and she sighed a little, feeling suddenly, I suppose, though vaguely, the burden that life had laid upon her race. Or was it only, that she was remembering the two or three little flames that each year in September came brightly to the school, but before the year's close were snuffed out? Yet none of us who cared for them was ever able to remark the blowing of any wind.

The big girl set the child down. The little drooping figure walked slowly back to her place by the railing of the steps.

"Does she cough?"

"No, ma'am; but they give her cod liver oil. She don't like it. I seen her cry last night when she had to swallow it—The cook she fixes eggs for her."

After that I acquired the habit of seeking her out with my eyes at least, every time I came to the school; she was much too shy to allow of more direct approach. She was almost always to be found in some sunny, sheltered corner, her little head bent, her eyes upon her lap. I think I never once saw her playing.

Then I missed her; even before Christmas it was, when she was to have gone home to her mother.

I stopped the buggy by the terrace wall. The blue-clad figures were stirring about at their quiet play.

Bridget came and climbing up to the step of the buggy thrust her little chapped hand into mine.

"Where's the little homesick one?" I asked.

She looked up at me for an instant with her deprecating smile. Then her face went suddenly grave.

"Nancy?"

"Yes."

"She's—dead."

"Oh!" I cried, "but she never coughed—"

"No, she never cough. She just die. Two days ago her mother come for her. She die in the wagon, they say. I guess you hear them cryin' when they drive down past your place."

And the little chapped hand still in mine, I looked out across the irrigated, parti-colored valley to the mountains walling the western sky.

ALWAYS FROM the time I left the reservation with him except once—which time is the occasion of the telling of this present anecdote,—he moved in a sort of blissful exaltation. In his timid, repressed way he was as much beside himself as is a new lover or an artist in the throes of creation. A train even he had never seen until the one which was to take us to Denver thundered dustily up to our little Sub-Agency station, and he, crowding behind me, clung with frantic hands to my skirts. But when I had hoisted him up the high step and we had got fairly seated and were off, his delight knew no bounds; his dark eyes twinkled and gleamed, his young mouth was quite awry with the effort to repress the joy that was proving itself irrepressible. He snuggled beside me in the seat, peering out of the smoke-grimed window, bracing himself involuntarily when there seemed to be sudden dips and rises in the road ahead of us, and then laughing softly at himself as the train sped level and serene across them.

"Who's that?" he would whisper as some new person whose appearance caught his eye, came in at the door. And he was astonished, even incredulous, when I failed to be able to answer so simple a question. At home on the reservation we of course knew everyone, at least by name and appearance.

Before he had left the Government boarding school the little boys' matron who supplied him from her store with a new tam-o'-shanter for his travels, had carefully directed him as to the wearing of it. "This bow," she had explained, "must always go on the left side." At home his old and much-punctured sombrero with its beaded hat band went on any way. But now, no matter what our hurry at twenty-minute eating stations, nor with what breathless haste we followed the rush of passengers toward a panting train, we must needs pause till we had found the bow and were quite sure which side was the left one and then got the two in conventional conjunction.

To reach Denver the exigencies of train connections required us to stay over night in Cheyenne. We took a room in a nearby hotel. Going to the station in the morning my little boy looked back over his shoulder with glowing eyes.

"My!" he cried. "Wasn't that strange man good to let us sleep in his house?"

Once in the train he fingered our tickets, eyeing them carefully.

"How much did you have to pay for them?" he asked.

I told him; the amount as I remember it was well over ten dollars.

He looked at me with eyes of startled unbelief.

"Why, you shouldn't have given all that money for them! They are only pieces of paper."

He was indeed very much impressed by the fact that everything we did required money; our food, trolleys, busses, everything. At home we seldom handled cash. The trader and the butcher sent in monthly bills and we paid by cheque, if we were able, or didn't pay, in the reverse case, and went on buying "on jaw bone," as the saying goes in Wyoming. Actual money was seldom visible.

But the arrival in Denver was I think the happiest moment of all. Night had already fallen. The streets were garish with lights, grouped, single or in designs, marvellous set-pieces that moved by magic power. There was a great clattering and crying of voices about the station, a pleasant welcoming turmoil. Different, indeed, all this to the arrival of trains at our little frame stations set solitary in the midst of the prairie night, their silence scarcely broken by the slipping away of the train, or their darkness cloven by the station-master's single lantern.

The child almost forgot his timidity, so great was his elation.

"Is it fairyland?" he whispered against my elbow. And the bus that bore us jolting to the hotel he felt sure must be a second Cinderella's coach. He even spoke in quite a brave, loud voice so that our fellow-

passengers, the usual blasé travelling men, became suddenly aware of him and eyed him from the height of their lofty indifference, taking note of his ill-fitting Government clothes as well as of his eager eyes set in the smooth childish face.

One of them even asked: "This the little Injun's first trip?"

And while I assented the boy, becoming suddenly self-conscious again, shrank back under the shadow of my arm.

At the hotel he was a little disturbed by the elevator; the alligator, he called it. And, suddenly recollecting: "Shall we have to pay to ride in that too?" he demanded.

On his account—I had brought him to a doctor for special treatment—our stay bade fair to become rather unexpectedly extended, too much so at any rate to allow of our remaining in the hotel. So the child and I went forth to seek lodgings. Our search proved to be a weary one. We progressed languidly from door to door, from address to address.

At last a certain house opened to us, disclosing in its doorway a kindly-faced woman.

"You have a sign out advertising rooms to rent."

"Yes, ma'am. But the lady of the house ain't in just now."

"Do you happen to know anything about the rooms?"

"Yes ma'am but,—excuse me, is that your little boy?"

I said "yes," and as I spoke my eyes went out to meet those of the little boy who was not mine.

"Well, it ain't no use for you to ask about the rooms then. I'm real sorry about it but she won't take no children in here."

So we turned and went together down the steps. I confess that I felt dashed. I had lived so long amongst a people to whom a child represented the chief blessing of life that I had forgotten the "white," more civilized, attitude toward them.

Beside me the lad walked, his head lowered, shrunk into himself, even withdrawn somewhat from my protecting shadow. It was as though the better to bear this new-found burden he walked alone.

We gave up our search for that day and boarded a car for home. As for myself other thoughts soon drove that of our rebuff from my mind. This seemed to be true also of the child. Beside us in the car sat a party of Swedes talking volubly in their own tongue. The boy listened to them, all attention. He eyed them up and down carefully and appraisingly, his dark gaze especially on their blonde heads, their pale eyes. Then he turned his eager little face up to mine.

"They don't look like Indians but—what kind of Indian are they talking?"

It never, I suppose, had occurred to him that the whites could have more than the one language. And even as I explained, laughing at him the while, I remembered that I had met many of the dominant race who firmly believed that all tribes of Indians use a common speech.

That night some friends came in to see us and we recounted to them our adventures of the day. I did the talking, for when several persons were present he became far too timid to undertake such an act of temerity. He joined in the conversation only with shy, acquiescing smiles or a "Yes, ma'am," whispered tremulously and under great pressure.

I spoke finally of our last enquiry and the subsequent rebuff. Then I felt him straighten himself beside me; his eyes grew hard, his mouth stiffened.

"What do you think she said to us?" he cried out, his timidity lost at last in the greater indignation. "She told us they didn't like children! They didn't want them! They didn't want *me*!"

My friends, who of course did not realize the Indian point of view, could not feel all the enormity of the statement. They murmured polite sympathy.

The child searching them with those eyes grown

suddenly hard, sighed at length, drooped a little, nestled against my arm.

Subsequently, from his cot drawn close to mine, and several times repeated during the night, I heard a long trembling sigh. Even in his dreams, it seemed, the disturbing discovery was pursuing him that life was turning out to be not just what he had always thought it. He was indeed beginning the toil of the long inevitable years of unlearning.

"Some say that he is getting better, and some that he is worse, and one old woman even told me that he was dead. She talked with signs, but I am sure that is what she meant."

"Who is dead?" asked the girl. She hesitated before she spoke, dropped her eyes, holding them resolutely down. She was obviously evading my implied question.

"You know very well, my dear; the Gros Ventre boy who was shot in that drinking scrape somewhere around Lost Wells. The Agency doctor saw him and reported that the bullet was still in him. But the medicine woman claims that she had really got it out."

"She *did* take it out." The black eyes challenged me steadily. "My father he *seen* her do it."

"But really the doctor ought to know."

"It was all nasty from the wound."

"She played a trick on you. Don't talk to me! Anybody who claims to be able to change rocks into potatoes...And didn't she tell the Indians plainly at the Fourth of July celebration that she was in league with the devil and that it was his power—his 'medicine' —that helped her?"

"But she probe for it. There were a lot of 'em there. They seen it, all of 'em."

"Probed with what?"

"A willow stick."

"Oh! Oh!"

"At first he get better, but after a while, worse."

"After the probing. Naturally!"

The girl relaxed her vigilant expression; she laughed, even. "I guess so."

"And is he really dead?"

She nodded. "That's what they say. The whole camp's moved."

"The way they move when any one dies?"

"Yes."

"That old devil! She has just as good as killed him."

"Oh, my!"

"With a willow stick. Ah! the poor young man!"

The girl put up her hands and smoothed her sleek hair from its straight, red-painted parting to the tips of her buckskin-tied braids.

"If her medicine is so strong why didn't she cure him?"

She peered up at me from under her hands. "The Indians say everybody she takes care of dies."

"And yet they always have her!"

She dropped her eyes, then shot me a look from under her lids. "I guess they're afraid of her," she said.

"And well they may be if those are her methods."

She gave a quick little sigh. "You know her girl?"

"Yes."

"She just got married."

"I know."

"That's a white girl."

"So they say. She always paints so much you can't tell it though."

"And she always say she 'Rapahoe. She gets awful mad if you call her white."

"She is white though, isn't she?"

"Oh yes! But even that old woman won't let on. She always tellin' that girl, 'A box, that's your mother.' "

"And that old woman brought her up from a little brand-new baby?"

"Just born."

"Do tell me the story."

"That happened eighteen years ago, I guess. She little bit younger than me. The Indians they all camp 'round the Agency that time. It's winter, and the creek is froze so they have to go for water up above that bend where there's a hole in the ice. Every little while they passin' up and down that lane behind the Agency houses. Then one day there's a big new box out there close to the fence. Just after they first see it there my mother-in-law she walkin' up along the road to get water."

"Which woman is that?"

"Don't you know? She's the one with them yellow eyes. That's what they calls her in the camps, 'Yellow Eyes.' She's got a real name beside that though. 'Many Horses,' I guess you'd call it."

"I know her, I think."

"Well, when she got to that box she stop and look down—then she pretty near drop her bucket. First she jump back, then she bend down again. She lean 'way over and she look, and look. Then she turn 'round quick—she don't go on for the water—she just run back to camp. My grandmother and some of them women they see how funny she actin' and they kind o' go out to meet her. 'What's the matter? What's the matter, Yellow Eyes?' they say. Then she begin to cry, and she point to that box, and she say, 'It's in that box. It's in that box.' And all them women cry out, 'What, Yellow Eyes? What?' 'Somethin' pale,' she say, 'Way down in a corner.' Then she look up at them all. 'It's a *white baby,* that's what it is. And it ain't even got rags 'round it.' She have to stop to wipe her tears. 'But is it 'live?' 'Yes. I seen it movin' and I hear it making a little noise?' And the women all cry, 'Ah-ee! Ah-ee! What shall we do? A new-born baby and—thrown away! A white baby!' Then they all begin rememberin'. 'Must belong to that girl livin' in the second house. We all see she going to

born a baby—and she always wrappin' herself up and hidin'—We never noticed no man 'round.—Her old mother she looked mean. Guess it was the mother throw that baby away.' Then they all say, 'Ah-ee! Ah-ee!' some more, and them that's cryin' they wipe their eyes with their hands.

"Then that old medicine woman come—only then she wasn't old nor a medicine woman—and she say, 'Why, what's the matter?' Everybody begin talkin' at once, and pointin' to that box. She laugh, and she put her hands over her ears 'cause she can't hear them, all talkin' so loud and fast. But she see the box, and she think if she go over and look in it then maybe she understand. She walk that way takin' long steps, and all the women followin' 'long after her. She stoop down too—then she jump back and she cry out. Next she dive down again and she pick up that little naked, thrown-away baby in her hands, and she hold it right up in the sunlight, and she turn it all 'round and look at it every way. Then she raise her eyes to them Agency houses, and her face get mighty mean; she turn toward them other women, and last she look back at the baby. 'A little girl,' she say. Then she speak to her. 'Well, baby,' she say, 'this box I guess must be your mother, only she don't seem to take care of you. And these women,' she say, and she look them all up and down, hard-like, 'they let you lie shiverin' and

freezin' here while they cryin' like a pack o' coyotes. I guess I be a better mother to you than that fool box or them fool coyotes.' She put that baby inside her shawl, against her breast, and real slow and smilin' she walk past them women, never turnin' her eyes, and right back to the camp."

"And what did she do?" I cried. "Where did she get milk for it? She had no cow, I suppose, and no money with which to buy canned milk at the store."

Out of the corners of her eyes the girl smiled at me cannily. "Oh! She just go where there bese mothers with babies," she said.

"And it lived!"

"It's nearly as old as me."

"I heard that long afterwards the real mother tried to get it back."

"Yes, she come to that old woman's tent, she even bring an interpreter with her. When that medicine woman see that white mother comin' she lift up the back of the tent, and she push that little girl under it. 'Go down to the willows,' she say, 'and hide. There's some bad folks comin'. Maybe they wantin' to steal you. Don't you come back till I call you.'

"Well, that white woman come in and the first thing she do she look all 'round that tent, quick. The medicine woman she pull her shawl up over her head so

her face way back in the shadow and she never take her eyes off that mother.

"Then that woman she make herself a little bit stiff, and she say right out, 'They tell me you got my daughter.' That old woman she like the straight way that woman speak, but you see she love that thrown-away baby so much she awful 'fraid; she just shakin' inside. 'I got a daughter myself. But I not know you got one.' The mother she look at her hard, hard. 'No,' that medicine woman say. 'Seven years ago I find my daughter, a little thrown-away baby, in a box. She only newborn, but I don't see no other mother for her but just that box. Somebody got a bad heart,' she say, 'can throw away little live babies, just like blind puppies, or trash.' That mother she put her hands up and she cover her face. 'That's a white baby,' the foster-mother say, 'but Indian hands washed her, Indian womans sew for her, Indian mothers' milk make her fat, Indian love keep her 'live. That little girl got white skin, but her heart—that's Indian heart.' Then she stop 'cause that mother kind o' groan, then take her hands down from her face and stare and stare at that Indian woman. That woman stare at her. Afterwhile that mother she turn 'round and she put out her hand and begin feelin' for that door-flap, same as if she be blind. Once like she going to speak she look back over her shoulder; then that old woman see that she cryin'."

