grounds. Before the cunning "rustlers" had passed the point of descent a misshapen moon, which perhaps the mice had gnawed, was looking over the river bluff and into the coulée.

Suddenly an incautious voice was heard in the rear, the voice of a man, who had heard the fading tinkle of bells, and who supposed the ponies had pulled their picket pins and were wandering off.

"Sohe-e! Sohe-e! Ksōōk-ksōōk!" the man called in a remonstrant resonant voice, which filled all the coulée behind.

They did not wait to look back, but mounted their lead animals and whirling their rope ends dashed upon the herd in their front. The cracking strokes, the sharp "huh-huh-huh!" of their urging quickly set the small bunch of ponies off at a gallop. Once they got going it was easy to make them go faster. In a minute or two they had swept around a point of bluff, up a coulée descent, and out upon the illimitable prairie.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE GRIEF OF FIRE CLOUD AND CRANE'S CRY

The same grass-growing moon, which saw the little voyagers launched upon the prairie country, brought the first news of their capture to Fire Cloud's village of Oglalas.

As the warm days had come on and the grass was making good feed, Fire Cloud had said to his wife, Pehan-ho-win or Crane's Cry, "After a little time now we shall pack the travois and go to your relatives at the Missouri River. There we shall visit until the buffalo killing. I shall send for our children, and they shall remain with us during two moons."

Then Crane's Cry was glad. The heart of the mother sang within her. Two little sloe-eyed girls also were delighted. Although it seemed to them a great age since older sister and brother had been taken from home, the little ones ran off to some sand hills to chatter their joy and to play at "drag-the-travois" on a trail to the muddy river.

And the happy Sioux mother immediately set to work to prepare for meeting her children. She had many things to do. She had wished to make clothing for her absent ones and not that

the missionaries should clothe them. Now that she was to have them with her for a time she would make them many garments. During the summer, too, she would make them beautifully beaded moccasins. Her dear little daughter should have a valuable dress of the finest fawn-skin, with shield and sleeves done in stained porcupine quills, and with many bright colored fringes upon the skirt. And Etapa, her mimic, the story-teller, her stout-hearted little hunter, whose sturdy voice every day rang in her ears—how her heart laughed at thought of him! Well, he should have a war-bonnet, not a mimic head dress, but a real bonnet with feathers trailing to his heels.

With deep interest and dancing heart the mother undid her bundles and parflêches of fine skins and ornamental work. And she joyfully called in a young married sister, who was deft at making designs and patterns, to assist her in planning the various garments. The sister was only too happy to be of use in her favorite pastime, and Crane's Cry's tepée was speedily converted into a workshop, which might be said to combine tailoring, dress-making and millinery with fancy work.

As the days went by her two little brown girls watched with delight the growth of gorgeous garments. And there was no envy in the hearts of these well-dressed mites, who dearly loved





their tanké and śunkaku. Whatever the Sioux father may have thought of these things he said nothing. He was apparently content that his wife should find happiness in working for her children.

Matters were thus in Fire Cloud's tepée when the day drew near that he began to think of taking the trail to eastward. He sat upon the ground at midday and smoked and meditated. Quiet had settled upon his village. Men were lying about asleep or reclined upon the grass lazily playing at simple games of chance. Women gossiped in low tones within their open tepées. Many children were wading or swimming in the shallow river, which ran over a gravel bed near at hand. Across the stream, upon a flat bottom and upon the hill slopes beyond, large herds of ponies dotted the surface. Some were grazing, a large number lay at full-fed ease. Upon a high point above these a man stood erect, a pigmy figure etched upon the deep blue of a June sky.

The eyes of this watcher were keen and far-seeing, and the scope of his vision the limit of their range upon the levels. Presently this man picked up a blanket at his feet and whirled it three times about his head with a peculiar circular motion. Then he waved it up and down once, and once from east to west. Immediately a man in the village cried that the scout was sig-

naling the approach of a single runner coming from the east and that the courier was on horseback with two lead ponies.

