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The Singing Spirit
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EARLY SHORT STORIES BY

NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

EDITED BY BERND C. PEYER

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TUCSON

Aside from a number of articles and stories, most of which have gone unrecorded, she also cooperated with Fannie Reed Griffin to produce *Oo-mah-ha Ta-wa-tha*, which was published for the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in 1898. She wrote at least one of the chapters in the booklet and did the illustrations, including two color prints. In addition, she wrote the introduction to Thomas Tibbles's *The Ponca Chiefs* (1880) and *Ploughed Under* (1881). La Flesché died on May 26, 1903, at her home in Nebraska.

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Nedawi

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"BRIGHT EYES" [SUSETTE LA FLESCHÉ]

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"Nedawi!" called her mother, "take your little brother while I go with your sister for some wood." Nedawi ran into the tent, bringing back her little red blanket, but the brown-faced, roly-poly baby, who had been having a comfortable nap in spite of being all the while tied straight to his board, woke with a merry crow just as the mother was about to attach him, board and all, to Nedawi's neck. So he was taken from the board instead, and, after he had kicked in happy freedom for a moment, Nedawi stood in front of her mother, who placed Habazhu on the little girl's back, and drew the blanket over him, leaving his arms free. She next put into his hand a little hollow gourd, filled with seeds, which served as a rattle; Nedawi held both ends of the blanket tightly in front of her, and was then ready to walk around with the little man.

Where should she go? Yonder was a group of young girls playing a game of *konci*, or dice. The dice were five plum-seeds, scorched black, and had little stars and quarter-moons instead of numbers. She went over and stood by the group, gently rocking herself from side to side, pretty much as white children do when reciting the multiplication table. The girls would toss up the wooden bowl, letting it drop with a gentle thud on the pillow beneath, the falling dice making a pleasant clatter which the baby liked to hear. The stakes were a little heap of beads, rings, and bracelets. The laughter and exclamations of the girls, as some successful toss brought down the dice three stars and two quarter-moons (the highest throw), made Nedawi wish that she, too, were a young girl, and could win and wear all those pretty things. How gay she would look! Just then, the little glittering heap caught baby's eye. He tried to wriggle out of the blanket to get to it, but Nedawi held tight. Then he set up a yell. Nedawi walked away very reluctantly, because she wanted to stay

and see who would win. She went to her mother's tent, but found it deserted. Her father and brothers had gone to the chase. A herd of buffalo had been seen that morning, and all the men in the tribe had gone, and would not be back till night. Her mother, her sister, and the women of the household had gone to the river for wood and water. The tent looked enticingly cool, with the sides turned up to let the breeze sweep through, and the straw mats and soft robes seemed to invite her to lie down on them and dream the afternoon away, as she was too apt to do. She did not yield to the temptation, however, for she knew Mother would not like it, but walked over to her cousin Metai's tent. She found her cousin "keeping house" with a number of little girls, and stood to watch them while they put up little tents, just large enough to hold one or two girls.

"Nedawi, come and play," said Metai. "You can make the fire and cook. I'll ask Mother for something to cook."

"But what shall I do with Habazhu?" said Nedawi.

"I'll tell you. Put him in my tent, and make believe he's our little old grandfather."

Forthwith he was transferred from Nedawi's back to the little tent. But Habazhu had a decided objection to staying in the dark little place, where he could not see anything, and crept out of the door on his hands and knees. Nedawi collected a little heap of sticks, all ready for the fire, and went off to get a fire-brand to light it with. While she was gone, Habazhu crawled up to a bowl of water which stood by the intended fire-place, and began dabbling in it with his chubby little hands, splashing the water all over the sticks prepared for the fire. Then he thought he would like a drink. He tried to lift the bowl in both hands, but only succeeded in spilling the water over himself and the fire-place.

When Nedawi returned, she stood aghast; then, throwing down the brand, she took her little brother by the shoulders and, I am sorry to say, shook him violently, jerked him up, and dumped him down by the door of the little tent from which he had crawled. "You bad little boy!" she said. "It's too bad that I have to take care of you when I want to play."

You see, she was no more perfect than any little white girl who gets into a temper now and then. The baby's lip quivered, and he

began to cry. Metai said to Nedawi: "I think it's real mean for you to shake him, when he doesn't know any better."

Metai picked up Baby and tried to comfort him. She kissed him over and over, and talked to him in baby language. Nedawi's conscience, if the little savage could be said to have any, was troubling her. She loved her baby brother dearly, even though she did get out of patience with him now and then.

"I'll put a clean little shirt on him and pack him again," said she, suddenly. Then she took off his little wet shirt, wrung it out, and spread it on the tall grass to dry in the sun. Then she went home, and, going to a pretty painted skin in which her mother kept his clothes, she selected the red shirt, which she thought was the prettiest. She was in such a hurry, however, that she forgot to close and tie up the skin again, and she carelessly left his clean shirts lying around as she had laid them out. When Baby was on her back again, she walked around with him, giving directions and overseeing the other girls at their play, determined to do that rather than nothing.

The other children were good-natured, and took her ordering as gracefully as they could. Metai made the fire in a new place, and then went to ask her mother to give her something to cook. Her mother gave her a piece of dried buffalo meat, as hard as a chip and as brittle as glass. Metai broke it up into small pieces, and put the pieces into a little tin pail of water, which she hung over the fire. "Now," she said, "when the meat is cooked and the soup is made, I will call you all to a feast, and Habazhu shall be the chief."