THE CAPTURE OF EDMUND GOES-IN-LODGE

THEY RANGED themselves in an awkward, bashful row, three half-grown boys, their hats in their fumbling fingers. Being Indian boys they stood in silence, words struggling with their shyness for utterance. The disciplinarian, his pen still in his hand, half turned in his chair and looked at them over his glasses. "Well?" he said.

The middle boy, the one who showed in his skin and his hair an admixture of "white" blood, spoke: "We 'Rapahoe boys are 'shamed of Edmund Goes-in-Lodge." His voice was low and deep, the intonation peculiar.

"And well you may be!" cried the disciplinarian cordially. "I'm ashamed of him myself."

He waited for them to speak again, but they stood mute. "Well?" he interrogated again.

"Mr. Knight, us boys, we wanted to ask you if you'd let us be absent from Sunday School and dinner today. We goin' down there to his father's and we goin' capture him and bring him back. We got a fine plan, Mr. Knight."

The disciplinarian laughed; he leaned back in his chair and enjoyed the joke to the full. Then he laid down his pen—and laughed again.

"Capture Edmund,—the worst boy in the school—you three kids! With all the Indian police after him and his old warchief of a father doing all he can to get him back, or claiming to, anyway. Heap crazy, every one of you!" and he laughed again.

The boys grinned and in laughing forgot something of their shyness.

"Honest, Mr. Knight, we can do it. We've got a fine plan, sure we have."

"Well, let's have the fine plan."

"We goin' down to Goes-in-Lodge's this mornin' on our ponies. Me and Roy's goin' to ride together, and Chester's got his big black horse. We goin' tell Edmund's mother we runnin' away too, then she tell us where's Edmund. Then we'll tell him, 'Come on, let's go up in them Bad Lands across the river and play awhile.' We'll say, 'Don't bring no horse; you just jump on that black one behind Chester.' We'll have a good, new raw-hide rope with us; Chester he's got one. Well, out there we'll play awhile, have lots of fun; all the time we'll be workin' up the creek to the next ford above Goes-in-Lodge's, the one at Black Man's place, I guess you know it. Then when we get near to that ford with the hills between us and his father's place we'll begin to say 'We're gettin' hungry,' and 'Let's go back and get some dinner.' Then Chester, he'll say to Edmund, 'You jump on my horse first.

You sit in the saddle and I'll ride behind you.' Edmund, he'll like ridin' that way, he'll jump up quick. Then Chester'll get up behind him. Me and Roy we'll have our horse right close, but we won't get on him. We'll be kind o' foolin' with the cinch. We'll have the rope tied on our saddle, not on Chester's, and while I'm pullin' up the cinch, Roy'll be untying the rope. Then when Chester has got up behind Edmund he'll give a kind of yell and he'll grab Edmund right around his arms and he'll hold him tight. Chester, he ain't so tall but he's awful strong, he can sure hold Edmund for a while anyhow. Then me and Roy'll come quick with the rope and we'll tie Edmund's feet together under the horse and we'll wind the rope around him to hold his arms down. Then Chester, he'll reach around him and he'll take the lines. We'll get on our horse, Roy and me,—and we'll be up here by five o'clock."

"By all the powers!" gasped the astonished disciplinarian. "Who on earth ever thought all that up? Why, it's wonderful!"

"All of us, I guess," said Jack, but he grinned with suspicious glee.

"Boys," the man began, seriously now, "you never could put it through. Edmund would see through you, and he's mighty mean when he gets mad. I sure want to give him the licking that's coming to him, but I don't want him to get the chance to try the licking on you

first. I know Chester is strong, but I doubt if he could hold him. Besides that, if that old Sioux mother of his ever got her hands on any of you, there wouldn't be enough left to bring you home, and 'that's no sheep-herder's dream!' I remember the time, and so do you, that she came here and pulled a knife on the agent because her girl was sick in the school here and he wouldn't let her take her home. You're three of my best boys and I sure couldn't afford to lose you."

They all grinned this time. Again the spokesman took up his plea.

"Mr. Knight, if we don't get that boy there can't no police man never get him. His father and brothers has got the best horses among the 'Rapahoes. His mother watches for him and tells him when she sees anybody comin' down the road. Then he just goes out into the Bad Lands and hides out. He's got a cache up there. He could stay for weeks. Everybody's 'fraid o' him, he's so mean, and 'fraid o' his mother, too. His father he tells him to come back to school but his mother, she helps him so he don't have to. Mr. Knight, you know in the beginnin' of the year the Agent told us if we'd stop the runnin' away in this school we could all keep our ponies in the school pasture and be free to go home Saturday and Sunday afternoons. We sure don't want him to take that privilege away from us on account o' Edmund. He said he would if the boys

began runnin' away again, and Edmund he's the first boy to go. We're 'shamed of him. You let us try to bring him back. You'll see; we can."

"By Jove," said the disciplinarian, "You're a lot of good sports, every one of you. Go ahead and get him. You're excused from everything till you show up again. But mind," he said, and his eyes twinkled at them, "don't you three run away on me!"

They were gone on the instant, down through the basement to pick up saddle blankets, bridles and rope; their saddles were lying out in the pasture. Boys of all sizes to eighteen years of age, were scattered about shining their Sunday shoes, giving their hair an extra wet dab, assisting little ones, new from the camps, in the difficulties of donning Sunday clothes, urging the wearing of the shirt inside the trousers, so contrary to the preconceived Indian idea of the fitness of things. Envious eyes, nudges, jokes, followed the exit of the three conspirators.

They caught their horses and started in the manner planned, riding at a good lope down the valley road. The prairies were gay with flowers, growing between the grey sage bushes; gentian, lark-spur, Indian paint brush; a dozen different parti-colored varieties. Down the dusty road the boys passed, free in the dazzling sunshine. Their manner, their talk were quiet enough, most of their energy, however, was centered in their

eyes and ears, in that power of observation so marked in their race. They swung lightly to the horses' pace with strong easy muscles. The feeling of loyalty to the school, to their tribe's best welfare, was strong in them as was also a boy's love of mischief.

A couple of miles below the school at Squaw Creek, a little tributary of the river, where they pulled up to let their horses drink, a contretemps befell them.

An old gnarled man on a pinto pony rode up to them from the opposite direction and accosted them. He spoke quietly enough in the deep Indian voice with its almost monotonous intonation.

"Are you three running away?"

It was Jack sitting in front on the smaller pony, who answered. By common consent the others waited for him to take the lead. He humped himself a little as he sat on the pony, his head low, so that the brim of his sombrero shielded his face from the old man's eyes; he grumbled out a sort of acquiescence.

Rock knew his duty. A big metal star inscribed in plain letters "Indian Police" did not rest for nothing on his breast, neither was it for nothing that he received from a munificent Government the sum of ten dollars a month for the keep of himself and the horse he must furnish, the time he must give, the courage he must not fail in, the risk, even to life itself, he

must frequently assume. An old but useful six-shooter sagged in its holster on his hip.

"You must go back," he said quietly.

"We're going down to Edmund Goes-in-Lodge's," said the shameless Jack.

The man sized up the three with his old keen eyes. "Edmund's no good," he said. "Better go quietly back to school. Turn around now. Go on."

No one moved. There was silence. The horses splashed in the shallow ford. Chester's big black pulled at the lush grass along the edge, the sound of his crunching teeth and jingling bit filled the pause. The leather of the old Indian's saddle creaked with his horse's breathing.

"Singing Rock"—Jack, who of course spoke in his Indian tongue, used the full name—"we can't go back; we won't go without Edmund. If you take us back, Mr. Knight will beat us. Besides that you know that no one will ever will be able to catch Edmund. But you come with us down to Goes-in-Lodge's; we'll go in ahead of you and we'll talk to Edmund and get him to ride with us a ways up the road. You can hide yourself some where and when you hear us, you can just come out and pull your gun on him. Then we'll all go back with you. We say we'll do this and we'll surely do it, but we can't go back to the school without Edmund."

Whence the boy evolved this plan, why indeed he evolved it at all, he would have been the last one able to explain it to you. It was as natural for him to meet strategy foiled with new strategy, as for the beaver to build his symmetrical dam, the bird his balanced nest.

The old man surveyed the three critically. Here was a chance, as it seemed to him, to do double duty and with assistance at that. The boys, as he knew, did not exaggerate when they said that the police were quite unable to cope with the problem of Edmund's capture. Well, they were good boys, as had been their fathers before them, his friends; he would trust them.

"Come on," he said, and wheeled his pony about. They splashed out of the ford behind him.

Before they reached Goes-in-Lodge's—a good ten miles down the valley—they left the old police man safely sheltered from sight by the bulk of a point of land that at a certain place crowded the road to one side against a wire fence.

As they approached the little huddled cabins, tents and corrals, that made up Goes-in-Lodge's camp, the conspirators saw a figure cross, from the inside, the little window of the principal cabin; Edmund's mother reconnoitering, no doubt. The boys jumped from their horses and went into the house. Only Goes-in-Lodge's immediate family was there. The old man smoking his Indian pipe and eyeing them

gravely sat on the side of his home-made bunk. The run-away and his mother began laughing and joking at sight of them. Edmund said to them in English, "Guess you boys made a mistake, this ain't your Sunday School class," followed by much giggling. Somebody cocked an eye out of the window at the sun. "It's 'way past Sunday school time; I feel more like it was dinner time."

The old woman laughed, taking the hint, got up and began bustling around the stove. She was indeed in an excellent humor, being mightily pleased with her son, her youngest born, and his cleverness in out-witting the nagging Agency. "It's all right to have him go to school and learn something. I don't want him to grow up to be just a 'buck.' I want him to read and write and know farming like his brothers; but I won't have him kept in that school as though it was a jail."

They all sat about on the floor enjoying the little feast; fried bread, and meat served with that great Indian delicacy "cherry gravy"; there was also weak sweetened coffee. At the end Jack got to his feet and remembering his manners, "We all ate good," he said with sincerity, "Let's go out now and have some fun. Get your horse, Edmund, and come along." They saddled up; Edmund's mother, throwing scraps to the dogs, smiled at them from the doorway.

That they lacked in loyalty to their hosts in thus

decoying the boy into a trap never could have occurred to their minds. They were playing a game as was Edmund. The only question was, who would win?

They lured their victim up the road; it was easy enough to do so. In time, they rounded the point of land—there stood Rock. He had not deemed it even necessary to take the six-shooter from its holster. The star of authority gleamed upon his breast. The runaway took in the situation at a glance. They all drew rein.

"Go on," said the old man, "I've got you all now. If you keep loping you'll be at school in time to report at five o'clock." He fell in behind them and rode squarely in their dust all the ten miles to the school. The boys preserved a neutral silence. The three who really understood the situation felt it not incumbent on them to explain; the true captive was upbraiding himself furiously, if silently, for the stupid ease with which he had let himself be taken. Truth to tell the three conspirators were feeling a little uncomfortable. For many years Edmund had been the acknowledged leader and "bad boy" of the school; it was only natural to suppose that he would have his innings yet. The quick lope of the little bare-footed ponies counted off the miles.

The arrival at the school was without dramatic effect. Mr. Knight was on the watch. Rock gave him his ver-

sion of the affair. Mr. Knight, looking into the anxious eyes of the three, gleefully understood. The victors themselves said never a word, not even to him: were they white men that they need make explanation with words?

"All right," said the disciplinarian. "Rock, go into the office. You three put up your horses. Edmund, come with me."

The boy took his thrashing stoically though he winced under it, for of its kind it was a good one. When it was over Mr. Knight left him in the dingy lock-up of the school and went to fetch him his supper. On his return as he opened the door the boy lifted his head and searched with eager eyes the space behind the man.

"Where's the others?"

"The others?"

"Yes, when are you going to lick them three?"

"Why, Edmund, don't you understand?"

It was clear that he did not. Mr. Knight set down the supper tray and, as gently as might be, explained. The boy stared at him. Incredulity was in his eyes and a new expression, could it be it fear? He spoke no word. He turned away from his jailor, the haunted look deepened. Then as though suddenly suffocated by its lack of space he strode across the little room.

He wheeled about. For an instant the man half thought that he was going to strike him.

"They made a plan?" He spoke between shut teeth. "You let them go?" Although he was plainly impatient of the fact there was no doubt but what his voice was trembling. He shook his head over the intolerable realization. He frowned above his sharpened features.

"And Rock? He was in that plan too?"

"Oh no. They met him by chance and they fooled him also. That was part of their fun, I guess."

"Their—fun."

The boy's face went grey, he put out a hand, groping for the one chair in the room. Finding it he sank into it, a huddled heap.

"Here's your supper, Edmund."

But he did not answer. Mr. Knight, a little uncertainly, went toward the door. "He didn't look like that when I licked him."

The huddled figure hunched his shoulders, twisted a little as he sat. Then not even waiting for the sound of retreating steps, a great sob, that was half a cry, wrenched him.

After all he was only a boy.

"Edmund..."

"Go 'way. Oh! Go 'way."

And for very shame's sake the man went, tiptoeing

out of the door. But the reign of Edmund was over. The school's "bad boy" was in the dust.

Her "folks," as she called them, looked at her patiently, smiling a little. They said they had always thought that her eyes looked queer.

The little half-breed girl smiled too, twisting a corner of her blue spreading "hickory" apron, a dimple in each smooth cheek, her mouth soft and warm as though from her mother's recent kisses. But it was only a memory that kept it so, for the mother was dead; and the eyes, with their oddly heavy lids, certainly did look "queer."

"We are going to Denver soon," we said. "Might we not take her there with us? There are doctors there who care only for eyes. Do you think she would be too homesick?"

They lifted incredulous eyes to us. "Oh! she wouldn't be homesick." They stared at the object of such strange fortune.

And the child stood, twisting her apron, the little smile still awakening the dimples in her cheeks.

"You goin' on the railroad?"

The railroad had but lately been built up into our part of the country.

"Why, yes."

Then they arose to the occasion. "Sure! Take her," they said. "They don't look right, them eyes. Take

her. She won't be no trouble. She's a good little thing. Now, Ethel, mind you're good. Mind you don't make no fuss. You'll yet a lickin' when you get back if I hear you do."

The little dimpled face and pretty eyes were lifted sweetly.

"She'll be good."

"Yes," whispered the little girl.

The doctor in Denver agreed that her eyes were "queer," even as queer as they looked. "Trachoma," he threw at us over his glasses. "Better be careful how your own child handles the things this one touches. It's very contagious."

"But, is it curable?"

"Yes. She may need an operation, and anyway, a year's treatment. The operation—if I decide on it—I can manage here easily enough. But the treatment—is there anyone up there on the reservation who will follow it up faithfully? That's her only salvation, conscientious regularity in giving the treatment."

"There's a matron at the Government school where this child is," we said. "And there's a doctor."

"A doctor? What kind of a one?"

His question embarrassed us a little. "Oh, an Agency doctor; the usual kind."

