He fought with your people and overcame them at Bear River."

He spoke simply, without boasting, cleaning his pipe bowl meanwhile with a small sharp tool.

Esh-ke-bug-e-coshe! The little voyagers' faces grew pinched and cold again, and their eyes held the wavering, far-off expression. For the name of this man's father was a hated one among the Dakotas. Zintkala and Etapa had often, too, heard the old men speak of two suns of fierce fighting at Bear River, where the Raratonwan had wrested from their nation a great hunting ground.

No wonder that fear gripped their hearts, yet they sat motionless, saying nothing. After a time their unbidding host looked at them earnestly and his words were good.

"We are now at peace with the Dakotas," he said. "We have fought each other enough heretofore and we wish the Dakotas well. I shall give you some presents, and I will treat you well so long as you shall stay in my wigwam."

He who imagines that the Indian and the Indian's child are stoics, void of the ordinary emotions, should have seen the young Sioux's faces light up and shine with a great joy.

CHAPTER XV

IN BLACK OTTER'S CAMP

The little voyagers had indeed chanced upon Black Otter's village at an opportune moment. Although they knew nothing of the truth at the time, less than a moon had passed since Little Crow's Sioux scouts had visited the Awanse winter towns, and had gained the promise of this Chippewa soldier and his young men that they would soon join the Dakotas in a war of extermination to be waged against the settlements and posts of the Upper Mississippi.

The reception of Zintkala and Etapa among these hereditary enemies was, without doubt, colored largely by their recently formed alliance. These children were treated with truly distinguished consideration, quite as the son and daughter of a friendly chief would—from natural kindliness and motives of interest as well—have been treated.

When the sister and the brother had gained confidence Zintkala told to Black Otter and his wife the whole story of their misfortunes after running away from the missionary school, their capture by the Hohé, the "sleeps" they had traveled with them, the meeting with Tall Gun's

Ojibwa near the traders' fort, and of how Tall Gun had traded with Gauché (Left Hand), giving two spotted ponies, one with white hind legs, in exchange for themselves; they were small ponies also, but he had given the Hohé also a fine green blanket and an ax and many fishhooks and beads. She told, too, how she had hidden her necklace of elk's teeth, and of the cruelty of 'Lizbet, who had beaten her because she had clung to the strings. Then of the sugar-making and of the flight, and how Tall Gun's soldiers had shot at them. They showed the little white scars of the small shot, and Black Otter and his wife put their fingers upon the swan-shot under the skin of Zintkala's hand.

The young chief and his wife were filled with interest. Narratives of the true incidents of war, the chase, and adventure made up a large part of the interest of life to the Indian of those days, and a tale of escape from captivity with so many incidents of varied character was absorbingly entertaining.

When Zintkala told of Etapa's striking the bear the chief was much pleased. "Hu-hu!" he exclaimed, "that was indeed very brave. How, that was well done, how, how!"

Etapa had begun to feel some life and animation among these new friends, and so he showed in his mimic way how he had struck mato-sapa a hard stroke upon the snout. And Zintkala

came in for a share of commendation when she told of what she had done for her brother in his illness, and of the killing of the carcajou. Black Otter and Other Bird, his wife, much admired the carcajou's skin as an ornamental garment, and they quite regarded Zintkala as a person of consequence, saying that what she had done was how, how, very well done of a truth.

The chief said that he was very much disappointed in the Assiniboins, who were his friends, that they had done so badly in a time of truce among Indians, and when all must be considering what they should do to save their lands from the white men. As for Tall Gun, he was not surprised. The man was a distant relative, but he had mixed with white people and agency folk, and had drunk of their red waters till he was very nearly as bad as they were. Tall Gun and his men had come to be very much no-account Indians, and they were no longer considered as true Awanse. Zintkala and Etapa had done well, he told them, to run away from such folk.

Yes, indeed, said Other Bird, she knew 'Lizbet Tall Gun very well, and she had always been a very disagreeable woman. Twice her husband had turned her out of his wigwam, and he would not have taken her back only she had many half-breed relatives around the posts, and these had supported her in the quarrels. Once, too,

'Lizbet had stolen from her—Other Bird's—mother a beautiful pair of moccasins ornamented with stained porcupine's quills and blue beads. Certainly that was very bad among one's own people.

Other Bird quickly became much attached to her young guests. She took that vivid interest in them as strangers' children which is common to young mothers the world over. Zintkala's ability to talk the Awanse and thus to tell of her life among a strange people, lately become Ojibwa allies, gave her an extraordinary attraction.

Having naturally a shrewd turn of mind and an alert intelligence, the young Sioux girl talked well.

Etapa also warmed into life among these friendly folk. A dry lodge to sleep in, a variety of nourishing food, and a new interest in life, these things added daily to his strength of body and mind. Soon he was able to play with boys that came, shyly at first, to get a peep at the strangers, and finally, as his strength improved, to admire his feats with the bow and arrow, a weapon which had fallen into disuse save as a plaything among the Awanse. The Sioux boy taught them new games and learned to play at theirs.