They all laughed. But alas for human calculations! During the last few minutes, a shy little girl, with soft, wistful black eyes, had been watching them from a little distance. She had on a faded, shabby blanket and a ragged dress.

"Metai," said Nedawi, "let's ask that girl to play with us; she looks so lonesome."

"Well," said Metai, doubtfully, "I don't care; but my mother said she didn't want me to play with ragged little girls."

"My father says we must be kind to poor little girls, and help them all we can; so I'm going to play with her if *you* don't," said Nedawi, loftily.

Although Metai was the hostess, Nedawi was the leading spirit,

and had her own way, as usual. She walked up to the little creature and said, "Come and play with us, if you want to." The little girl's eyes brightened, and she laughed. Then she suddenly drew from under her blanket a pretty bark basket, filled with the most delicious red and yellow plums. "My brother picked them in the woods, and I give them to you," was all she said. Nedawi managed to free one hand, and took the offering with an exclamation of delight, which drew the other girls quickly around. Instead of saying "Oh! Oh!" as you would have said, they cried "Hin! Hin!" which expressed their feeling quite as well, perhaps.

"Let us have them for our feast," said Metai, taking them.

Little Indian children are taught to share everything with one another, so it did not seem strange to Nedawi to have her gift looked on as common property. But, while the attention of the little group had been concentrated on the matter in hand, a party of mischievous boys, passing by, caught sight of the little tents and the tin pail hanging over the fire. Simultaneously, they set up a war-whoop and, dashing into the deserted camp, they sent the tent-poles scattering right and left, and snatching up whatever they could lay hands on, including the tin pail and its contents, they retreated. The little girls, startled by the sudden raid on their property, looked up. Rage possessed their little souls. Giving shrieks of anger, they started in pursuit. What did Nedawi do? She forgot plums, baby, and everything. The ends of the blanket slipped from her grasp, and she darted forward like an arrow after her companions.

Finding the chase hopeless, the little girls came to a stand-still, and some of them began to cry. The boys had stopped, too; and seeing the tears flow, being good-hearted boys in spite of their mischief, they surrendered at discretion. They threw back the articles they had taken, not daring to come near. They did not consider it manly for big boys like themselves to strike or hurt little girls, even though they delighted in teasing them, and they knew from experience that they would be at the mercy of the offended party if they went near enough to be touched. The boy who had the dinner brought the little pail which had contained it as near as he dared, and setting it down ran away.

"You have spilt all our soup. There's hardly any of it left. You bad boys!" said one of the girls.

They crowded around with lamentations over their lost dinner. The boys began to feel remorseful.

"Let's go into the woods and get them some plums to make up for it."

"Say, girls, hand us your pail, and we'll fill it up with plums for you."

So the affair was settled.

But, meanwhile, what became of the baby left so unceremoniously in the tall grass? First he opened his black eyes wide at this style of treatment. He was not used to it. Before he had time, however, to make up his mind whether to laugh or cry, his mother came to the rescue. She had just come home and thrown the wood off her back, when she caught sight of Nedawi dropping him. She ran to pick him up, and finding him unhurt, kissed him over and over. Some of the neighbors had run up to see what was the matter. She said to them:

"I never did see such a thoughtless, heedless child as my Nedawi. She really has 'no ears.' I don't know what in the world will ever become of her. When something new interests her, she forgets everything else. It was just like her to act in this way."

Then they all laughed, and one of them said:

"Never mind—she will grow wiser as she grows older," after which consoling remark they went away to their own tents.

It was of no use to call Nedawi back. She was too far off.

Habazhu was given over to the care of the nurse, who had just returned from her visit. An hour or two after, Nedawi came home.

"Mother!" she exclaimed, as she saw her mother frying bread for supper, "I am so hungry. Can I have some of that bread?"

"Where is your little brother?" was the unexpected reply.

Nedawi started. Where *had* she left him? She tried to think.

"Why, Mother, the last I remember I was packing him, and—and oh, Mother! you *know* where he is. Please tell me."

"When you find him and bring him back to me, perhaps I shall forgive you," was the cold reply.

This was dreadful. Her mother had never treated her in that way before. She burst into tears, and started out to find Habazhu, crying all the way. She knew that her mother knew where baby was, or she would not have taken it so coolly; and she knew also that her mother expected her to bring him home. As she went stumbling along through the grass, she felt herself seized and held in somebody's strong arms, and a great, round, hearty voice said:

"What's the matter with my little niece? Have all her friends deserted her that she is wailing like this? Or has her little dog died? I thought Nedawi was a brave little woman."

It was her uncle Two Crows. She managed to tell him, through her sobs, the whole story. She knew, if she told him herself, he would not laugh at her about it, for he would sympathize in her troubles, though he was a great tease. When she ceased, he said to her: "Well, your mother wants you to be more careful next time, I suppose; and, by the way, I think I saw a little boy who looked very much like Habazhu, in my tent."

Sure enough, she found him there with his nurse. When she got home with them, she found her mother,—her own dear self,—and, after giving her a big hug, she sat quietly down by the fire, resolved to be very good in the future. She did not sit long, however, for soon a neighing of horses, and the running of girls and children through the camp to meet the hunters, proclaimed their return. All was bustle and gladness throughout the camp. There had been a successful chase, and the led horses were laden with buffalo meat. These horses were led by the young girls to the tents to be unpacked, while the boys took the hunting-horses to water and tether in the grass. Fathers, as they dismounted, took their little children in their arms, tired as they were. Nedawi was as happy as any in the camp, for her seventeen-year-old brother, White Hawk, had killed his first buffalo, and had declared that the skin should become Nedawi's robe, as soon as it was tanned and painted.