"Well you can tell him what I say. I'll give you the directions."

But we knew better than this. "You'd better write a letter to him," we ventured. "Agency doctors don't always like suggestions from the laity."

He laughed a little. "I'll write the letter," he said. "Anyhow he probably knows enough to realize that the case is a serious one."

But we felt that we must understand more fully than this. "What if they should somehow neglect her and she should not be cured?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "In that case," he said, "she'd go blind, that's all."

"So many do," we murmured.

"Didn't your doctor up there look at her eyes, ever think they needed looking at, even?"

"No."

He glanced at us a trifle incredulously.

"There are lots of blind people on the reservation, children even."

He stared long at the child. "I can easily believe it."

At the end of our visit, and fortified with our letter to the Agency physician, we bore our little girl back to the reservation. To the matron we unbosomed ourselves at length.

"He said that absolutely she must never use the same towel as any body else, nor be allowed to sleep in the same bed with another child. The trouble is very contagious."

She listened to us politely but with unmistakable indifference, perhaps incredulity.

"It's the same disease that makes those white eyes so many of them have."

"Oh."

"And this stuff is to be used night and morning according to the directions, and at least during the rest of this school year."

"The doctor told me. What did you say they call it?"

"Trachoma."

She spelled it after us. It was evidently a new word to her.

"Trachoma?"

"Yes. And that's one of the diseases they shut immigrants out for, you know. It's so contagious."

"But it's curable?"

"Yes, with the right treatment, and care."

"I see."

We felt that we had said enough.

"Well, Ethel dear, good-bye."

The child edged up close to me.

"Can't you thank her?" said the matron.

"Thank you," whispered the little girl.

"It sure was good of you to take her," vouchsafed the matron.

"Oh! She was no trouble. A dear little thing! If it'll only cure her."

From that moment of course the child ceased being under our control. But I made frequent enquiries of her.

"Night *and* morning?" I asked.

" 'Most always."

"Not really always?"

"Sometimes she forgets, I guess."

"And you use only your own towel?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you sleep by yourself?"

She hung her little head. "I sleeps with Mamie."

"But you know you shouldn't, dear."

"She bese cold at night."

"Who told you to sleep with her?"

"Miss Raney."

I went to the matron.

"But they want to sleep together," she said. "They asked to. Beside that we're short of beds. And then also it saves bedding. The laundry girls are awfully over-worked."

I went to the doctor.

"I leave all that to the matron," he said. "I really cannot interfere with matters pertaining entirely to her own department."

I even went to the agent, tentatively, and very humbly.

"You should see the doctor." He was both cordial and solicitous. "He's the one to control those things."

"Then you don't think it best to speak to Miss Raney yourself?"

"Frankly, no," he answered. "You see I should be interfering in the doctor's province."

I thanked him rather vaguely.

But he checked me hastily. "Rather I thank you," he cried. "It is more than good of you to take so much interest in my little charges."

Long before the end of the year they were not giving her the treatment at all.

"But why, Ethel?"

"I guess the bottle's empty," she said.

LITTLE THINGS

I

He was a very small boy, and in September they had brought him, reluctant, to the boarding school. There the authorities had scrubbed and dressed him. He had rather enjoyed the first of these novelties, though the big boy who worked over him, incited by the matron, had been none too gentle with him. And he had been actually fascinated by his new and unfamiliar clothes; shirt and shoes he comprehended, though the mystery of stockings and garters and trousers was deep.

That first day all went well enough with him. It was the second, his first morning of awaking in the long dormitory, that put his powers to the test. To begin with, he felt as though his bed were out of doors; no brooding teepee walls hung just beyond the reach of his short arms, muting so little the soft call of the prairie wind. Here in this strange place of space and beds a great bell clanged; then someone gruffly stirred him to action. Slowly, puzzling, he applied his garments. It helped a little that so many of them went in pairs. His shirt he put on last, leaving it dangling decently over his trousers, as in the camps his calico home-made shirt-substitute had covered that part of him left bare where his leggings ceased. When he took his place in the line formed to go to the dining

room he felt himself so successfully apparelled that he really could not understand why the matron, speaking very low and quick, pointed a finger at him, just as a big boy seized him by the collar and yanked him back into the dormitory.

Subsequently, during breakfast, he felt none too comfortable with his shirt wadded thus tightly into the top of his nether garment.

It is so hard to remember what you learned yesterday, and that even when they also spank you and send you back a dozen times to the dormitory to readjust your various, and apparently superfluous, ill-put parts! It always would seem illogical to him, he thought, to have that shirt of his curtailed so wastefully.

After the lapse of a few weeks came a certain Saturday when the matron, in rusty skirt and dressing jacket, standing gingerly upon the lowest step of the staircase directed the efforts of two big boys, armed with buckets and mops.

In the nearby doorway appeared the little untidy figure of a boy, one corner of the bottom of his shirt protruded saucily above his trousers, his unlaced boots flapped, his recently cut hair bristled. But his eyes were fixed in fascinated incredulity upon the matron; from rusty skirt they ranged to hanging dressing jacket, fixed themselves, glared. Then in joyous, conscious imitation he raised a stubby forefinger and levelled it

at the matron's middle. His English came to him as an inspiration.

"What's the matter you?" he cried. "Shirt-tail all time hangin' out!"

II

The big girl wrapped a corner of her blue "hickory" apron about her chilly hands and edged a little so that her back would be more to the wind that forced itself in at the door of the girls' building, by which we were standing.

"And when I was beading' them moccasins for my little sister last summer," she continued, "that little girl used to be beggin' me to let her try them on. 'Just try them on,' she'd say, ' 'cause nobody don't never bead moccasins for me.' And then when we all got our money last payment time, she was beggin' her grandma to buy her a little shawl, 'even one o' them sheets,' she said. But you know her grandma, she can't. Them folks, they so poor. My! she's awful thin."

In the dormitory to the right a child's voice screamed out suddenly. There followed the sound of a scuffle, of two vigorous spanks; anl then the child's voice again wailing angrily.

Another big, blue-clad girl came, laughing, from the dormitory. In her hand she held a pair of new, small, clumsy government boots. These she lifted to my view.

"Four times now I've taken these away from that kid." She laughed again, holding her hands over her ears. "My! but can't she yell. Four times she be takin' these new boots to bed with her. You see when she first come the matron she didn't have no new ones to fit her so she have to have a worn pair left over from last year. So she only just gettin' her new ones this week. Now every night she hide 'em in her bed. This time she have 'em right on her feet laced up tight. The girl that sleep with her she tole on her. My! them little kids. They do be such a bother."

III

By the headgate of the lateral of the great new irrigating system of the reservation sat an old man wrapped in a sheet, his summer blanket. He was watching with contemplative eye the water sluicing under the raised gate.

A young mixed-blood, mounted on a pony, stood beside him, watching also, but professionally, the inflowing water.

Said the mixed-blood, with signs, "This is a fine ditch!"

The old man assented.

The horseman gazed across the valley, his eyes following the straight course of the laterals which carried the water at an apparently slightly rising grade across the sage brush to the canal on the other side.

Straight and luminous as the flight of an arrow the water gleamed in the ditches. Far up the stream which fed this whole irrigating system, and out of sight, were built the high masonry walls of the main intake.

The Indian followed the gaze of the younger man. His old eyes rested on the emerald of alfalfa patches across the valley, first season's fruit of this new ditch.

"Some day we'll have lots of hayfields down here," proclaimed the horseman.

Again the old man assented. Then he eyed the ditch-rider curiously. "That ditch over there looks as though it was higher than this creek." His old hands formed the descriptive signs.

"Well, maybe it is," agreed the rider, condescendingly.

"A long time ago, when I was a young man," mused the old hands, "water used always to run down hill." A little malicious gleam crept into his eyes. "But the white man, he's so smart he's changed all that. Now he makes it run the other way."

A MAN

HALF OF the tribe was starving that winter. I am afraid there was no doubt of it. We heard it on every hand. It was just at the time when the blind step-daughter of Goes-up-Hill died. They said that for three days before her end she and her people had nothing to eat but dog meat—no flour, no coffee even. The snow was deep and drifted. The family lived far out in the reservation on a little tributary of the river. They could not come to the Agency for help nor could any of us have got down to them. In fact we knew nothing of the case until everything was over. Mercifully the girl was ill for only a few days. It was Goes-up-Hill himself, his hair falling unkept over his shoulders, his ragged blanket pinched about his lean form—covered, that is, with the Indian sack cloth and ashes—who told us about it. He spoke—being one of the old timers who knew no English—in signs, meager, but definite, even poetical. After he was done with his story there was nothing for it at so late a day but to shake his old hand, to look the sympathy we felt.

Then came a sudden thaw. With the sound of an explosion the ice dam on another tributary went out. It happened early in the night. There were some sheep camps on the low meadows bordering the creek. The sheep had been rounded up and brought in off the

frozen range to wait the near coming of the lambs. That gave a few of the Indians work in the lambing pens, a very, very few. None of them as yet, however, had received any pay. Ah! the sheep that went down that night. Right over the fences of their own corrals the water carried them. And as sheep are poor-spirited creatures who make but little fight for life, for only a few minutes did they struggle in the icy water, then huddled and still, with boards and sacks and other extraneous things, the tide flooded them down toward the main river.

All the "upper" Indians—those living close about the Agency—were laughing, though their laughing was often wan, as the reports came to us.

"They say them people down there just stand on the bank with long poles and fish in the drowned sheep. It's all right with the sheep men. They don't mind how many of them they take if they'll bring back the pelts."

Those above the forks on the main river did not of course benefit by this freak of prodigality of awakening spring.

That was the time—if you lived here you'd remember it as we do—that the stage, on a piece of river road, was overturned by the rush of the water. The driver saw the danger coming and tried to get up into the little hills above the road, but he was too late. His horses, held down by the weight of the wrecked stage,

were drowned. But he, upborne by some shred of grim grit, extricated himself from ice and débris and dragged himself somehow to the shelter of the shore. But the mail sacks went down with the rush of the water. Then the ice of the half-frozen river concealed them, though many Indians there were who stood on the banks, watching the flow of the oily water, hoping for a glimpse of just one of them. You see immediately after the thing happened the Post-office Department offered a reward of five dollars for each sack that should be recovered. The very day after the disaster, a young man called Charley Good Woman found one of them, half buried in the mud. With great difficulty he secured it and bore it in dubious triumph to the local post-office where he was immediately, and to his own bewilderment, handed his five dollars. It was like finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

That event brought one man at least out of every teepee in the neighborhood of the river, to sit long hours on his horse, his lariat, its noose assuredly free, grasped in a ready hand, his eyes fixed to the point of hypnotism, upon the sweep of the current.

Among these equestrian statues, half clad, cold, daring not quite to hope and yet capable of suffering all the pangs of disappointment, there sat one oldish man called Howling Wolf. Of all of that lean throng there was perhaps none as poor as he. Ah! do not pity

him. His condition was brought about mainly through his own fault. For he was a man who drank sometimes, feeling as he did within his old body a craving, which never, in all the days covered by the reach of his memory, had been satisfied. And also he gambled. You see that no apology can be offered for him. No one could claim, even his most friendly excusers, that any unsatisfied longing set him gambling. In fact by every canon of morality his action must be condemned. For was he not thereby taking food from the very mouth of his wife, the clothes from her back? Of children they had mercifully none. Those that had been born to them had died little and long, long ago. Even the memory of them had become confused, had emerged itself into a sort of dull ache, which in turn mingled itself with the pangs of his unsatisfied body. Often in his teepee he would sit on the ground-made bed, smoking—tobacco, when he had it, chopped willow bark, choking and bitter, when he had not the other—staring at the hard-packed dirt of the floor, at the embers of the fire; going over eternally the past, the days of youth, of austere young manhood, the courting days when down in the bushes by the river he had played on his flute to her, notes liquid and alluring... At this point he would lift his old dreamy eyes to his wife who sat, fat and huddled, on her side of the tent, smoking too her short Indian pipe, staring also at the

hard-packed floor. And during the long, long days he would think of the vanished game; of the days of achievement, gone also; and of the time when he as well, would have slipped away, when to the hillside, amid the wailing of the women they would carry his body—as he had followed many, many bodies,—wrapped in new quilts, stark, insensate at last. He would picture them lifting him from the old farm wagon—the borrowed wagon—in which he was making this his last trip, and laying him in his shallow bed. And then he knew that they would cover him up tenderly away from the sunlight that allured, away from his accustomed aching. And he was aware that thence-forth his wife would be homeless and poorer than ever, living out her days on the carelessly given charity of her neighbors, trying with less and less hope, but always patiently, to pay the bills she had incurred at the store, even the bills for the new quilts in which she had swathed him for his burial. At this point he would get up suddenly and striding out of his tent would go to where his last pony was picking about amongst the brush, and he would mount it bareback as it was and with an end of his lariat about its neck for a bridle he would lope steadily across the snow, across the ice of the river to that little town where distraction and temporary oblivion might be obtained.

At last of course he would be forced to come back;

at night, probably; his lariat gone perhaps, or his blanket, or the handkerchief from about his neck, or even his hat. For luck seemed never to come his way, though his little bag of "medicine," suspended by its dirty twisted string he always kept hidden securely away inside his shirt. But the "medicine" was old, and the white men of the little town—those of them who would play with him—knew a trick or two of twice its worth. The younger men of the tribe had indeed learned from the whites defensive cheating at cards, but not so he; he was too unprogressive, too "Indian."

Thus just before the thaw he had come back to the old teepee and the old wife, utterly depleted. Then unexpectedly hope, that will-o'-the-wisp, had lit for him in his blindness a little trembling, enticing flame; and so he too sat motionless by the river, watching for the water to give up a lost mail sack, in his hands a borrowed lariat.

And as he sat—it was the fourth day now, yet only the one sack had been found—he saw a man on the other shore, a white man mounted on a solid cow pony, come slipping and sliding down the opposite bank, and gingerly make his way out upon the rotten ice. But after a moment his eyes old and smoke-dimmed grew tired facing the ice-glare and he dropped them to the open water close at his feet. He gasped,—his old heart swelled big within him. For there almost within

reach of his hand he saw at last the object of his long vigil. One corner of it projected above the tide. He lifted his heels to force his horse down into the flood—then suddenly his ears were assailed by a great sound. There came to him the crash of an explosion, and mingled with it a terrible wild cry. Staring out across the river he saw black water yawning where had been the ice. Cowboy and horse had disappeared. But even as he looked the man came to the surface. He floundered, groped, caught precariously a side of jagged ice. The mail sack, even at his side, sailed slowly by, the ice crust below waiting to secrete it again.

With the swiftness of Nature herself Howling Wolf had his lariat uncoiled and like a meteor flash sent its sinuous length out over the oily water. It caught the half-submerged man fairly about the shoulders.