Many older people, too, took a lively interest in Black Otter's protégés, and they brought

many small gifts and listened again and again to Other Bird's account of their adventures. Zintkala soon had quite a pouchful of colored beads, bits of bright ribbon, stained feathers and the quills of porcupines, one of those bracelets she had wished for wrought from the skin of a green snake, and other ornamental and useful trinkets such as girls delight in.

Other Bird was delighted that her guest should receive these gifts appropriate to a chief's daughter. She herself made for Zintkala a pair of highly ornamented leggins and a short blue skirt of trader's cloth.

These Pillagers were then an independent and showy people, living upon magnificent hunting and fishing grounds. They were never in actual want of food save from sheer improvidence. In berry seasons they had a surfeit and they dried and stored large quantities for future use.

Though in ill-repute as material for the missionaries of civilization and intractable to the cast-iron military discipline of a U. S. Indian agency, these Indians are to this day the most independent and nearest self-supporting of those who cling to the old life. It has been their fortune quite recently to chiefly accentuate the beginnings of another "Century of Dishonor."

Their reception and treatment of the little voyagers were, after all, in keeping with the spirit they had before manifested toward any

who claimed their aid and friendship. They had fought the Sioux for many generations and finally, by the aid of firearms furnished by the British traders, had wrested from that warlike nation a great region of woods and lakes and rich prairies. Yet, in the midst of this long war, a band of Dakotas, driven from their own country by a tribal feud, and starving in winter upon a fire-swept prairie, came to the Awanse, bringing the captives they had taken, their women and children, saying, "We perish from hunger and our enemies seek to destroy us. Do as you will with us. If you shall save us we will ever after remain your friends—if you slay us we die at any rate."

Immediately the Pillagers took these poor people into their lodges and fed and clothed them, and, when safer times came, sent them back to their own country. There has been no quarrel between the two tribes since. This is history confirmed to the writer of this narrative by aged and honorable men among the northern tribes and by the marriages which yet take place between the northern Sioux and the Chippewas.

For a time these friendly people made Zintkala and Etapa forget their homesick longings. Besides their genuine hospitality and the blossoming of their wonderful spring season, there were fishing and swimming, canoe racing, drum and flute music and dancing, and, not the least

of pleasures, the gathering and eating of fat young pigeons—"squabs," as the white settlers have called them.

There was also a war excitement. The young men of this large camp were preparing to take up the hatchet, and there were strangers coming and going who had entered a league forming against the encroaching whites. It appeared that Black Otter was not the chief of these Awanse, as the Sioux children had at first been led to suppose, but only a partisan and war leader of the young men.

After a time, seeing all this preparation for war, and that Etapa was becoming strong again, Zintkala thought of going homeward. One evening she spoke to Other Bird about this. Black Otter's wife sat thoughtful for a time, then she got up and went outside her tepée to see if anyone was within hearing. When she came in she spoke.

"You have seen," she said, "that our young men are going to war. Men from Little Crow's towns of your people have come among us urging war against the white folk who have taken our lands. So there will soon be fighting in the lower country. It may be that they are fighting now. It will not be good for you to leave us yet until we can safely send you to some of your people who will assist you homeward. What I have said is as the bird sings, and my husband

would be angry with me if he should hear that I had spoken thus unwisely."

Zintkala said nothing, but these words gave her great uneasiness. She wanted more than ever to go home. She was not capable of logical reasoning, but she felt that now her father must surely wish his children to be at home and not among the toka (enemy). With all her little soul she detested the conquering race, but she did not believe that her father would wish to go to war against the white people. Fire Cloud had said to his family, "My children, the waśécunpi" (white ones) "are countless. We are nothing. It is very silly for us to think of going to war against such."

Zintkala knew that this father, however, would send for his children very quickly if there were to be a war against the agencies. She was very much troubled and spoke to Etapa of these things when she could do so privately. "Let us go homeward secretly and quickly, older sister," was his response.

"Younger brother," she replied in reproof, "what you have said is very wrong indeed. We should not escape from these people as from the enemy."

It was but a day or two later that they played for a long time in the afternoon upon a gravel beach, gathering pretty pebbles and especially hunting for small colored stones with holes in them. They were hunting these at sunset when

some young men came down to swim, and as these passed them they heard a familiar voice and, looking toward the group, saw several of Tall Gun's young men. Instantly the two bent low over their search, turning their backs toward the swimmers. They slipped gradually away from the vicinity and, getting quickly behind some bushes, ran swiftly to the lodge of their host. Black Otter had gone away in the morning. Other Bird had taken her baby and gone to gossip with a neighbor.

The Sioux children did not stop to consider the usages of hospitality. All these people were become once more the enemy. The head chief of this village they did not really know. He had never spoken to them. Doubtless when Tall Gun should demand the slaves whom he had purchased of the Hohé this man would deliver them to him and, according to all Indian custom, they were the property of Tall Gun until they should be ransomed or make good their escape.

Therefore they gathered their blankets and the few weapons and effects they had brought with them and, placing their presents in a heap upon a mat, as soon as darkness came on, crawled under the skin at the rear of the tepée, silently crept away among the bushes which fringed the lakeshore and bluff, and so passed unmolested around the village and into the wood beyond.