What a pleasant evening that was to Nedawi, when the whole family sat around a great fire, roasting the huge buffalo ribs, and she played with her little brother Habazhu, stopping now and then to listen to the adventures of the day, which her father and brothers were relating! The scene was truly a delightful one, the camp-fires

lighting up the pleasant family groups here and there, as the flames rose and fell. The bit of prairie where the tribe had camped had a clear little stream running through it, with shadowy hills around, while over all hung the clear, star-lit sky. It seemed as if nature were trying to protect the poor waifs of humanity clustered in that spot. Nedawi felt the beauty of the scene, and was just thinking of nestling down by her father to enjoy it dreamily, when her brothers called for a dance. The little drum was brought forth, and Nedawi danced to its accompaniment and her brothers' singing. She danced gravely, as became a little maiden whose duty it was to entertain the family circle. While she was dancing, a little boy, about her own age, was seen hovering near. He would appear, and, when spoken to, would disappear in the tall, thick grass.

It was Mischief, a playmate of Nedawi's. Everybody called him "Mischief," because mischief appeared in every action of his. It shone from his eyes and played all over his face.

"You little plague," said White Hawk; "what do you want?"

For answer, the "little plague" turned a somersault just out of White Hawk's reach. When the singing was resumed, Mischief crept quietly up behind White Hawk, and, keeping just within the shadow, mimicked Nedawi's grave dancing, and he looked so funny that Nedawi suddenly laughed, which was precisely Mischief's object. But before he could get out of reach, as he intended, Thunder, Nedawi's other brother, who had been having an eye on him, clutched tight hold of him, and Mischief was landed in front of the fire-place, in full view of the whole family. "Now," said Thunder, "you are my prisoner. You stay there and dance with Nedawi." Mischief knew there was no escape, so he submitted with a good grace. He went through all sorts of antics, shaking his fists in the air, twirling suddenly around and putting his head close to the ground, keeping time with the accompaniment through it all.

Nedawi danced staidly on, now and then frowning at him; but she knew of old that he was irrepressible. When Nedawi sat down, he threw into her lap a little dark something and was off like a shot, yelling at the top of his voice, either in triumph at his recent achievements or as a practice for future war-whoops.

"Nedawi, what is it?" said her mother.

Nedawi took it to the fire, when the something proved to be a poor little bird.

"I thought he had something in his hand when he was shaking his fist in the air," said Nedawi's sister, Nazainza, laughing.

"Poor little thing!" said Nedawi; "it is almost dead."

She put its bill into the water, and tenderly tried to make it drink. The water seemed to revive it somewhat.

"I'll wrap it up in something warm," said Nedawi, "and maybe it will sing in the morning."

"Let me see it," said Nedawi's father.

Nedawi carried it to him.

"Don't you feel sorry for it, daughter?"

"Yes, Father," she answered.

"Then take it to the tall grass, yonder, and put it down where no one will step on it, and, as you put it down, say: 'God, I give you back your little bird. As I pity it, pity me.'"

"And will God take care of it?" said Nedawi, reverently, and opening her black eyes wide at the thought.

"Yes," said her father.

"Well, I will do as you say," said Nedawi, and she walked slowly out of the tent.

Then she took it over to the tall, thick grass, and making a nice, cozy little nest for it, left it there, saying just what her father had told her to say. When she came back, she said:

"Father, I said it."

"That was right, little daughter," and Nedawi was happy at her father's commendation.

Nedawi always slept with her grandmother and sister, exactly in the middle of the circle formed by the wigwam, with her feet to the fire-place. That place in the tent was always her grandmother's place, just as the right-hand side of the tent was her father's and mother's, and the left-hand her brothers'. There never was any confusion. The tribe was divided into bands, and every band was composed of several families. Each band had its chief, and the whole tribe was ruled by the head-chief, who was Nedawi's father. He had his own particular band besides. Every tent had its own place in the

band, and every band had its own particular place in the great circle forming the camp. Each chief was a representative, in council, of the men composing his band, while over all was the head-chief. The executive power was vested in the "soldiers' lodge," and when decisions were arrived at in council, it was the duty of its soldiers to execute all its orders, and punish all violations of the tribal laws. The office of "town-crier" was held by several old men, whose duty it was "to cry out" through the camp the announcements of councils, invitations to feasts, and to give notice of anything in which the whole tribe were called on to take part.

Well, before Nedawi went to sleep this evening, she hugged her grandmother, and said to her:

"Please tell me a story."

Her grandmother said:

"I cannot, because it is summer. In the winter I will tell you stories."

"Why not in summer?" said Nedawi.

"Because, when people tell stories and legends in summer, the snakes come around to listen. You don't want any snakes to come near us to-night, do you?"

"But," said Nedawi, "I have not seen any snakes for the longest time, and if you tell it right softly they won't hear you."

"Nedawi," said her mother, "don't bother your grandmother. She is tired and wants to sleep."

Thereupon Grandmother's heart felt sorry for her pet, and she said to Nedawi:

"Well, if you will keep still and go right to sleep when I am through, I will tell you how the turkeys came to have red eyelids."