Fortunately the teepee was near. His thin old arm supported and guided the staggering man. Arrived there it was with the greatest difficulty that he and his wife got off the man's already freezing clothes. They put him in their bed, for they had no change of raiment to offer him while his own things thawed and dried. They covered him with all they had. They wiped his streaming face and hair. Then they boiled coffee and brought him some of it in a bowl. The smell of the sage brush fire, of the coffee, and the steam from the drying clothes, filled the tent. The white man, sick and

faint, lay chattering between the quilts. Dinner time came but brought with it no dinner; it went as it had come. A little later they all partook of coffee. With signs the old man made his apology, his face twisted with distress for his inhospitality.

"There's only this," he seemed to say. "We have no food."

He had gone twice to the river to look for signs of the stranger's horse only to return and report that there were none.

At last the white man, restored, dressed himself again and got up to take his leave. He spoke to the old couple in English, which neither could understand, making what awkward explanatory signs he could recollect.

"I remember you, all right. You're the old feller we cleaned out the other day over at Slim's place. Gee! They've cleaned me out since. I haven't got enough in my pockets to jingle and now my horse and saddle are gone. I'm afoot, I am, walkin' for my livin', these days! Say, bad luck's a rotten thing, ain't it? Well, here's four bits, every cent I got on the earth. I want your wife to take it. It'll buy you a little grub anyhow. I'll walk over to the store at the Forks, I know the feller that runs it. I guess he'll give me a hand-out to eat and maybe a job—" Then each in turn he shook solemnly by the hand. "I'm right grateful to you for

what you done for me. I'm expecting to go out of this country, but if I should ever come back—well, anyhow, so long."

Standing outside the door of the teepee, the fifty cent piece tied for safe keeping in a fold of the wife's sleeve, the old couple stood, shading their eyes, watching the man trudge cheerfully across the snowy waste.

From inside the tent came the smell of boiling coffee.

LAZARUS

THEY STOPPED their wagon at our hitching post, tying their narrow-built, bare-footed ponies to the rack. Their skeleton dogs, curling themselves up into furry cocoons, crouched down upon the frozen gravel away from the wind. Then they came in, the young man trailing in the wake of his father. It was one of those bitter cold days that so often visit us in Wyoming, but cold days that do not look cold; like smiles disguising bitter words; like Death itself, visibly serene, yet the very state of dissolution. The whole world, or at least the wide stretch of it to be seen from our ranch windows, was gala with sunlight; yet under cover of that sunlight, intangible, the teeth of the cold, like manacles, bit into the flesh of the unwary.

In Wyoming when we enter house or tent in winter we go straight to the stove. So deep-rooted is this habit that to do so has become almost a matter of etiquette. Even in summer we congregate about our empty stoves, smiling and talking to each other across their idle blackness.

I drew up chairs for my guests. It was morning. There was house-work still pending, so I moved about near them, busying myself as I might, not wishing to seem inattentive. They pulled their chairs close to the stove. Stooping, the young man opened the drafts.

They drew off their gloves and held toward the fire their hands, cramped with the cold—old gnarled hands and young thin ones. Removing their hats they laid them down upon the floor beside them. Their heads were tied up, hood-fashion, in faded bandannas. They were dressed in the heterogeneous vestments of border civilization. A single pair of overalls formed the lower garment of the son. A knitted muffler enveloped the father's neck. Flimsy canvas moccasins shod them. They wore no overcoats.

For our Indian guests we always kept on hand a sack of tobacco. This with the book of papers I now passed to them. They gave me smiles of acknowledgement. Then with hands still awkward from the cold, they helped themselves sparingly, rolling their economical cigarettes.

The young man, his shoulders bent heavily, his claw-like hands extended, hollow of chest, spoke in a husky voice.

"My Father he come here ask you find him a story in the Bible."

"A story in the Bible?"

"Yes."

And watching us, in his native tongue the old man spoke suddenly. His words sounded emphatically. With his hands, one of which held the cigarette, he enforced their meaning by accompanying them with

the conventional gestures of the Indian language of signs. His deep eyes were upon his son.

The soft odor of tobacco filled the room. The heat from the open stove made the air heavy. The young man, bending forward, his eyes upon the floor, slowly inhaling and exhaling the smoke of his cigarette, listened attentively. He coughed.

"My Father he say one time he go to the Indian church and the minister he tell that story. Since then he always thinkin' 'bout it. He want to hear that story 'gain. It's in the Bible, he says. You got lots o' books, he guess you know it."

"Can he tell me what it was about?"

The young man coughed again. He threw the stump of his cigarette into the stove.

"It 'bout a man, a white man, a chief, a king, I guess you call him. This man big man; he have lots to eat, lots o' good clothes, plenty money. All time he just sit in his house and everybody workin' for him. He smoke, he have good time."

From this beginning I felt dubious about eventually recognizing the story.

"But one day a man come, sit down on the ground by his door. He stay there all the time. This man he awful poor. He just got rags on him for clothes; he don't comb his hair and it hang down all wild; he got sores on his legs, on his body. The dogs they come

close to him, they bother him good deal. He awful hungry." He lifted his face to me. With one thin yellow hand he formed the expressive sign which, turned against the breast of the maker, says: Hunger is killing me, Hunger has conquered me.

"I understand," I said.

The young man coughed, smiled apologetically.

"My Father, he say that sick man so hungry he forget that chief got hard heart, one day he call out and beg him for some scraps of food. But that big man always laughin', talkin', havin' good time. He don't hear him. He always lookin' the other way. That man wait long time but nobody give him nothin'. Then that poor man he try steal the bones away from the dogs. But he too weak. Them dogs they all time fight him off. Then he sit down by the door again, and he feel bad in his heart and his sores hurt him and he awful hungry. At last by the door he see a swill bucket and he reach out his hand and he pull things out of it and he eat them; peelings, anything." He stopped, coughing.

I got up suddenly and went over to the book shelves.

The old man straightened himself up. He looked at his boy, he looked at me; he spoke vehemently. Then he leaned back in his chair. The son lifted his haggard face, his eyes glowed above hollow cheeks.

"My Father, he say, long ago when he young man,

it's different, but today the Indians been like that sick man, they so hungry all time they learn now to be glad when white people let them eat just them thrown-away things."

And, hollow of chest, he too sank back in his seat.

AT THE END OF HIS ROPE

It is not often that a man has to undergo two identical and very hard experiences. Such however, was the fate of Jerome Rising Elk. It seemed almost incredible that twice the same bitter thing should happen to him. But let me tell you this story. Soon after he left school, as quite a young man he had married, in the Indian way, and he had set up house keeping for himself and his bride in a little white tent pitched close to her father's home. In time there had come a baby, and at its coming she had left him.

Who shall conceive the horror of her last day? The young moaning mother lying on the floor amongst dingy quilts, the gloom of the teepee, the helpless sympathetic, women-faces about her, the old weeping grandmother, her mother, a baby at her breast, her own last anguish fresh in her mind: the flies, the heat, the sneaking dogs, the day-long agony; and then the spent flesh breaking at last, the thread of life snapping, even as the infant's cry proclaimed the birth.

The girl's mother had taken the child. For a few months she nursed it with her own; then—for who shall starve one's own for the sake of an outsider?—then its wailing cry had ceased and they had laid its little lean body in a grave hollowed out of the dry earth near its mother's.

Jerome and his wife did not live at our end of the reservation. I scarcely knew either of them by sight, but their story, the sad story of the manner of her death, was told everywhere about the camps; the women listened, wonderingly, holding close their own, thinking in their hearts: "If it had been I!"

Two or three years passed. Like a homeless bird the young man, a boy of some education for a reservation Indian, drifted from camp to camp, made long journeys and visits to neighboring tribes, in Oklahoma, in the Dakotas. He had no one to do for him, to care for his clothes, bead his moccasins. At her death all her possessions and most of his had gone in the Indian way to her people. He lodged where he might, stretched his welcome, the wide Indian welcome, to the breaking point, flitted from home to home. At last, as was inevitable, he married again.

The second wife was a girl from our school. I knew her well. A lovely girl she was, a slender, strong, lightfooted thing; eyes clear and starry. To see her walk you were reminded of the figure in the Old Testament "Light of foot as a wild roe."

Her name was Ada. They came down to our little church to be married. I remember the day, my kitchen apron on, my sleeves rolled up, right from my washing, I ran over to the church to make the necessary second

witness. Jerome was neatly dressed in store-bought clothes and boots, a bright handkerchief tied cow-boy-wise about his neck. She stood by him in her trim "squaw dress." Its graceful lines, as those of the shawl drooping from her shoulders, gave a lovely almost classic look to her figure. Her pretty head was bowed humbly. Frankly and without hesitation together they went through the binding service. Of all their friends and relatives only her father had come with them. He and I were their witnesses. I wrote my name, he made his "thumb mark" on their certificate. Then I hurried back to my washing.

It was next winter or early spring that we sat one night in the living room of our ranch house, my husband and I, on either side of the lamp, reading. Suddenly I heard a faint rattling noise as of a wagon driven fast down the frozen road, distant from our house nearly half a mile. Very distinctly there reached us also another sound. The book dropped from my fingers and I was on my feet in an instant.

"That's crying," I said. "Somebody's dead. They're wailing. Maybe it's May—or Lottie's little boy."

I ran to the door and opened it on the frosty night. The unseen wagon was clattering on down the road. Several voices were crying, women's voices, raising their weird despairing lament into the night. Then a man's voice joined the strange chorus. We stood

together listening to that sound, which, though I've heard a hundred times, can never lose its power to shake, to pierce.

"Poor Indians! Poor people! Death everywhere—suffering without help and always death—I suppose we'll hear tomorrow who it is."

We heard. Soon after breakfast some one came riding fast toward the house from the lower gate. When I hear anyone approaching at that rate of speed, I have no need to look out of the window to know who it is. There's a blind boy who always rides like that. Seth, they call him in English. But his Indian name is at once tragic and poetic: "He-sits-in-the-night." The sand flew from beneath his little buck-skin's scampering feet. He stopped near the house door. I went out. At the sound of the door he called to me.

"Where's that ole' hitchin' post?"

I laughed as I put a hand on the buck-skin's bridle to lead him to it.

"Come on in," I said. He got down lightly and followed the sound of my steps into the house.

"It's cold."

I pushed a chair for him close to the stove. "There," I said. "Sit down and tell me all the news."

The boy, welcome everywhere for his kindly nature and witty mind, his helpfulness, his pluck, acted as a

sort of walking newspaper for the tribe. From Seth you were always sure of getting the last bit of gossip.

"Last night we hear bad news," he began.

"Who died?" I asked. "I heard them driving by here and crying. I hope it wasn't May."

"Yes," he said. "It's Jerome's wife. She die down below at the Forks of the river. That's her mother and father you hear cryin'. They was campin' at the school and my father he go up to tell them 'bout it. They drive way down to the Forks in the dark last night."

"Oh! Seth—" I cried. "Not Ada!" Pretty light-footed Ada with her starry sweet eyes.

"She borned a baby," explained Sits-in-the-night. "A girl, I think. It didn't die."

So it was all to begin over again; the miserable business of trying to raise in the camps a motherless baby. I had seen it attempted so many times, almost always to end in failure.

"Who'll take the baby?"

"I never hear; I guess the mother."

Poor Ada. Poor pretty young wife! Poor motherless, hungry little child!

It was almost summer time when I heard of the baby again; they lived so far from us, forty or fifty miles, and quite off in a direction by itself. Mollie, one of Ada's school mates, told me about it.

"No, it ain't doin' well at all. They say it just cries and cries. You know the grandmother, she don't want to do nothin' but play cards. She leaves it all alone in her teepee and she goes off gamblin'. The women they hears it cryin' when they passes her tent. Ada used to be just crazy 'bout babies. My! I guess she'd feel bad if she knew how her little baby cries."

"Oh! Mollie!" I said, "Oh! Mollie!" The thought of that miserable little one haunted me for days.

The end of the story came before long. Heaven knows the facts were bald and bitter enough.

It seems that in the end the young father had not been able to endure longer the child's neglect. If you with your superior white man's way of settling every one's difficulties for him out of hand, think he should have interfered sooner you probably do not know that with the Indians the child belongs exclusively to the mother and her people, the father, indeed, having no voice in its disposition. It was only because Jerome was an old school boy, versed a little in the white man's ways, that he undertook at all to manage the affairs of his motherless little one. In doing so he had to face public opinion and the opposition of both his relatives and those of his wife. But at last he took it away from the card-playing old grandmother; went to her tent and got it bodily, its rags, its bottle, a can or two of condensed milk. Horseback as he was he

carried it down the valley a number of miles to the cabin of a friend of his, Lee Hunting Wolf, an old school boy like himself.

Lee and his wife made their guests welcome to the little they possessed. The Indian way is always open-handed even to impoverishment. The woman took the baby in hand, washed a bit cleaner the murky, encrusted bottle, changed its clothes, warmed the little feet. For a while it was quiet, drowsy after the long unwonted ride. Then it began to fret, to wail; its crying became incessant. From the can the woman put milk into the bottle, added water, a little sugar, warmed it, tried to make the child take hold of it, suck—but in vain. It wailed and cried ceaselessly, distressingly. From a spoon they endeavored to feed it their weak sweetened coffee, then even some of the soup in which the meat of their supper had been boiled. Its distress only increased. Bed time came and still it fretted, twisting its body, its arms writhing, its legs drawn up. The woman as she lay in bed held it on her arm, changing it about from one side to the other. Not one of them was able to sleep.

At last her husband got up and taking a quilt with him went outside and lay down on the ground under the wagon, seeking a little rest. The woman continued to hush the baby, patting it, talking patiently to it. Its father, in the other bunk, lay rigid, motionless,

covered even to the head with his striped blanket; a long, sinister, despairing form. He made even no sign of being aware of his little one's distress.

The long night wore on. At last the early dawn of midsummer began to show faintly in the night sky, over the distorted shapes of the Bad Lands to the east, amongst the stars. The light wind of the morning sprang up. Outside the house meadow-larks sang loudly their sweet insistent tune. The baby had at last fallen into an exhausted doze. The woman slipped it cautiously from her arm, and getting up from the bed stepped noiselessly out of the door into the sweet morning sunlight. The man in the other bed still slept, apparently. The woman went to the wagon and, stooping down, woke her husband. Heavily and stupidly after the weary night, they set about their morning tasks. He gathered together his little band of horses, and mounting bare-back on one, drove them before him, down to the stream half a mile or more away. The woman gathered chips of wood and made a fire in the old cook-stove that stood on the ground, just outside her door. She brought meat from the house and set it on in a black kettle to boil. She put coffee, sugar and water into an old smoky coffee pot and placed that over another hole. Then she sat down on the ground by the stove and began mixing a kind of dough, shaping it with her hands, rounding it on a plate, slashing it in

the centre four times with a knife, that it might fry, doughnut-wise. While she worked the man in the house came to the door and shut it. She heard the key turn in the lock. If this seemed strange to her, she in her stupid, sleepy condition, scarcely gave it a thought.