This news put the people on the qui vive. Some of their own young men had gone among the pine coulées to hunt the deer that morning, but none of them had taken more than a single horse, so they knew that a stranger was coming. A stranger with two pack animals must have come from a long distance, and thus might be bearer of important tidings.

As with other folk, there is nothing of greater interest to the Indians than news from abroad, or from distant relatives. The arrival of a runner from another town is an event in village life, and if he has some stirring narrative of a war expedition, of some successful or disastrous exploit, or if he bring news that the buffalo are uncommonly plentiful in the country from whence he has traveled, there will be a new date in the tribal calendar, a fresh entry that will determine the name of that year's "winter count."

But Indians do not often run to meet the news bearer nor show, as a rule, any outward interest in his arrival. Although he well knows that his approach has been noted from afar, and that news of his arrival is spread in the village, the newcomer will see no evidence of the undercurrent of excitement which his coming has set in motion.





When the man with three ponies descended into the river valley and dismounted in the outskirts of this Oglala village to picket his animals there was no one at hand to make curious inquiry. No one seemed to take note of him as he walked, very straight, with a blanket over one shoulder, in among the tepées. He was a man of middle age, with a keen sharp face, scarred cheek and thin figure, and several furtive pairs of eyes recognized him for a soldier of the Wapetonwan—Cut-Face, who had fought a duel with two Ojibwas and who bore in consequence a number of knife scars.

In a very brief time this man discovered the tepée of Fire Cloud and walked straight to where its chief was sitting upon a grass plat. He had news for which there could be no ceremonial delays. "How, my cousin," he greeted, "I have been glad to find you here. I am come to bring you bad news. Your children were taken by the Hohé. They went away from those white people, and were coming homeward and thus the Hohé took them."

"My children are dead!" said the chief with conviction. He had not stirred as the messenger spoke, but his face had undergone a subtle change. It had suddenly become shrunken and thin, and his eyes were turned inward. Inside his tepée a little smothered exclamation, a sharp

catching of breath, told that Crane's Cry had heard her husband speak.

Then the father bowed his head upon his breast and the mother fell face downward in her tepée, and so lay as one dead, while the runner sat upon the ground and told his story.

The children of Fire Cloud had fled from the mission, he said, during the dry-grass moon. Men had been sent to trail them, and had come back after five suns, saying that the Assiniboins had carried the children northward. These men had been too few to follow and attack so large a party. The Indians at Traverse des Sioux were not agreed as to what should be done, but the missionaries had hired a young man to go to Fire Cloud's village with the news.

This runner had come as far as the Missouri, and there learning that the Pawnees were hunting to westward, had tarried at a Brulé town, not daring to go on. This young man had acted very badly. He had stayed all winter among the Brulés, who told him that they did not see that anything could be done to recover captives taken to such a far country among enemies so powerful. This unfaithful runner had not come in at Traverse des Sioux until the grass had started, when he, Cut-Face, who had been away from home in autumn, had packed his own ponies and traveled very fast to inform his cousin of the evil thing which had befallen.





"I am a broken man," said Fire Cloud at the close of this recital. "I have done wrong, and Waniyan Tanka has punished me. Etapa is no more. My daughter is dead—henceforth there is nothing."

"I have yet something to say," said the messenger. "The Dakotas of the agency will make war soon. They will destroy those who have taken our lands. Petit Corbeau of the Wapeku-ton-wan has sent to ask if the Oglalas will assist in this war. I will not talk further to-day." And the messenger arose abruptly and left the father to his grief.

Fire Cloud passed into his tepée. His wife yet lay as one dead with her face to the earth. She had heard all, and hope was gone out of her. His little ones were away at play. The man stood motionless inside his lodge for a time. Then, wishing to be alone, he blackened his face, drew his blanket around him, and passed out and walked far away from his village.

Quickly the news spread throughout the encampment. People did not speak to the chief as he went out from them. They did not go to his tepée, for they respected the grief of Fire Cloud and Crane's Cry. They said, "Lo, our friends are deeply affected. After a time we shall go mourn with them."