"Once upon a time, there was an old woman living all alone with her grandson, Rabbit. He was noted for his cunning and for his tricks, which he played on everyone. One day, the old woman said to him, 'Grandson, I am hungry for some meat.' Then the boy took his bow and arrows, and in the evening he came home with a deer on his shoulders, which he threw at her feet, and said, 'Will that satisfy you?' She said, 'Yes, grandson.' They lived on that meat several days, and, when it was gone, she said to him again, 'Grandson,

I am hungry for some meat.' This time he went without his bow and arrows, but he took a bag with him. When he got into the woods, he called all the turkeys together. They gathered around him, and he said to them: 'I am going to sing to you, while you shut your eyes and dance. If one of you opens his eyes while I am singing, his eyelids shall turn red.' Then they all stood in a row, shut their eyes, as he had told them, and began to dance, and this is the song he sang to them while they danced:

Ha! wadamba thike
 Inshta zhida, inshta zhida,
 Imba theonda,
 Imba theonda.

[The literal translation is:

Ho! he who peeps
 Red eyes, red eyes,
 Flap your wings,
 Flap your wings.]

"Now, while they were dancing away, with their eyes shut, the boy took them, one by one, and put them into his bag. But the last one in the row began to think it very strange that his companions made no noise, so he gave one peep, screamed in his fright, 'They are making 'way with us!' and flew away. The boy took his bag of turkeys home to his grandmother, but ever after that the turkeys had red eyelids."

Nedawi gave a sigh of satisfaction when the story was finished, and would have asked for more, but just then her brothers came in from a dance which they had been attending in some neighbor's tent. She knew her lullaby time had come. Her brothers always sang before they slept either love or dancing songs, beating time on their breasts, the regular beats making a sort of accompaniment for the singing. Nedawi loved best of all to hear her father's war-songs, for he had a musical voice, and few were the evenings when she had gone to sleep without hearing a lullaby from her father or brothers. Among the Indians, it is the fathers who sing, instead of

the mothers. Women sing only on state occasions, when the tribe have a great dance, or at something of the sort. Mothers "croon" their babies to sleep, instead of singing.

Gradually the singing ceased, and the brothers slept as well as Nedawi, and quiet reigned over the whole camp.

* * William Jones * *

William Jones was born on March 28, 1871, on the Sac and Fox Reservation in the Indian Territory. His father, Henry Clay Jones, was of Welsh and Fox descent; his mother, Sarah Penny, was an Englishwoman. Because his mother died in childbirth, he was left in the care of his Fox grandmother until the age of nine. He became a member of the Eagle Clan and was given the name Megasiáva (Black Eagle).

At the age of ten, a year after his grandmother died, he was sent to an Indian boarding school maintained by the Society of Friends in Wabash, Indiana (this was probably White's Indiana Manual Labor Institute, which Gertrude Bonnin also attended in 1884). He spent three years there and afterward worked in the Indian Territory as a cowboy. In 1889 he was chosen among other Sac and Fox youths to attend the Hampton Institute, where he was to remain for the next three years. There he became an Episcopalian and learned carpentry.

Jones chose to continue his education and in 1892 enrolled at the Phillips Andover Academy. He graduated in 1896 and then enrolled at Harvard, intending to obtain a degree in medicine. At this time, however, he became acquainted with F. W. Putnam of the Peabody Museum, who stimulated his interest in anthropology. Jones joined the Boston Folklore Society and wrote articles for its *Folk Lore Journal*. In 1897 the organization financed a field trip to the Sac and Fox, after which he made the decision to specialize in North American anthropology. While at Harvard he was twice awarded a Winthrop Scholarship, but to supplement his income he wrote a series of short stories for the *Harvard Monthly* based on his experiences on the range and his fieldwork among the Sac and Fox.

On Putnam's recommendation, he received a scholarship to

Columbia University, where he was awarded a master's degree in 1901 and a doctorate in 1904. His tutor at Columbia was Franz Boas. In preparation for his thesis, he conducted intensive linguistic and ethnological studies among the Sac and Fox under the guidance of the American Museum of Natural History.

Unable to find a means of support that would allow him to continue his work on North American Indians, Jones accepted an offer from the Field Museum in Chicago to conduct an expedition to the Philippines in 1907. There he was ambushed and killed by a group of Ilongots on the island of Luzón on March 29, 1909 (Barbara Stoner gives April 2 as the probable date of his death).

Along with Francis La Flesche, Arthur C. Parker, J.N.B. Hewitt, and others, Jones was one of the major Indian anthropologists during the early development of the field in North America. His special area of interest was Algonquian linguistics and oral traditions. His major publications are *Some Principles of Algonquian Word-Formation* (Lancaster, Pa.: New Era Printing Co., 1904); *Fox Texts* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1907); *Kickapoo Tales Collected by William Jones*, ed. Truman Michelson (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1915); and *Ojibwa Texts Collected by William Jones*, ed. Truman Michelson, 2 vols. (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1917-19).

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The Heart of the Brave

WILLIAM JONES

* * *

Ameno Kisheswa, the moon that summons together the white-tail deer in droves, had been born but a night and a day; and as she hung at twilight in the western sky, she reddened like an up-turned buffalo horn on fire. The flowers, our grandparents, had hushed their glee; and drooping their foreheads, they waited without so much as a whisper of complaint the coming of *Takwaki*, the cruel frost. But the leaves and the grasses were happy, gay in the varied colours of their garments. *Nutenwi*, the big, hollow-mouthed wind, was abroad; and above him, far up, flew quacking geese that strung themselves in lines, bow-like, one after the other, across the heavens, as they journeyed merrily toward the *Shawaneki*, the regions of warmth and sunlight.