The house was built on high, dry ground, well back from the river where the pest of mosquitoes made summer camping almost unendurable. Unconsciously, she kept looking down the trail for the return of her husband. She felt shaken by the night. Her own last baby had died two years ago, or it would be that long come Sun Dance time, and the feeling of this little ailing creature on her arm had moved her pitifully. A band of loose horses, mares with their foals, fed near the house, switching savagely with their tails at the encroaching flies. The little colts scampered about, whinnying shrilly. She wondered in her tired, hurt mind at the ways of God. Here were babies at their mothers' sides, fat with their mothers' milk, while that human baby was deprived so utterly. Dexterously she she turned the cake of fried-bread in the boiling grease. Through the shimmering heat waves about the stove, she saw her husband riding up the trail, the coiled end of the lariat which served him for a bridle, in his hand. The other horses trotted ahead of him. The animals were switching their tails, her husband slashing about

his head and hands with a willow branch. He slipped off his horse near to her, throwing the coiled end of the lariat on the ground.

"Whee!" he cried. "Mosquitoes!" He still beat about with his branch. The sides of the horses were black with the little pests, dancing in clouds in the sunlight above and around them. The woman smiled.

"The food's nearly ready," she said.

Then suddenly was shattered the peace of the morning. A horrible sound of sinister import burst upon their ears, the thunder of a gun fired at close range.... The report could have come from nowhere but within the house. The woman was on her feet in an instant. They both ran to the door.

The woman seized the knob, rattled it ineffectually, beat upon the boards with her bare hands; the man thrust at it with his shoulder. It failed to yield. The woman rushed around to the one window, but the man inside had screened it with its calico curtain. Lee ran for the axe, returned with it, in a couple of blows had the door off its hinges, prone. After all the woman cowered back to let her husband pass first into that place of fear. She followed him however by a step or two. Simultaneously they beheld Jerome Rising Elk. He had got himself so propped in a corner that the shot that had killed him had left him sitting upright as in life. His hair was braided carefully, his face and head

anointed with the red "medicine" paint; he was dressed in his best, dressed indeed by his own hand for his burial. His striped blanket was wrapped around him, drawn close about his shoulders; his hand that had fired the shot was beneath its folds so that the bodily destruction was not visible. Only at his feet, as he sat, was a dreadful thing,—a red, red pool on the mud of the floor, a pool that spread insidiously even as they looked.

The man ran forward and pulled the blanket off one shoulder but with a cry and eyes that in horror sought those of his wife, he replaced it hastily. With the disarranging of his wrappings the man's limp hand, somehow entangled in the lock of the six-shooter, slipped from his knee and fell toward the floor, dragged down by its horrid burden. Above, the half-opened eyes, the mysterious painted face, showed no change.

On the other bed, the nipple of the bottle still in her little mouth, the baby lay sleeping.

THE LOVE WOMAN

THEY CAME to me tentatively, their shawls wrapped about their calico-clad forms. At my bidding they sat by the stove, thrusting out their muddy moccasins to the heat. They talked a little, but shyly, their eyes searching me. Assuredly there was something they strove to say. I bided my time knowing that in all probability they would get it out at last. They turned their rugged faces toward me, their eyes keen, though always slightly veiled.

One of them spoke softly. "Pauline, she goin' to born a baby pretty soon."

"I know."

"Did you hear that?"

"Oh yes!"

"Her mother talk a lot about that baby. They don't want it."

"I suppose not, poor little soul!"

I looked around the room which, as it sometimes seemed to me, ached with its emptiness, the empty corner, the empty pillow, the drawer full of empty little clothes, and my hands in my lap, emptiest of all.

"She can't be much more than sixteen."

"She is sixteen."

"And of course he can't marry her because he has a wife already."

"The old folks always say when they was young, girls didn't have babies that way."

"So I've heard."

"Her mother talks awful bad to her about this one."

"It's too late now to talk."

"Yes, pretty soon she'll born it."

I sighed.

"Her mother she think may be they give it away... She wonderin' if perhaps you'll take it."

"I!"

"There's no one else," they faltered.

I stared and stared at nothing, my empty hands lying in my lap. "Does Pauline want me to?"

"She say so."

"Ah! But when it's once born she'll feel differently."

The girls looked pensively at the fire.

I got up suddenly and walked across the empty room.....Then I came back.

"When you see them, Pauline or her mother, tell them—I'll take it. I'm willing. If they don't want to keep it, why shouldn't I? I've got clothes for it,—I've got everything. Will it be soon?"

"Maybe next month."

"Oh!" There would be an infinity of weary days stretching between this one and "next month."

We sat in silence listening, I suppose, each to the beating of her own heart.

They got up at length. "Well, I guess we go." And shuffling and rustling faintly they crossed the room and slipped out, a little side-ways, through the half-opened door.

It was a couple of weeks after this that looking one day out of the window over the valley, I saw some one crossing our fields. It was an Indian woman, and she was alone. This latter fact was so unusual that it invested her at once with a touch of mystery; in some way set her apart. She sped over the little bridge, passed the hitching rack, stepped delicately upon the gravel surrounding the house. She walked rapidly and in her stride there was something eager, even resolute. As she advanced her garments fluttered about her, the fringes of her shawl, her ribbon-trimmed skirts, her wide, beaded leggins. Her blanket was drawn up over her head.

Then came the sound of fingers, fluttering also against my door.

"Come in," I called out.

She entered, bending a trifle forward. With a back-reaching hand she closed the door, her eyes searching the room. Then she slipped her blanket down from off her head. Her sleek, very black hair, was brushed to glossiness, beads encircled her neck. Her dress was new and bright in color, ribbons and a small bag of Indian scent were pinned on her breast. Her snug-

fitting moccasins were daintily beaded. Her cheeks and the parting of her hair showed the faint tinting of paint. It was Pauline. There was a child-like quality about her, almost elfin. She was short, reaching I should say barely to the shoulder of the gaunt women of her tribe. In her smile, a little set in her soft, parted lips, in her small piquant face and most of all in her darting swift glances, there was something that recalled the Japanese.

Holding her shawl carefully about her, she dropped into a chair, laughing a little. One slim hand she drew quickly from its hiding place beneath her shawl's folds. Its delicate fingers, their nails a trifle long, were clasped about a tiny bunch of violets. Then, her head cocked a little to one side, she held them up to me.

"See, I find these. They're the very first ones."

Perforce I came near to admire them, but instead, I looked at her. She suggested dimly a kitten, eyeing a darting butterfly, I thought.

Perhaps because she was of a nature more direct than that of most of the women, or because discretion no longer tramelled her, or because she had formed a habit of choosing and seizing suddenly, she did not hesitate and secrete and essay, as do the Indians generally, but turned to me at once with her errand.

"I wanted to ask if you could lend me some money." Above the hand holding the violets she smiled at me.

"You know I goin' to need it soon and we've not got any, really." She laughed something both shy and daring in the sound. "The Indians goin' to have payment in two months, that's what we hear, but that's not soon enough for me. I can pay you back then. Will you do it for me? I don't want to starve when I'm sick." Again a low laugh escaped her. The sleek head was tilted a little, the soft lips parted in anticipation, the questing eyes astir.

"How much did you think you'd need?" I really had no intention of lending the money to her.

"I suppose five dollars. Is that too much?" Her smile was almost indulgent, as though from some plane far removed from me she looked back upon me.

"Oh! my dear, that's a good deal."

She made with her hands a deprecating gesture, gazed at me, sighed.

"Yes, indeed it is." And all of a sudden something plaintive came into her eyes, her mouth, pouting, drooping at the corners. She stood up, the hand that held the violets thrust suddenly out to steady her; ribbons, fringes, skirts fluttered about her. "Yes, I suppose I askin' too much."

The opinion I held of her clamored in me for utterance.

"You're only sixteen, Pauline, aren't you? Just think!"

She looked at me sharply, in her face a quick expression of unearthly wisdom. And then feeling poignantly anew the emptiness of the room and made a little reckless, a little tender by the consciousness of it, I turned impulsively. "I'll let you have it," I said, and wondered at hearing the words spoken by my own voice.

A sudden dimple showed in the curve of her cheek and seeing it you felt as though something which had been lost was on the instant returned to its own place. A sense of proportion came to you, a comfortable feeling of fitness.

She fluttered across the room to me holding out her hand for the extended cheque. Then she stood by me turning it in her fingers, her sleek head bowed, her wandering eyes bent upon it, her face pensive, the dimple fled. In a moment she raised her head quickly and looked me straight in the eyes. She stiffened a little, her lips parted as though she would have spoken. But, although I waited, no word escaped her. Instead a tremor passed over her face leaving it set and wan. She drew her shawl carefully about her, stowing away her cheque somewhere in the recesses of her clothes.

"I'm thankin' you very much," she said. Her voice was soft as are the voices of Indian women, but unlike the majority of theirs it was keyed a trifle high.

She opened the door. "Goodbye." She smiled back

to me over her shoulder, and, fluttering and eager, she sped away across the field.

Then I heard that the baby was born.

"Have you seen it?" I asked one of the girls.

Her eyes were quickly averted. "No, ma'am."

"Have *you* seen it?"

Again the hastily veiled eyes, "Why, no."

Yet in the Indian camps the advent of a baby is such an event! There are smiles, hand-shakings, proud exhibitions at the coming of each little new-born. Why in Pauline's case was it different? I did not wish to understand and yet seeing and hearing what I did must needs do so. I would have gone myself to see the baby only that I was constrained by a sense of delicacy amounting almost to shyness. If they should think I had come to take the baby, that I wanted to deprive them of it! Except on that one occasion there had been no word said to me about it. But well I knew they were aware of my message to them. Was it of that the litt'e evil mother had wanted to speak to me over her drying cheque?

At last when she came out and began going about with it, some of them looked at it.

"Such a fat baby!" they said. "Oh! a beautiful baby. But so *white*." This last observation was always

repeated of it. That meant that it was not the child of the one they had named to me as its father, the Indian who, having a wife already, might not marry the little mother.

The girl and her mother lived in a big, conspicuous teepee standing tall and stately on the flat, sage-covered floor of the valley. But it had been erected not too far from the trees and brush growing along the river. From them anyone might reach it with discretion...

In a little while they began telling about the camps that the baby was dead. There seemed no good to be had from questioning them. More than the simple statement of the fact could be got from no one.

"But was it sick?"

"I don't know, I never see it."

"Did she have the doctor for it?"

"Oh no!"

"The medicine man, I suppose."

"I never hear." The pleasant, inpenetrable faces were averted a little from me.

"Where did she bury it?"

A comprehensive gesture was made with the head and lips. "Up there in the hills, I suppose."

Then one day I caught a glimpse of the young mother. She was speeding on foot up toward the Agency, her hair, worn loose now in conventional mourning, floated about her. She seemed to be a

little less brightly dressed, her moccasins were plainer; but still she fluttered as she walked. Often after a death when the hearts are still torn the Indians will not look at you, fearing, I suppose, to meet the compassion in your eyes, to show the pain in theirs. So I was prepared to pass her unrecognizing. But coming abreast of her, from under her hair, like the eyes of a restless sprite, hers were lifted to mine. A smile parted her soft lips, recalled the dimple...

I think I only stared at her. Once past her, over my shoulder I looked back at her slight figure, eager, bending forward, hurrying, furtive, noiseless, her hair and shawl fluttering behind her, and on her face, I must suppose, that little shining smile, that had gleamed where, as it seemed to me, any light would have been an intrusion.

Suddenly I carried a hand to my empty breast and lifting my eyes to the hills that bordered the valley I searched absently for that invisible place where lay the little sleeping baby that had not been wanted.

THE AGRICULTURALIST

He came into our house and sank down into the first chair that offered itself, the very picture of despair. All the lines of his rugged, homely face were drawn downward, his eyes were blurred and sunken, his body drooped as though sustained by his will alone. Of speech he seemed utterly bereft.

I greeted him guardedly. I dared not question him. What could it be? Had some one of his household died? What other explanation could account for such dejection? In vain I searched my brain to recollect a moribund member of his family. Something sudden must have occurred. I looked at him; I dared not speak, not knowing what to say or to leave unsaid.

But, understanding the Indians as I did I was convinced that in his own time he would unbosom himself. If I could have given him some refreshment it might have loosened his tongue but it was the middle of the morning, an awkward time for house-keepers, and really I had nothing to offer him.

So I stirred about at my work making my presence as inconspicuous as I might.

Then at last the explanation came, almost epic in its naked despair.

"I been to the store. They won't trust me. At home we got nothin'; nothin'. And there's no work." His

eyes turned miserably in the direction of his home. "My children are cryin'."

I stood before him, filled with sympathy, listening.

"I work summer before last. I raise potatoes, a good crop. But that cold time round Thanksgivin' they all freeze. We just throw them out in the road. Beside that I raise oats. Then all through the winter I sell oats, a sack at a time. That give us food. That last till nearly summer. Then this summer I plow, I sow oats again, I work hard. I irrigate. They grow fine, them oats; high, thick. Then I go up to the Agency for the reaper. But it's broken. I ask the engineer fix it for me. He's too busy. I go see the clerk. He promise. I wait. Then I go see the agent. He promise too. I wait some more. It's past time to harvest, my crop it's spoilin'. I try to borrow a reaper from the school. They won't lend theirs. The other two Agency ones, they gone. The men that got 'em they can't give 'em to me, so many askin' for them before me. I try fix that machine myself, but I can't do it good. I ask the engineer again. He still busy, he say... Then there come a hail storm and cut my crop for me." A long breath escaped him. "After that there wasn't nothin' to do but turn the stock in on it."

"Ah-ee!" I cried, Indian-way. Then I turned on him suddenly. "It's nearly spring now. Has that reaper ever been mended?"

"No. I guess that past mendin'." But his mind wandered back to his lost crop. "Them oats they were fine. I buy my own seed-oats from the Agency store. Some them Agency seed-oats what they issue to the Indians they got wild oats mixed in with them. Wild oats they hurt the stock. You can't sell good oats with them mixed in. But my crop ain't got none o' that kind." He ceased wearily, sunk back in his chair.

"I might lend you some money," I said.

He looked at me, but apathetically. "Then I could buy my children somethin'."

I placed the money in his hand. "Cheer up," I said. "You'll have better luck next year."

"I would hire a machine, pay for it from the crop, but I can't find one nowhere. New they cost seventy-five dollars. I can't buy one."

"No, no. The Government doesn't mean that you shall have to. It intends to provide that for you."

"Yes," he said, "but that Government's in Washington, a long way off. It can't make engineers work when they busy way out here on the reservation."

"Where," I ventured, "are the two good reapers now?"

"Layin' out in the sage brush. Them folks they don't bring 'em back to the Agency and the agent he don't make 'em."

"Next year those will be broken too."

He sighed. Then he looked at the money in his hand. "I thank you," he said.