The sister of Crane's Cry took her brother-in-law's little girls into her own tepée. Gently she

told them of their loss and that they must abide with her for a time. The broken-hearted wails of these little ones were the first sounds of grieving for the lost Zintkala and Etapa. The children's open grieving, however, was hushed, long ere that of the stunned mother began.

During three suns Fire Cloud stayed out alone upon the prairie. He sat under his blanket fasting and praying. At night he stood upon a high hill that the spirits of the upper world might see him and thus consider as to whether his prayers should be answered. He desired to go against the enemy, and that, in fighting them, he should meet an honorable death.

When darkness came on also Crane's Cry and her immediate relatives retired to a hilltop, where they bewailed the lost ones. Crane's Cry wore a black blanket and put earth and ashes upon her head. She cried continually during the night, and in daylight lay upon the floor of her tepée with her face in ashes.

With most Indians the captivity of their children, without hope of rescue,—and there seldom is such hope—is a calamity more bitter even than death. For the children will, if not put to the torture, be reared as strangers and enemies. They are known no more to their own people, and therefore they are dead, and it is thus that their relatives speak and think of them.

When his period of fasting and prayer had





expired by exhaustion, Fire Cloud returned to his tepée and ate meat.

On the following day he attended a council of the Oglalas, who were met to consider the message of Little Crow, chief of the Minnesota Sioux. This man who had proven his quality as a leader was planning a war against the settlements, which had pushed his Indians off their prairies, and because the Great Father at Washington had failed to keep his people from starving. This soldier asked the Oglalas whether they would join him in the fighting, and he had urged strongly that they should do so.

Many Oglala soldiers spoke at this meeting which debated the matter for several days. Some talked in favor of going with their brethren in the war, others opposed the plan altogether. Fire Cloud, though nominally outranking any present, was one of the last to speak. His speech is preserved to this day in the traditional lore of his people. It ran as follows:

"My friends, you see in me a desolate man. The light is gone out of my tepée. I am as one who walks alone and in darkness. When I reach out my hand to touch those who should be my support when the hairs are white, they are gone. My children are dead, and I am punished for my folly in sending them to be taught by the enemies of my race. Henceforth there are only the garments of mourning in my lodge.

"Hitherto I have not talked in this council of wise men. I have said in my heart, 'My people know better than I what should be done. Let them, therefore, decide.' I have listened to what has been said. Some of my partisans have spoken well, and I have considered. I know this soldier of the Wapekutas (Little Crow), and I have listened to the words he has spoken by the mouth of Cut-Face. The man is brave, but he is very foolish. Doubtless he and his soldiers will kill some white people, and we shall lose a larger piece of land in consequence.

"Listen, my friends, my partisans, and ye old people. The white soldiers are as the gnats which sting at sunset. As fast as we shall kill some, others will come, bringing a greater company, to suck the blood from our veins. Already they have taken the best portion of our possessions. Now we shall lift our tomahawks and by our folly ask them to come and finish despoiling us! My friends, you have all seen the wounded bull turn upon the hunters. He might withhold himself and escape, but he wishes to inflict an injury and so dies. I think the Dakotas are like this bull. They destroy themselves in wishing to gore the enemy. When they have caused the white people to strike us in Minnesota and to pursue us hither, and when these have burned our towns and scattered our numbers, then shall our enemies, the Hohé, the Crows, and the Scili





come to pick the bones which the Great Father's soldiers shall leave behind them.

"Heretofore I have said it is foolish to fight the white people. I will not now go to seek them, but if they shall come after me whither I am going I shall fight them. I desire greatly to give my body to the enemy that when my arm is tired striking he shall count coup upon it. But I will strike at the Hohé, who have despoiled me of my children. These fighters of their kind and eaters of their own offspring I wish to cut off from harassing my people. I will not take part in Little Crow's war. I will go to the Bad Lands and make a stronghold, and there I will fight any who come against me. I desire that my partisans and my soldiers and their people shall follow me. I have spoken my thoughts."

This speech was effective in causing the Oglalas to reject Little Crow's overtures. In the end a number of villages of the western Sioux packed the travois and followed Fire Cloud.