It was on a morning of one of these days that Wakamo and a hundred Osakies set out for the Comanche country, the land of plains and home of the buffalo and prairie wolf. Old and young thronged the banks of the Mississippi and watched them paddle across. Women waved and children hallooed as the men in twos, in threes, and in single file passed over the sand bars and disappeared in the shadow of the tall wood beyond. Many of the men were young, only braves. They wore their hair long, letting it fall in two braids each over a shoulder in front. The rest, who had been on a raid before, wore the hair shaved, leaving only a tuft, like that of the blue jay, upon which nodded the feather that marked them off as the warriors. Few were the burdens they took. All were in leggins and moccasins; and over their naked backs were slung the quivers of arrows. In the hand they carried their bows; and at the belt, on the side away from the knife, hung a small bag of dried jerked venison and pounded corn of the season before. At the head of them all,

and by the side of the old councillor, Kewanat, went the youthful Wakamo.

The name, Wakamo, only the moon before, had been that of a young man who thought more on the hang of the blanket from his shoulder than on the dangle of a Comanche scalp-lock at his belt. Ever since the day that Sanowa lay down to sleep—that was early in the spring soon after the bluebirds came—our fathers, the bent old gray-heads, kept debating before the Council fire in words like these:

“Yes, look at the son, that thin-nosed, woman-eyed youth with always a smile or a happy look for those he meets. No, the shoulders are not those of a strong man. They never will grow so broad as the father’s. And he is not a runner,—no, not even a wrestler. Besides, he stands no taller in his moccasins than a woman. The hands, and even the fingers, are but those of a woman. And yet, shall the youth become a chief of the Osakies?”

“True,” others of them gave answer. “True, he is not big, not tall, and not so strong as was the father. True, he is not this, and he is not that; but hush, mark what the people think and say. One day we see that his mother and sister have beaded an oak-leaf upon his moccasins. In the next few days we behold the oak-leaf on the moccasins of other young men. They even plait their hair of a braid same as his. They watch his gesture, they catch the sound of his words; and all that he does, they do, and wherever he goes, they go. Look also at the women, the younger women. Why do they lift their eyes from the sewing when they see him pass? And why do they slacken step in the path from the spring with their vessels of water, and glance from the corner of their eyes at him stepping by?”

Thus back and forth over the Council fire, our fathers talked of the son of Sanowa. But there came an end of it all at last.

One day in the *Nepeni Kisheswa*, the moon that ripens the corn, most of the men and women and even children were in the fields, down in the valley, gathering corn. Suddenly at midday, when the sunshine came down whitest, runners burst through the lodges yelling, “Comanches over the river coming this way! Comanches over the river coming this way!”

Now the story would be long to tell of the alarm spreading among

the harvesters; how the braves and the warriors flew to arms, and how as they met the Comanche in the valley, on the banks, and in the water of the river itself, our fathers back yonder among the lodges gathered about the sacred drum, and beat upon it a measure to which the women kept time as they sang the war songs of the nation; how in the evening by the firelight, our fathers put up the scalp-pole, at the top of which they had hung the Comanche scalp-locks newly won that day in the battle; and how as they seated themselves by it, they watched warrior after warrior step slowly out of the dark and stand before them to receive an eagle feather from his gens; and how finally, by the aid of their canes, they pulled themselves to their feet on hearing Sanowa’s old warrior, Kewanat, say, as he stuck an eagle feather into the hair of a youth who came up last of all the warriors, “Wakamo, your gens gives you this because you were first at the river and the last to leave off fighting the Comanches.”

While the embers of the scalp-dance fire were flickering low, while the people were silently filing off to their lodges, and the warriors on guard were signalling to one another the calls of animals and birds of the night, Wakamo busied himself with persuading the elders to let him go at the head of his father’s warriors into the country of the Comanches. There, in the stillness of night, they gave him his father’s war bundle, telling him solemnly, as they gave it, to keep it as became an Osakie and a son of Sanowa.

Our men had been in the Comanche country ever since the morning, and as the scouts went spying ahead, they scattered themselves far enough apart to catch a signal one waved to the other. The sun was halfway down the western sky when a scout near the top of a prairie hill far in advance gestured with arm and hand that buffaloes were feeding beyond in the plain below. From scout to scout behind him flew the message to Wakamo, who was coming up with the main body of our men. Back in the same manner flew the gestures of Wakamo, signalling for the scouts to hide on the hill where the farthest scout was, till he and the rest had caught up. Then up the hill went our men, silently and stealthily picking their way. But hardly had half of them reached the place where the scouts

lay, when suddenly a rumble, like the grumbling of the Thunderers, rolled over the plain where the buffaloes were browsing. Instantly all who had come crawled to the ridge and peered over. Behold! the buffaloes were making away from the hill on a wild stampede; and as the men straightened their backs and rose from their knees, they caught sight of wolves emerging from hollows and out of patches of reeds. Wakamo yelped. Instantly they sprang to their hind feet, and lo! Comanches stood before them. For as fast as they stood erect, they flung back from their heads and shoulders the wolf-skins with which they had covered themselves to decoy the buffaloes.