"Cheyenne, Wyo.
Nov. 6.

Dear Friend:—

I want to ask you go see my wife. Indians they write me she borned her baby and she don't get well. I ask you go see. Give her money. I know them folks they poor cause my oat crop fail. Nobody be there to water it after I have to go way. When I come out this place I work for you. I pay. Tell her me I be all right. I ain't sorry here in prison. Three months I guess it go quick.

Your friend
Henry Howling Crane.

I just like say to you I never did have no whiskey in my tent. No more don't Arthur. He say so. That Agency man must put in that coat pocket himself make trouble for us. Arthur and me we thinking that.

Henry."

I turned the little, blue-lined sheet over and about. I stared at its straggling, ill-formed words, at its frequent smudged thumb marks. Then I read its contents again.

The Half-breed, through the blue of his cigarette smoke, eyed me curiously.

"Do you know the whole story?" he asked.

"About the finding of the whiskey? Why, yes."

"I said the *whole* story; the first part especially."

"I didn't know there was a first part."

"I thought not, but there was. You never heard of the great Agency graft case that happened before you came here, five—no, six—years ago?"

"Of course I've heard of it. You mean the time that half the money appropriated by the Government for the building of laterals from the main ditch was said to have been stolen? That time the Indians came up to the Agency to be paid for their work on the laterals and the cheques were passed to them backs upward, over the agent's counter? And the men were directed how to endorse them and were made to do so without turning them over? Then when the cheques were signed they were at once withdrawn and the Indians were handed out the amount in cash they knew to be due them. Each man receiving his full pay was consequently satisfied. It was a simple enough trick and it would have worked all right if some of the younger men had not become curious. 'They never gave us our pay that way before,' they said. Then two or three of them snatched their cheques and turned them over... The sums written on the faces amounted to double and more what the men were receiving."

"And were you told which men turned the cheques over and what they did then?"

"I heard there were three of them who signed that letter to the commissioner in Washington, the letter that exposed the whole graft and asked that an investigation be made. And then an inspector came, and he made it pretty hot for the whole Agency. And finally after the findings had been sent to Washington and an answer received, an employee and a trader were summarily ejected from the reservation. The agent and the other trader, who were said to have been involved, saved their official necks by no more than a hair's breadth. And now the only reason—or so most people seem to think—that the lot of them aren't putting in a few well earned years in the Rawlins 'pen,' is because the affair took place in a year of important elections—just before them, in fact—and the votes and influence of the gang were needed by the senator and the others, who stood behind the grafters."

The cynical eyes narrowed. "Ah! I see you've got us here put up pretty pat...And the names of the three informers, do you happen to know them?"

I shook my head.

The Half-breed got up and so suddenly that it might almost have been said that he leapt to his feet; with nervous, soundless steps he crossed over to the stove and cast into it the butt of his cigarette.

"One was James Badger—he's dead." He wheeled about, fixing me with his eye. "The other two were

Arthur Broken Horn and—" his hand waived airily toward my letter, "your correspondent."

"How strange,—" I began, not knowing just how much of the implication I was expected to understand.

"You think so?"

I folded the letter primly and inserted it in its envelope.

"Do sit down. You make me fidgetty when you prance."

He stopped, looked at me, laughed—and sat down.

"I will," he said.

Then ensued a half-minute's silence.

"May I smoke again?"

"Of course."

He selected a cigarette from his case, twisted it in his lean, yellow fingers, lit it, carried it to his lips. Then he flung himself about in his chair, settling the length of him at some sort of ease. There was something lithe and yet lazy in the pose of the man, alert though somnolent.

"Well, what do you think of my theory?"

"As a matter of fact you haven't got to the theory yet."

"Oh! haven't I?" The mocking eyes searched the depths of mine.

"Of course Arthur and Henry are the last ones anyone would have suspected of caching whiskey, or of

giving it to the school boys. That last was the charge they were sent up on, was it not?"

He nodded. "Do you remember how the whiskey was found?"

"Yes. An Agency employee who had no ostensible business in the Indian camp suddenly burst into their tent—Arthur and Henry were camping together. They are great friends, you know—"

"I do. And I know also that the stars were in felicitous conjunction that day and that the Agency white man is a great watcher of the Heavens—" He puffed out a thick cloud of smoke.

"—the employee offered no word of explanation but began to rummage furiously. Before the astonished inmates of the tent could make a move to stop him he had burst into their grub-box, even stripped their beds of the covers. At last he unearthed an old slicker and from its pockets produced two bottles partly filled with whiskey. Then he cried out his accusation to the two still bewildered men, and with his booty, disappeared. In a little while the Indian police came and arrested the fellows."

"Correct. And did you know that before the policemen came the wives, and some of the steadiest of the old men, wanted those two to skip off and hide; promised, in fact, to see and keep them safely cached...?"

"And they wouldn't go?"

"They wouldn't go."

"...I have always felt Henry was such a *good* man. He takes care of that blind boy, you know, and that old woman, neither of them any relation to him. I understand—"

"Ah, '*good*!' Ambiguous term! Kind, if you like, but not necessarily..."

"I know. I know," I interrupted. "I know what you are going to say, all of it, but must you condemn too?"

He straightened himself in his chair, composed his face as by an effort. He shook his head. "There's been condemnation enough. I'll cast no stones—" he dropped his eyes, "for your sake."

"Rather, for Henry's."

"Rather for Henry's. I'm sorry. He *is* good. You see I make amends. Yes, good, as the patient ox before the butcher's axe; good, but maddening."

"But the odds against him! What could he have done?"

"Nothing. No more than could the ox. But he maddens me just the same."

I sighed.

"But he is good. Especially just now by comparison."

"He is." I spoke severely. "Of course the Indians

do smuggle lots of liquor into the reservation, but Henry is not one of those who do it habitually at any rate. Beside that he would hardly have been so foolish as to have risked such facile discovery——"

"Exactly," said the smooth, cynical voice. The black eyes twinkled.

I picked up the letter from my lap. "He writes me that his wife's sick now. It seems that there's a new baby—Do you know anything about it?"

Again the Half-breed flung himself out of his chair and up and down the room on nervous feet; for all the world, I thought, like a caged thing.

"I do," he said. "The baby died. He'll never see it, Henry won't—that is, not this side of Jordan." His steely eyes almost leered at me, his mouth twisted scornfully. Then he got himself together again. "But I must be going. I've stayed gossiping too long... Goodbye."

Just perceptibly he hesitated, then he did, for him, a most unusual thing. In striding past me he checked his dash for the door, and stopped, almost wavering, before me. Then he held out his hand. He did not look at me.

I took the hand. "I'll go down to the camp to-morrow," I said.

He lifted his gaze to my face, and suddenly I saw

that his eyes had grown soft, even pleading, like a dog's.

"Do." He no more than whispered the word, and turning on his hurried, soundless feet he quit the room.

A MATTER OF CUSTOM

He was a small man for an Indian, with a face that bore a look at once baffled and yearning, like a child who though repulsed, returns. His skin was very pale, with that sallow, shadowless look that denotes with Indians sickness or disturbance of soul. He sat in the stale and dingy railroad car, crowded close to the window ledge, slumped low in his seat, his eyes fixed blindly upon the fugitive landscape. Beside him was the sheriff, in heavy coat and wide hat, his elbows and shoulders filling the major part of the seat. The young Indian himself was in clothes as thin as they were threadbare, though brushed to an irreproachable neatness, and adjusted with nicety. He sat at a sort of numbed ease, except that the muscles about his jaw twitched and trembled spasmodically.

As I entered the car and remarked him, I went at once to him. When, Heaven knows with conscious gentleness I called his name, a look so startled that it was almost one of agony, convulsed his face. It was instantly suppressed. He took my proffered hand, lifted his eyes to mine—eyes large, and gentle for one of his keen race. We did not speak. There was indeed nothing to be said. The thing from every point of view was past words of ours.

Then I let go his hand and quickly he withdrew it,

tucking it out of sight at his side, as though he were thankful that he might conceal that much of himself.

A voice called me by name. I turned. An oldish man, also in overcoat and wide hat, and seated a little way behind the young Indian's place, was beckoning to me. I did not recognize him but the look of his face was so urgent that I went at once at his call. He crowded over toward the window, making room for me beside him.

"You know him?" he asked, and eagerly.

"Oh, yes! Well."

"Then tell me about the case. Tell me everything you can."

I looked at him helplessly. The charge on which the young Indian was arrested was indeed to me an unnamable one. It bore a strange, mediæval appellation, which I myself had never heard in use until I came to live among Agency-governed Indians.

The man continued. "I'm called on the jury. It's a United States case, you know, to be tried down in Cheyenne; not locally. It's a serious charge, you realize that. It'll mean five years for him, the way things appear. Maybe more."

I looked at him. "There are two men now," I said, "in Leavenworth serving five year sentences, on that same charge."

"You see." There was no mistaking the earnestness

of the man. His eyes looked as grave even as I felt mine to be.

"It's a horrid charge and—I don't know much about Indians. I've always understood though that they were decent,—at *least* decent. Tell me, is he that *other* kind of a man?"

"Oh, no! I know him well. His first wife,—she lived only a little while—was one of the girls I was fondest of. He was a good husband to her. I believe him to be steady and self-respecting, even high-minded. This affair has been going on a long time, you know, though it is only just now that the agent is taking action."

"Why?" his eyes as well as his voice demanded.

"I—don't just know."

"Do you think it's spite work?"

"No I don't. I'll give the devil his due. It's not all that at any rate."

"How much?"

"You see this Indian and his wife are both rather prominent young people, and they have had certain advantages, in the matter of schooling; and I suppose what they did was more of a disappointment to the agent than the same thing would have been in others. She's not over school age yet, not past eighteen."

"They're obliged to stay in school till they're eighteen?"

"Yes. But as long ago as the summer before last these two lived together, were married, you understand, in the Indian way. And when it came time for her to go back to school they went to the agent together and asked him for a marriage license. This he refused them on the ground of her being under age. She then returned to school, and quietly enough. And she stayed there faithfully throughout the entire year, though in the Christmas holidays she went back to this man, her husband. Her mother was living then; they all occupied one tent together. He even gave her family presents for her, I understand. Some of the girls told me so. There was not the slightest secrecy or effort at concealment in the whole affair. They shared one tent. She cooked for him and waited on him. He paid her bills and her mother's at the store. They were seen everywhere together, she sitting on the seat of the wagon beside him, with Indians the wife's place. Then when school was over that year they again asked for a license. She is all but eighteen. Frequently, of course, when there is—a reason, the age limit is waived, and the girls are allowed to marry. But there was no reason, in this case. Once more the license was refused and the girl was told that she must again in the fall go back to school. But when she went

back and the agent understood at last how things were, he was furious.

"And now they are trying him as though she were a child and he a man who had taken base advantage of her."

"Hell!" said the man—"I beg your pardon."

"You needn't."

"Well, if he hasn't done what they charge him with, what has he done? There seems to be at least a modicum of fault."

"He has disobeyed the agent."

"But that's no criminal offense."

"No, though I understand there exists a ruling of not so very recent date that Indians must be married legally."

"That, then, is wherein he has offended."

"Yes. He did what his father and grandfather and all his people had done before him. He wooed and won according to the custom of his own people. and then at the demand of his dominant neighbors he would have married in their way, had he been allowed. He tried to, twice. Of course even in trying he was guilty of forcing things..."

"I'll swear again if you're not careful."

"But oh! they shouldn't try him on that dreadful charge; that bitter, insulting accusation that hits him in his manhood and her in her motherhood."

A sudden movement ahead of us drew our attention. The young Indian was leaning forward, half rising to his feet, peering across the aisle and through the opposite window. The train was just passing over the last corner of the reservation. To one side, on a hill top, silhouetted against the pale, remote sky of the plains, stood a rapt and immobile figure; man or woman we could not tell which. Then the train shot into a cut and out again, taking thence a new direction. The young man slumped back into his seat, again hastily thrusting out of sight his hands. His chin dropped to the level of his breast.

The Half-breed knocked, opening my door almost simultaneously. From a pocket of his canvas jacket protruded a newspaper which I recognized as being a Cheyenne one.

"Nannie's back," he said.

"Ah! Nannie's back, and safely. And Jared?"

"Jared is to cool his heels for six months at Rawlins."

"They convicted him!"

"But, my dear lady," and the narrow, cynical eyes opened suddenly wide, "you didn't expect they'd let him off? He may be thankful it's six months instead of as many years. He'll see his son before it can walk at any rate."

"His son?"

"I understand there's a son."

"But why must they *always* convict them? I never heard of an Indian on trial being exonerated. Stop being horrid and tell me the reason."

"The reason? Really you ought to know it. It's because when we Indians aren't dead we're considered next safest behind bars. So it's rather a matter of race pride on the part of the whites to see us safely there, I fancy."

I pushed a chair toward him. "Considering me," I said, "you're rude. Beside which cynicism is not always an ornament."

He pulled the paper from his pocket and held it out to me. "No, my friend," he said, "but it's a refuge."

THE DAY DREAM

It was before she left me that day that I told her of my dream. For a long time I had wished, vaguely, that she might know of it. And yet before the child had died I never had had courage enough to relate it to her. But today, almost before I realized what I was doing I began telling her of it.

"There is something I have wanted to say to you," I said. "It is a very strange thing. I—I want to tell you of a dream I had, oh! long ago, before indeed you sent me that note asking me to get the doctor for your little Millicent, you know."

"Yes, I wrote you that."

"I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read the letter—Sits-in-the-Night brought it to me—and still less when I found your name at the end of it. It was the very night before, the morning before to be exact, that I had had my dream, about you—about her."

She looked at me strangely. "You dreamt of her?"

"I thought I was there, in the kitchen, and I heard wheels driving up to our hitching rack and stopping; then voices, then steps. Finally people came—women—crossing in front of the kitchen window. They seemed to be passing around toward the back where the door opens. I recognized Sadie, she had Hannah

on her back, high up on her shoulders. You know the way she always packs her babies."

"Yes, I know."

"And Lottie was with them, and Amy. They wore old shawls, their leggings were falling about their ankles, they looked draggled and torn and their hair was hanging wild and loose about them—"

"Ah-ee!"

"And they were crying. Sadie opened the door and came in. Tears were running down her face. The other women stood outside and wailed softly, but bitterly, oh! bitterly. Then Sadie explained. She said your baby was dead. 'Mollie's baby is dead. Millicent is dead. We goin' to bury her. We want you to come. She is out there in the wagon, all wrapped in the quilts—and Mollie is there too. We goin' to dig the grave. Won't you come?' And all the time those two out there kept wailing, wailing. I had never heard them so near before, crying that bitter way, nor such young women. It is generally the old grandmothers and far off to one side at the burial that you hear."

"Yes."

"Then I began reaching out my hands every way; putting things to rights in the kitchen, getting my wraps on, preparing to go with them. I fumbled and blundered. Everything was confused as so often it

is in dreams. This seemed to go on for a long while. And all the time those two outside——"

"Ah-ee!"

"And beside their crying a sort of chorus sounded; far off, very faint but very penetrating, a surge of voices; as though all the crying of all the mothers bereft throughout the ages was audible to me... Then I woke up and I was crying too. My face was all wet with tears."

She still stared at me strangely, her eyes searching the depths of mine. Once she shifted her glance but quickly looked back at me again. A white woman would have been upon her feet, torturing her fingers; but she was Indian, and upon her lay, to her almost tangibly, the weight of the hopeless ages past and to come. So she only looked at me, in her eyes the resignation of one to whom hope has been ever deferred.

"That was before I received the letter. I had not heard the slightest whisper of Millicent being ill."

Then she leaned toward me, something acute and desirous in the action, the pose. With who could say what of poignancy, of anxiety, of mysticism, she put me a question which to this day I have never understood.

Her eyes blazed into mine. "Did you dream that in the *day time?*" she cried.

HER FEET were upon the flying treadle of my machine, her fingers poised over the creeping material; above her watching eyes her brows frowned a little, as in her scant calico and close-wrapped shawl she bent above her work. Her hair was parted sedately in the middle, one long delicate line drawn from forehead to neck. Its dark meshes hung unbraided, but gathered close and pressed against her head, disclosing its gentle curves, and although falling loose was restrained by her enfolding shawl. She worked swiftly, and with that despatch which denotes skill; yet also with an air unhurried, leisurely, after the manner of her people, who work, but ever, at the call of friendliness or need, feel free to lay down the burden and check the pace. So ever and anon she paused, pressing her fingers upon the flying upper wheel, restraining its progress; and across the intervening machine lifting her eyes to mine.

With her she had brought her sewing ready cut and folded together. On the floor at one side of her lay the heap of fitted pieces, on the other the finished fruit of her accomplishment. Now she was busy laying together two squares of brightly flowered calico, turning in their meeting edges, stitching them securely.

"You'll not make any little clothes for it?"

"No little first clothes, we don't never dress them in the beginning, you know." Her eyes dropped to the squares under her hands. "We just wrap them up."

"I feel glad that you are going to have another."

She sighed, still eyeing and fingering her sewing. "I should like to have a lot of children, and my husband would like it too."

"You are young. You will have them."

"But when they die——"

"Ah you needn't tell me of that!"

She began turning the treadle slowly, guiding the work with her slim, brown fingers.

"I always feel sorry that your sister does not have any more."

She stayed the wheel, looking up at me strangely. "She don't want no more."

"Doesn't want them? But I thought all Indians loved children so much."

"You know she has buried her three."

"And now she is afraid."

"I guess that's it—she takes something..."

"What! Do Indian women do that? But then they are as bad as the whites."

"Whites, they do that too? With us the old women they know a root. They dig it up and pound it fine and tie it up in little bags and the women that don't want no babies, they take it."

She regarded me long with her mirthful, strange gaze. "I think," she said, her eyes although still upon

me giving me the effect of not remarking me, "I think it is better to want children. After all God made us women—"

"And a woman who isn't a mother—" I interrupted.

"Oh!" cried she. "*That's* the hardest of all. The women cry and cut their hair and gash their legs and go in rags when their babies die, but it's better to be a mother of dead children than not to be a mother at all."

Again her eyes and fingers took cognizance of the work waiting beneath her hands.

I got up suddenly and crossed over to my treasure trunk. From it I brought forth a little yellowed garment. I held it out to her. Our eyes rested upon it; not upon each other. Then I spoke.

"Do you mind," I said, "because he died?"

She reached out and took it, folded it slowly, and laid it upon the heap of her finished work.

"Oh no!" she said. "I don't mind. Mine—mine died too."

THE MAN'S PART

THE BIG, square, barren, rude room which in its existence had progressed from store to school-room and on to council hall, was filled to overflowing with a throng of anachronous humanity, rank on rank, tier behind tier. There was the sound of moccasins slipping grittily over the knotty floor, of the dull, rhythmic thudding of a mother's foot as she trotted her fretful baby, the rustling of soft garments, the stirring of unhurried bodies, the hissing of stealthy whispers. Here and there two Indians might be seen conversing in the sign language; their hands, shielded from sight by encircling backs, were lifted scarcely above the level of their laps.

The people were massed one might say ethnologically. The main part of the crowd was Indian, squatting, seated on benches, or standing leaning against the walls. The two tribes sat separately, as did also the sexes of each. To right and left at the tapering ends of the rows were the mixed-bloods, dressed mainly like the whites except that their garments looked more home-made, more patternless, more illy put. Then quite at one end of the room and grouped about the chairman's table sat the whites; school and Agency employees, traders, soldiers, ranch neighbors; an indifferent, self-seeking, heterogeneous group. In

the midst of these last, dapper, conspicuously well-dressed, and well-groomed, presided the inspector from Washington. His old, dignified face, slightly pompous, was crowned with grey hair brushed back from his brow. His hands rested squarely upon his knees. By his side, taking notes, sat his stenographer, his glance half curious and half supercilious playing constantly over the faces of the throng. At either end of the little table behind which sat the inspector, were stationed the interpreters, one for each tribe. The eyes of these men were searching, though their lips seemed to mock slightly, and when they spoke, rising to interpret, even though they passed on the phrases with a certain guarded vehemence, they seemed consciously to preserve a detached attitude, as do those who speak but will not be held accountable for what they say.

Perhaps the arrangement that caused the mixed-bloods and the other younger Indians to be the first to deliver their speeches was intentional on the part of someone. At any rate one by one they arose, in overalls, in spurs, in bright neckerchiefs, differing from each other in type and temperament, as differed also those two tribes, and indeed, the two races, represented there within the council room.

Occasionally after some speech the inspector would get up and pronounce in continuance a few elucidating words. He gesticulated slightly and conventionally.

He bent a little toward the interpreters, each in turn. His words came slowly and with unction.

The subject of the council was the desire of the Indian Bureau to throw open to white settlement a half of the reservation. The mixed-bloods and the younger Indians were, though they spoke but briefly, in accord in favoring the execution of the plan. Their words, however, from some lack in themselves of knowledge or of conviction, were not uttered in a manner calculated to tip the scale greatly their way.

"It's a question of water rights," they said. "We must have money to buy those rights and how else can we obtain it? It's an obligation to our children."

Again and again the same note was struck. One by one the young men arose, and one by one sat down again. The interpreters mopped their tired brows. The inspector sipped frequently from a glass of water upon his table.

The air was full of the odor of people, pungent with the herb perfume worn by the Indians in little sacks sewed to the clothing, acrid with the smell of sage clinging to shawls and dresses, with the flavor of smoke-tanned buckskin. A half-open window let in a little fitful breeze that played wantonly with the dust showing in the sunlight of the upper reaches of the room, flirting and whisking about the heads of the throng.

At last it came time for the weightier speeches, for those of the councilmen, of the chiefs, of indeed the older men of the two tribes, the patriarchs of this patriarchal people.

"Sell our land?" they cried. "Retreat? Give up? Be forced into contact with intermingling whites? Take money in place of our land? What, money for the good of these traders who will get it all from us in the end?" Their old faces hardened; their eyes flamed. "Give up? Retreat? Move on? Abrogate the old promises, the old treaties? What, *again?*" Their lips twisted bitterly. "Do you not know, does not the Great Father at Washington know, that all we ask now of life is a little land, a little peace, a little place wherein to live quietly our quiet life, and in the end a little ground for our narrow bed? Move on! That we think was the first word the whites—" the 'outsiders,' the 'aliens,' was the name they in the Indian tongue gave this other race—"said to us. It seems they are saying it yet." The soft bitter voices ceased; the old men sank into their seats, the interpreters too relaxed, wiping their faces.

The inspector stood up cautiously, apologetically even. "But these old men, the chiefs, do not seem to have caught the point. The whole question of selling or not selling turns on the matter of their water rights; on theirs and their childen's as has been said. Land

even in this beautiful Wyoming valley is a mockery without water. They can I am sure understand that; water they must have."

An old chief rose solemnly, turned deep, scornful eyes upon the inspector. "Let the white man from Washington go but a mile yonder," his extended arm pointed that way, "and he will see the river that flows down our valley and waters our land. It is there. It is ours. It is born in these mountains above us. God made them, I suppose as he made it. It is ours."

Along the packed rows there was a slight stirring.

Patiently again the inspector arose. "I know that it is hard for the old people to understand that having *water* does not necessarily mean having *rights* to that water. There exist hundreds of white men below you, beyond the border of your reservation, who have taken up claims along this same stream and who have filed on its water prior to any Indian having done so. The State must recognize this priority. The whites have filed on the water and have paid the dues. Beside that as the law stands now the Indians cannot individually take out water rights. I know that you will say that when this reservation was given to these two tribes, a matter of a generation and a half ago, the water was included with the land, 'to the center of the streams bordering the reservation,' as your old treaty reads. But times and conditions have changed since

then. At that period the Federal Government controlled the water of Wyoming, now its disposition has been turned over to the State. Where the Indians stand in this matter has never been decided by law."

The mixed-bloods who understood at least partially, shifted uneasily.

"But now—although the question of priority has still not been decided— the Indian Bureau—which I represent—says that you as a tribe may buy your water rights. For this you must have money." He named a sum reaching far into the thousands. "The sale of your land will bring you this amount of money, at least. This thing is intricate and impossible I believe to elucidate to the older people, your leaders. They must, I fear, just hear my statements and, if they can, believe." With his hands he made a deprecating little gesture. Then he sat down.

There was silence in the room, complete save for a slight stirring, the sound of deep breathing, and the fretting, here and there, of a hungry child.

Finally at the back of the room, by some shifting of his pose, by thrusting himself forward beyond the relief of his line, an Indian made his presence known. He was a man of powerful build, of nobly moulded head; his hair instead of having been braided, had been gathered forward into two loosely twisted strands; his

eyes showed speculative yet keen, his mouth was sharply chiseled though withal soft in its lines, and there was a kindly look on his face which gave somehow the impression of the morning light seen upon the rugged side of a great mountain. In age he seemed to be between the young and the old.

As he made his presence known there was a slow turning of the heads in his direction, a slight tensing of the crowd. The old chiefs appeared suddenly eager and filled with hope; as for the younger men and the mixed-bloods they glanced at him and looked away again, as if, sighing they said: "Another on the wrong side. Ah, the blind old men!"

Then he spoke. His voice was deep, very virile, carefully subdued as something held in leash, and yet through it there seemed to run a tremor, a quaver almost, that gave an impression of strange intensity.

I repeat his words with elision.

"I am not one of the old men," he said, "and yet I can easily remember the time when this valley, these mountains, were ours; not because someone had given them to us, but because we had taken them for ourselves, because our arrows flew straightest, our spears reached furthest, our horsemen rode fastest, our hearts were bravest."

Here several of the old men grunted sympathet-

ically. More and more the faces of the throng were turned toward the speaker.

"Then everything was changed. The strangers came like a flood, like our rivers in the spring; they surged over us and they left us—as we are. Perhaps this was the will of the Stranger-on-High, we cannot tell... But these strangers on earth were not altogether unkind to us. For what they took they gave a sort of compensation. It was as though they carried away from us fat buffaloes and then handed to us in exchange each a little slice of their meat. They deprived us of our valley and our mountains but instead they gave us each eighty acres of the land. Then they sent more strangers with chains and three-legged toys to measure these off correctly for us. They gave us wire for our fences but only enough so that we must spend much money for more. They gave us seed, but also so little that we were driven to buy more. We worked —some of us with the chains and three-legged toys— some at the ditches, every way we could, for now we needed a new thing—something of which we had before known nothing, *money*. We received it—and then we spent it."

Again faint grunts and groans encouraged him.

"For we cannot keep money long. We are children. This the Great Father in Washington understands, and also that our ears are dull, that our eyes cannot

read his written words. Therefore, in his kindness, he sends to us this man to speak to us face to face." He turned his slow gaze upon the inspector. In his eyes was the look of mockery. "We have listened to his words. But what has he said to us? 'Give up the eighty acres, for your children to be born, give up the money you earned and spent, give up your homes; as you gave up this valley and these mountains. The white men need them. Your day is past. But I am not unkind. Without compensation I will not deprive you. See, I will give you even a little more money—' " He stopped abruptly. His eyes drooped, his shoulders, his hands, the whole man.

A strained silence had fallen upon the room, smothered it. From it escaped the faint sighing of the younger men. The chiefs stiffened as they sat.

By an effort the speaker seemed to rouse himself. He stared strangely about the room. "There was a little boy once," he said, and his voice had grown dreamy, slightly high in pitch, "and this little boy held his hand out toward the flames, nearer,—I saw it—the fire was so pretty, so warm, it danced, purred, sparkled. His hand crept nearer, nearer. His father watched him. At the last moment he caught him and pulled him away. The child cried then, he struggled in his father's arms, he pushed away from him, he fought. Again he reached out toward the flame. But

finally he looked up into the man's face and suddenly it seemed to dawn on him that, although he could not understand, this was indeed his father, old and wise and loving; and that he, by comparison, was only a little misguided child..." The strange, vibrant voice dwindled, broke. The speaker made a wide gesture toward the attentive inspector, held it while the interpreters got forth in English his last sentence. Then he sank back into his old place against the wall; with one bent hand he wiped the sweat from his brow.

A faint sound of muttering passed over the room; old fierce eyes were veiled, young keen ones peered incredulously. But the insector was on his feet on the instant, his hand outstretched to grasp the golden moment.

"There is no more to be said," he cried. "Our ears are ringing with words. Our hearts are full. I have here, prepared, a paper. Let those who for their own good and the good of their children, are of a mind to sell, now sign it."

Slowly, amidst moving and murmuring, the long paper, in the hands of one of the interpreters, made its deliberate rounds. Difficult signatures were inscribed in slow succession. Ancient, unaccustomed hands, deft enough with spear or bow, grasped awkwardly the pen and with it made their wavering "mark."

Some there were of the old men, indeed the majority

of them, who wrapping their blankets about them arose, and shambling, withdrew, aloof and soundless.

Like a shaken kaleidoscope the council broke up.

The inspector leaned back in his chair, a hand shielding the working of his mouth. His eyes searched the variegated, dissolving throng. The stenographer, still seated and playing with his idle pencil, shot him an understanding glance.

Later the Half-breed, standing on the board walk outside the trading store, a box of crackers in one hand, a paper containing pickles in the other, was lunching heartily. Suddenly he shifted everything into his left hand and strode down into the road. For in company with his wife and a young son the last of the speakers was passing.

The Half-breed's extended hand grasped the Indian's.

"I thank you for what you said," he cried. "It was a noble thing to have done. You faced them all; the old timers, the chiefs, public opinion, prejudice. And you won. It was a brave act."