At the sight of them slapping their breasts, waving their bows and their arrows in air, and defiantly whooping a challenge to battle, Kewanat touched Wakamo upon the shoulder, and both stepped out in front of and apart from the rest. Each then took from a buckskin knot at the wrist a pinch of *natawinona*, the powdered dust of a sacred herb that grew in the shades and unfrequented retreats of the forests and valleys on the Mississippi. Facing the north-east sky, towards the land of their lodges, they sprinkled the *natawinona* to the wind, and muttered a prayer to Gisha Munetoo and to the spirit of Sanowa. Then Wakamo faced about, and whooped the *Wamakahamowina*, the battle yell of his father's warriors. They at once yelled it back, and all pushed downhill on the run; and as they went they strung their bows and whipped out their arrows from the quivers they had fixed under the arm at the side.

On reaching the foot of the hill, they found that they were three or four to one of the Comanches. But so fast and thick and sure whizzed the Comanche arrows that our men were brought to a standing fight at arrow range. The Comanches fought like buffalo bulls, and it looked as if they would drive the Osakies back up the hill.

By and by a lull fell over the fight. The Comanches were falling short of arrows, and so began to run to one of their number who was calling aloud to them; and as fast as they put into his quiver and hand what arrows they had, they whirled into the buffalo trail and ran at the top of their speed.

The Osakies at once pushed forward in pursuit; but no sooner

had they started than they stopped, amazed at the sight of the armed Comanche who, standing in their way, pulled his bow back as far as the point of the arrow, and drew a sweeping aim at their whole front as if to fight them alone. And as they stopped, he let fly the arrow, bringing down an Osakie. Instantly he turned and was off as fast as he could go after the other Comanches. Again our men pursued; and, once more, when they pressed the Comanche close, he faced about and pierced another Osakie, bringing, as he shot, all of our men to a stop. The next instant he was off, and another time our men pushed after him. On and on over the plain our men chased after the Comanche, stopping when he faced about and leaping after him when he turned his back. And as they ran, they stuck arrows in the ground at his heels, sent them whirring and hissing past every part of his body, but never did they once graze his skin. And all the while his friends were getting farther away out of the reach of our men.

Why it was the Comanche shot so well and our bowmen were unable to hit him, is not for us to say. Who knows but that a *munetoo*, a divinity, gave him courage to fight so many alone, turned aside our arrows, and guided the course of his? It was a strange fight, wonderfully strange. Feeling somehow that they could not hit him, our men coaxed and cajoled and yelled to one another to fling themselves with all their might into the pursuit with the hope of capturing the Comanche. And, at that, they shoved on all the harder, puffing as they went.

The Comanche's knees got to wobbling and his body to swaying from side to side as he ran. Then he got to drawing and aiming his bow without letting go the arrow. He did this once, twice, three times, and then Wakamo caught sight of the feathered tip of only a single arrow sticking out of the Comanche's quiver.

"Only one arrow he has, my men!" Wakamo yelled aloud as the Comanche shot away the one in the bow. "Don't stop when he shoots, but rush upon him and take him captive alive!"

As the Osakies rushed and closed in upon him, he faced them like a warrior. He drew back the bow with all the strength that he had. But when he aimed, it was up at the sky. And lo! when he let

go the arrow, and it flew over the heads of our men, his legs gave way beneath him; and at the very instant that Wakamo was about to lay hands upon him, the Comanche sank to the grass dead.

Panting and all in a sweat, our men crowded in a circle about the Comanche lying there young and tall and sinewy, without even a speck of a wound upon his body. Their eyes rolled with wonder as they looked him over from head to foot. For a while at first the wail of the wind only might have been heard. Presently Wakamo whispered, "A fighter!" "Yes, and like a hawk!" mumbled Kewanat. Instantly, "A man!" "A warrior!" and a multitude of other such words fell to buzzing from the lips of the men leaning upon their bows. Suddenly a hush dropped over them all, bringing again the silence. Kewanat knelt at the side of the Comanche, and as he wiped the blade of his knife on the palm of his hand, said:

"My young chief, and my kinsmen, here is a man who was truly a warrior. For you see what he has done. He has kept us from capturing him; he has kept us from slaying him with our own hands. More than that, he has enabled his own to escape and flee out of our reach. I shall not tell you that you are good warriors, nor that you are not. But *here* lies a warrior. I shall take out his heart, and show you the heart of a brave man. And after you have seen it, eat of it. You will then be brave, too."

Kewanat then cut open the flesh over the left of the breast along the hollow between two ribs. Spreading apart the ribs, he reached in his hand, and when he withdrew it, the eyes of the men were filled all the more with wonder; for between finger and thumb hung a heart no bigger perhaps than a sandhill plum. It was small, too small it seemed, for the heart of a man. It was like gristle and as tough as gristle.

"No," muttered Kewanat, shaking his head as he held the heart out at arm's length. "No, we will not eat of it. It is too small to go all round. But that is not all. The Comanche fought us like a warrior when he was alive. Let him then in death keep his heart. It tells us, besides, that the heart of a brave man is small, small like this."

After Kewanat had replaced the heart within the breast, he bent over, and fingered the Comanche's scalp-lock.