The rugged, illuminated face was turned to him, the deep eyes rested squarely upon his. "You have perhaps forgotten," he said. "You are younger than I am and too you have been for a long time with the whites—but I remember well the time when we were boys and our great head-chief Black Star used to sit and talk with

us. Yes, you have perhaps forgotten," he repeated, and his look, just touched with yearning, rested upon the younger man. "But I remember—I have never forgotten what he used to say to us. 'Be brave,' he would tell us. 'That is the chief thing to learn; to do what each one believes is right, to speak for the right, everywhere, always. To be fearless of tongues, of persecution, to take counsel with our own minds and being sure to speak out surely. That,' he always said to us, 'and that only, is the man's part.' "

TIT FOR TAT

THIS WHOLE affair was one that seemed so unspeakable, that was whispered with such pale lips, such starting eyes, from camp to camp, from man to man, from woman to woman, that only its merest exterior was ever known to us who were outsiders. But the end of it was open enough, and bold and hopeless and final.

At what we call our Sub-agency there was the usual trading store and in it worked as clerk and general assistant an Indian. He was a man, I should judge, of about forty, a little too old to have ever been a Government school boy; a man of steady, almost stately bearing, of fine head held proudly upon powerful shoulders, of keen level glance, and personal appearance most fastidious.

At first he had been employed in the store as a sort of janitor, a man to sweep floors, fill lamps, tend stoves, open freight boxes. He had worked steadily, silently, observantly; and then at the end of one uninterrupted year he had sought out the trader. He spoke in Indian, which his employer understood.

"I can read," he said, "and I can write a little, and I can figure. I have been learning." He picked up book and pencil lying to hand and made good his claims.

The trader regarded him with astonishment. When

the man had first come to him to work he had been able to speak but few and hesitating words in English.

"How in the world—?"

The steady, imperturbable eyes smiled wisely. "My little girl goes to school, and my wife's brother—"

"I see." The trader regarded the man measuringly. Then he took a turn up and down the store. He stopped in front of the Indian. "George," he said. "I need another clerk. Will you take the job?"

So in my day George Smoke was the chief clerk in the Sub-agency store, often in entire charge of it and of its little postoffice. He was the trusted right hand of the trader. There was no Indian on the reservation more respected than he.

He was a married man, living in a little two-room cabin which the trader provided and which was close to the store. His wife was a youngish, rather light-minded woman; the mother of several children; a little addicted to gambling. We thought that her ways were not always approved of by her husband.

Then the crash came, unforeseen, unattended. Of course, as the girls said, Jasper Blue Bird was frequently seen hanging about Smoke's wife's house, but then, he did not seem to be secret about it—he bore some distant relationship to Smoke—and the husband was just a stone's throw away, often on his duties pass-

ing in and out of the store and in full view of his home.

At length a day came when Smoke, his head as high as ever, his eyes level and imperturbable, went to the trader.

"Long Neck," he said—it was the Indian name for the man—"I want to quit."

The trader stared. "To quit? To quit the store?"

"Yes. I want my pay."

"But you've been with me three years, over three years. I can't run the store without you, George. And there's that fall shipment of freight just coming in—I was thinking you could begin tomorrow unpacking and listing it. I thought——"

"I got to quit."

The trader might as well have appealed for leniency to the smiling sky as to the serene, implacable face confronting him.

"You'll—you'll be coming back?"

"I don't know."

For a long time the trader fumbled over his accounts and the contents of the cash drawer before he found the right pay for his clerk. He was confounded. Silent, pleasant, impenetrable before him, stood Smoke. At last the money was counted out, the receipt signed. The Indian took his pay without a word, turned on his

moccasin-shod feet, and strode out of the store, his sleek head a little lowered.

Then for two months Smoke did nothing. He moved his family out of the cabin which belonged to the trader and into a tent also in the vicinity of the store. There he might frequently be seen—as might also his wife. Their four children were in the boarding school.

The very observant said that Jasper Blue Bird had ceased going to Smoke's wife's tent.

Jasper himself was also a married man, with a mild timid little Mission girl for his wife. Although three years had gone by since the day of their marriage there had as yet been no children born to them, only she plaintive of face, was in the teepee to welcome him, or to speed him. But often there were also with her her women relations, her mother, her aunts, her grandmother. Their presence, frequent, chattering, irked her husband. She knew this, vaguely, and yet seemed never able to find the courage to send them away but stood plaintive and wistful between the antipathetic factions of her house.

Then suddenly at night with a terrible sound of sobbing this little wife had flung herself upon the doorstep of the Mission, clutching and scratching at the locked door. The sisters within, wild-eyed and scared, had opened to the sound of her distress. She

lay torn, bruised, and disheveled in a frenzy of fright, incoherent, almost speechless.

Her mother was sent for. Then her husband.

The woman came wide-eyed, loud-voiced, fearful, aghast. They waited for the husband, but it was two days before he arrived, slinking in after dark, abashed and furtive.

The doctor also came and there followed with him a fearful scene of humiliation. Then his evidence was reported to the agent.

Her own story ran like this: She had been coming home from her mother's tent to her own, just a little way. It was dark. Yes, and cold. She had her blanket up over her head and had been walking fast. She had not heard so much as a step until—here she always stopped, choking, and sobbed spasmodically.

"Yes, it was George Smoke."

They regarded her gravely. "You are *quite* sure it was George Smoke?"

Beside little Mrs. Blue Bird there was one other person who was "quite sure," and that was George Smoke's wife. Her attitude was singular. For she went to the agent's office, alone, and there standing before him, her shawl drooping and trailing about her, she denounced her own husband. She was very specific. "It was revenge," she said. They stared at her, not understanding.

"Explain!"

This of course she could not do.

Then came out the stories of the frequent visits of Jasper Blue Bird to Smoke's wife's tent. Finally a charge was brought against Jasper.

Both men were tried at the next term of court.

Jasper appeared cowed, cringing; he stepped lightly, veiled his eyes, even bowed himself a little.

George Smoke however was his constant, haughty, imperturbable self. Even the sight of the plaintive little wife, his pitiful victim, did not visibly shake him. When asked for his explanation, excuse, if excuse there was, he only laughed, staring insolently at the judge.

Considering the delicate nature of the case had the trial been a "white" one, it would have been carried on behind closed doors. But as it was, the populace, ugly, scandalous, foul, of the little county seat was admitted, and freely. The two women were stared at, appraised; the men eyed sullenly, with indeed an occasional gleam of sinister mirth. That the wife of Smoke would soon bear another child was only too apparent.

The sentences of the two men were similar, five years at hard labor in the "pen" at Rawlins. And in a few days, hand-cuffed and side by side, the two were led away.

But all the time in the eyes of George Smoke, wheth-

er he looked at his own hard-eyed wife or at the stooping, cringing man toward whom her eyes so frequently turned, or at the little weeping childless wife of Jasper Blue Bird, was visible a gleam of triumphant satisfaction, of hunger glutted.

So we saw him at the last, the steady, exultant look in his eyes, his bearing calm, relentless, assured, unshaken.

THE OTHER MAD MAN

THEY CALLED him Crooked Hand. He had another name, two, in fact; an English one and a proper Indian one. But because his hand and arm were crooked—withered, twisted—they called him Crooked Hand, making a descriptive sign for him in their language of signs. His leg was also crooked, also withered and twisted, and beside that he was an epileptic. A strange disheveled looking creature he was; a rough shock of stiff, short hair crowned him, ill assorted ragged clothes covered him, he wore any odd shoes that came his way; in short he was neither prepossessing nor clean. His great eyes that seemed startled, even hurt, in their expression, were soft, unlike the steely sharpness of most Indian eyes, but withal shallow, as are the eyes of animals; eyes that indeed seemed hardly the windows of a soul.

His conversation, in English at least, was decidedly limited, was in fact restricted almost to one single sentence.

"How do you do, George?"

"Hello! hello!"

"Well, what's the news in the camps?"

Then he would look at you with his strange, pathetic, almost animal eyes and smiling his wistful bewildered smile he would gently reply, "Dam-fi-no." Often I had heard him thus innocently answer many innocent

questions, and yet each time that the incongruous phrase was hurled at me I would have to hold my face steadily to keep it seemly.

"And your step-mother, what is she doing today?"

Again the wistful, bewildered smile would light the sombre eyes, again in the soft, hoarse voice: "Dam-fi-no."

Sometimes he would arrive looking more directly gloomy than usual.

"What is it?" I would cry.

And he, struggling with the elusive English would manage: "Hungry, heap hungry. No bread. No meat. Children cry." And he would saw his hand across his middle in the "hungry" sign.

As we all know it is good when we are a little stirred to be able to do something immediate and definite. So I would spring up, fly to my refrigerator for scraps; meat, bread, cold potatoes, cold pancakes, seasoned or unseasoned, any way, any thing; and I would heap a great plateful and set it on his uneven knees. He would stare at it with famished eyes; and he would eat of it, but only a little, a taste of this, a taste of that. And then he would ask me for a bit of paper—all the time with his starving eyes upon the food—and, with a certain dexterity despite his crooked hand he would empty the scraps into the spread paper, and wrapping

all together he would rise to his uncertain feet, a smile upon his face, hunger in his eyes.

"You're not going to eat any more?"

"No. Them children, heap hungry. I take."

"Oh! all right." Not for worlds would I have tarnished with so much as a finger-touch, his altruism. "But you'll have a cigarette before you go, won't you?"

At that he would lay down his bundle and, seating himself securely, he would smile up at me from his crazy, shallow eyes, and, as he smiled, help himself to my proffered tobacco and paper.

"I savvy roll 'em. You ever see me?"

"No," I always said as I stood before him to admire. Upon his knee he would flatten out the little oblong of paper, pour into it the requisite amount of tobacco, manage, not unskilfully with his one hand, to roll his cigarette.

"That's fine," said I. "How did you learn to do it?"

And "Dam-fi-no," would answer George, pleasantly. Then resuming his bundle he would arise and lurch painfully away.

"Of course you might send him away," I suggested. "There's a place—an asylum—you know for Indians who are not—are not—well, you understand. But he's alright except when he has those 'spells,' as you call them, isn't he?"

"He has 'em often now."

"It's pretty hard on all of you."

"The children they bese 'fraid o' him."

"Then why not send him away?"

"You see—he's awful kind, and *good*. When we short o' grub he just don't eat nothin', 'most. Gives it all to them kids.

"Then why are they afraid of him?"

"He—he took the axe once—"

"The axe!"

"Yes. You mind the time that blind boy, Sits-in-the-Night, come here to see you? His head was bleedin' you remember? And you drove him up to the Agency to the doctor."

"Certainly I do. He told me his horse had thrown him."

"I know he told you that. He didn't want to make no trouble for—for George." Involuntarily the fingers of his right hand tapped upon the wrist of his bent left. "But, really it was Crooked Hand done it, he took the axe—"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"Afterward when the spell was over he feelin' so bad he cryin' about it."

Another day soon after this, Crooked Hand came, stumbling and lurching, to my door. His face worked; tears streamed from his shallow eyes.

"Why, George! What's the matter? What is it?"

He found a chair. "They take my gun," he mumbled. I want it. I want shoot. *Poom*!" His good hand made a suggestive sign against his own breast. "I die."

"Oh, George, no, no!"

He glowered at me. "I take my gun. I shoot." He repeated the words doggedly.

"What's happened now. What's so much the matter?"

He stared at me vacantly. "Dam-fi-no," he said.

All day he sat in that same chair, glowering, mumbling, eating when I gave him food, talking in his unintelligible English, whenever I would listen. It was to me a distressing and a very long day. About sundown his step-mother with one of her children came for him. He left me much as he had come, muttering, crying a little, half reluctant and altogether bewildered.

Then I heard that he had gone; that they had taken him to that place of mysterious location and tenantry, that vestibule of the realms of death; that bourne whence, in common with death, no traveler, or almost none, returns. It seemed that what had brought the thing to an issue had happened at the Sun Dance. When every one was inside the lodge, absorbed by its thrilling spectacle, Crooked Hand, outside, had been attacked by one of his "spells." His evil spirit rode and goaded him. An old inoffensive Indian lay asleep

in the shade of some nearby bushes. The possessed man came upon him. A broken bottle which presented itself to him opportunely served for his weapon. He fell upon the old man viciously. The commotion was heard even in the dance lodge. Men rushed out. The victim was quickly rescued, the mad-man bound. But the affair, having happened in that crowded public place, got noised about, came at last even to the agent's ears.

"He must go. There is an asylum in South Dakota to which he must be sent."

So an employee of the government was delegated to take him to that unknown place. To reach it they must make a journey of nearly twenty-four hours, and by train.

Of his parting with his people I know nothing. No one ever spoke of it to me and I never asked of it. Some things are better left mercifully covered. But of the journey I heard later from the employee who had accompanied him.

"No, he didn't give me any trouble. He slept all right, and he ate all right. But he seemed uneasy. At every little noise he would start and glance quickly over his shoulder. And he insisted on sitting faced the wrong way and staring and staring back in the direction from which we had come. He would not talk. I could not get even his famous phrase out of him. And

once he cried a little. I could see the tears running unheeded down his cheeks. And after all, in a way, he is a man...When we had nearly reached Canton we were obliged to pass from one car to another quite at the other end of the train. He walked ahead of me; I followed at his heels guiding and encouraging him. In the lurching of the train it seemed an endless journey. At last we passed into a sleeping car to be confronted by a full-length mirror. Crooked Hand saw it, or rather what it reflected. He stopped dead; then he strode up close to it, halted again, stared. I laid my hand on his arm. 'Go on! Go on!' I said. But he heeded me not at all. In the mirror, over his shoulder, I saw his face. It was transfigured, beatific. His lips moved; he was speaking brokenly in Indian. He stretched out a shaking hand. The man in the glass of course did likewise. I have never seen on a human face such an expression of trembling yearning, of incredible joy.

"Every one was staring at us; as you can imagine every face in that car was turned toward us. I shook him a little. 'Come, George, come! You must, really.' But he was still oblivious, standing staring, staring— Then he lurched and made as though he would sink down upon the floor. I caught him by his arm to check him. 'George, come on, come on! what is it? What's the matter?'

"For an instant he rested his vacant eyes on mine, then eagerly sought again the reflection in the mirror. Suddenly a terrible sob broke from him and he seemed to collapse and shrink together against my arm.

" 'Come on, boy, come on!'

"He lifted a trembling, grimy hand and pointed it toward the creature confronting him. He seemed to be struggling for speech. Did he imagine, I wondered, that the man before him was another Indian, come to him in his loneliness? Or had he, rather, an inkling that that wild-eyed, disheveled creature was indeed the ghost of his poor self? At any rate all this emotion was proving too much for his shallow wits. His head sank limp upon his breast.

"I shook his arm. The scene, with everybody staring at us, was growing unbearable.

" 'George, what is it?'

"Then, his chin upon his breast, his vacant eyes on the floor, he mumbled a reply. 'Dam-fi-no,' he said."