"Oh, my young chief," he said, looking up at Wakamo who stood

thoughtfully beside him, "that hanging in your lodge would be worthier by far than any your father ever took from Sioux, Osage, or Cheyenne. But your father never would have scalped a warrior like this. We are leaving him his heart, shall we also leave him the scalp?"

Wakamo nodded and slowly replied, "Yes. Let him keep it. There will be wailing enough in a lodge of the Comanches, and it may gladden the hearts of those in that lodge to know how bravely he fell."

Our men then dropped in behind Wakamo and Kewanat, glancing over their shoulders as they filed away for a last look at the Comanche. The bodies of their dead they took to the top of the hill from which they had first seen the Comanches. There they buried them, piling over them a mound of earth and stones.

While our men were resting and spying for a stream where they might camp, the sun was nearing the banks of the Great River in the west, the river that plunges and roars and foams between this world and the next. And as they were beholding the glow that lit up the western sky, their eyes fell upon three men leaving the spot where the Comanche had died. Their course was westward. One of them went ahead; the other two followed behind, carrying a burden upon their shoulders.

Our men came home before the first fall of snow. They said little about Comanche scalp-locks at the dance and the feast that welcomed them home. But by the fire of the lodge, the kin seated closely about and listening with open ear and expectant look, each told of a heart that makes a brave man, a little heart like that of the young Comanche. As our fathers one after the other heard the story, they rose and told it to others. When they had all heard it, they went to the Council lodge. And there they joyfully smoked their long red-stone pipe; joyfully, because the young Wakamo had seen with his own eyes what made a brave man, and because they felt that the son would now surely grow to be the chief that his father was.

* Gertrude Bonnin *

Gertrude Simmons Bonnin was born on February 22, 1876, on the Yankton Sioux Agency in South Dakota. She was raised by her full-blood mother, Ellen Simmons; her father appears to have been an Anglo-American. She later took up the pen name Zitkala-Sa, or Red Bird.

Bonnin attended White's Indiana Manual Labor Institute in Wabash, a Quaker missionary school for Indians, and completed her studies in 1897 at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. She then taught at the Carlisle Indian School for two years prior to enrolling at the Boston Conservatory of Music. In 1900 she accompanied the Carlisle Indian Band as a violin soloist on a trip to the Paris Exposition.

Bonnin began her literary career at the turn of the century, publishing three autobiographical sketches in the *Atlantic Monthly* and three short stories in *Harper's Monthly* and *Everybody's Magazine* between 1900 and 1902. In 1901 she published a collection of Sioux tales titled *Old Indian Legends* (Boston: Ginn & Co.; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985). At this time she also established a reputation as a public speaker, a talent she had already developed during her sojourn at Earlham College.

In 1901 Bonnin met Carlos Montezuma, the noted Yavapai physician and journalist. Their plans to marry never materialized, however, and in 1902 she took up the position of issue clerk at the Standing Rock Reservation, where she met and married Raymond Bonnin that same year. With her husband she moved to the Uintah Reservation in Utah, where she was to remain for the next fourteen years.

Around 1913 Gertrude Bonnin began to correspond with the Society of American Indians, and she joined its advisory board in

1914. A year later she started a community-center project at Uintah that was much publicized by the SAI. In 1916 she was elected as the society's secretary and thereupon moved to Washington, D.C. In 1918 and 1919 she also edited the SAI's journal, the *American Indian Magazine*. After the SAI disbanded, she established the National Council of American Indians, remaining president and editor of its *Indian Newsletter* until her death. Her political activities brought her into contact with the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and she helped to form its Indian Welfare Committee, which, along with the Indian Rights Association, sponsored an investigation of illegal appropriations of Oklahoma Indian lands (see Gertrude Bonnin, Charles H. Fabens, and Mathew K. Sniffen, *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery* [Philadelphia: Office of the Indian Rights Association, 1924]).

During the 1920s Bonnin strongly supported John Collier, who introduced her to people like Mabel Dodge and Mary Austin. By 1932 their relation had become strained, however, and she ultimately opposed the acceptance of the Indian Organization Act at the Yankton Agency.

In contrast to her political fervor, Bonnin's literary productivity decreased markedly during the latter part of her life. In 1921 she published *American Indian Stories* (Washington, D.C.: Hayworth Press; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), which was basically a reprint of her previous sketches and short stories. Somewhat earlier, in 1913, she had joined William E. Hanson in composing an Indian opera titled *Sun Dance*. It was selected in 1937 as the American opera of the year by the New York Light Opera Guild. Gertrude Bonnin died on January 26, 1938, in Washington, D.C.

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The Soft-Hearted Sioux

ZITKALA-SA [GERTRUDE BONNIN]

I

Beside the open fire I sat within our tepee. With my red blanket wrapped tightly about my crossed legs, I was thinking of the coming season, my sixteenth winter. On either side of the wigwam were my parents. My father was whistling a tune between his teeth while polishing with his bare hand a red stone pipe he had recently carved. Almost in front of me, beyond the centre fire, my old grandmother sat near the entranceway.

She turned her face toward her right and addressed most of her words to my mother. Now and then she spoke to me, but never did she allow her eyes to rest upon her daughter's husband, my father. It was only upon rare occasions that my grandmother said anything to him. Thus his ears were open and ready to catch the smallest wish she might express. Sometimes when my grandmother had been saying things which pleased him, my father used to comment upon them. At other times, when he could not approve of what was spoken, he used to work or smoke silently.

On this night my old grandmother began her talk about me. Filling the bowl of her red stone pipe with dry willow bark, she looked across at me.

"My grandchild, you are tall and are no longer a little boy." Narrowing her old eyes, she asked, "My grandchild, when are you going to bring here a handsome young woman?" I stared into the fire rather than meet her gaze. Waiting for my answer, she stooped forward and through the long stem drew a flame into the red stone pipe.

I smiled while my eyes were still fixed upon the bright fire, but I said nothing in reply. Turning to my mother, she offered her the

pipe. I glanced at my grandmother. The loose buckskin sleeve fell off at her elbow and showed a wrist covered with silver bracelets. Holding up the fingers of her left hand, she named off the desirable young women of our village.

"Which one, my grandchild, which one?" she questioned.

"Hoh!" I said, pulling at my blanket in confusion. "Not yet!" Here my mother passed the pipe over the fire to my father. Then she too began speaking of what I should do.

"My son, be always active. Do not dislike a long hunt. Learn to provide much buffalo meat and many buckskins before you bring home a wife." Presently my father gave the pipe to my grandmother, and he took his turn in the exhortations.

"Ho, my son, I have been counting in my heart the bravest warriors of our people. There is not one of them who won his title in his sixteenth winter. My son, it is a great thing for some brave of sixteen winters to do."

Not a word had I to give in answer. I knew well the fame of my warrior father. He had earned the right of speaking such words, though even he himself was a brave only at my age. Refusing to smoke my grandmother's pipe because my heart was too much stirred by their words, and sorely troubled with a fear lest I should disappoint them, I arose to go. Drawing my blanket over my shoulders, I said, as I stepped toward the entranceway: "I go to hobble my pony. It is now late in the night."

II

Nine winters' snows had buried deep that night when my old grandmother, together with my father and mother, designed my future with the glow of a camp fire upon it.

Yet I did not grow up the warrior, huntsman, and husband I was to have been. At the mission school I learned it was wrong to kill. Nine winters I hunted for the soft heart of Christ, and prayed for the huntsmen who chased the buffalo on the plains.

In the autumn of the tenth year I was sent back to my tribe to preach Christianity to them. With the white man's Bible in my

hand, and the white man's tender heart in my breast, I returned to my own people.

Wearing a foreigner's dress, I walked, a stranger, into my father's village.

Asking my way, for I had not forgotten my native tongue, an old man led me toward the tepee where my father lay. From my old companion I learned that my father had been sick many moons. As we drew near the tepee, I heard the chanting of a medicine-man within it. At once I wished to enter in and drive from my home the sorcerer of the plains, but the old warrior checked me. "Ho, wait outside until the medicine-man leaves your father," he said. While talking he scanned me from head to feet. Then he retraced his steps toward the heart of the camping-ground.

My father's dwelling was on the outer limits of the round-faced village. With every heart-throb I grew more impatient to enter the wigwam.

While I turned the leaves of my Bible with nervous fingers, the medicine-man came forth from the dwelling and walked hurriedly away. His head and face were closely covered with the loose robe which draped his entire figure.

He was tall and large. His long strides I have never forgot. They seemed to me then as the uncanny gait of eternal death. Quickly pocketing my Bible, I went into the tepee.

Upon a mat lay my father, with furrowed face and gray hair. His eyes and cheeks were sunken far into his head. His sallow skin lay thin upon his pinched nose and high cheek-bones. Stooping over him, I took his fevered hand. "How, Ate?" I greeted him. A light flashed from his listless eyes and his dried lips parted. "My son!" he murmured, in a feeble voice. Then again the wave of joy and recognition receded. He closed his eyes, and his hand dropped from my open palm to the ground.

Looking about, I saw an old woman sitting with bowed head. Shaking hands with her, I recognized my mother. I sat down between my father and mother as I used to do, but I did not feel at home. The place where my old grandmother used to sit was now unoccupied. With my mother I bowed my head. Alike our throats were choked and tears were streaming from our eyes; but far apart

in spirit our ideas and faiths separated us. My grief was for the soul unsaved; and I thought my mother wept to see a brave man's body broken by sickness.

Useless was my attempt to change the faith in the medicine-man to that abstract power named God. Then one day I became righteously mad with anger that the medicine-man should thus ensnare my father's soul. And when he came to chant his sacred songs I pointed toward the door and bade him go! The man's eyes glared upon me for an instant. Slowly gathering his robe about him, he turned his back upon the sick man and stepped out of our wigwam. "Hā, hā, hā! my son, I cannot live without the medicine-man!" I heard my father cry when the sacred man was gone.

III

On a bright day, when the winged seeds of the prairie-grass were flying hither and thither, I walked solemnly toward the centre of the camping-ground. My heart beat hard and irregularly at my side. Tighter I grasped the sacred book I carried under my arm. Now was the beginning of life's work.

Though I knew it would be hard, I did not once feel that failure was to be my reward. As I stepped unevenly on the rolling ground, I thought of the warriors soon to wash off their war-paints and follow me.

At length I reached the place where the people had assembled to hear me preach. In a large circle men and women sat upon the dry red grass. Within the ring I stood, with the white man's Bible in my hand. I tried to tell them of the soft heart of Christ.

In silence the vast circle of bareheaded warriors sat under an afternoon sun. At last, wiping the wet from my brow, I took my place in the ring. The hush of the assembly filled me with great hope.

I was turning my thoughts upward to the sky in gratitude, when a stir called me to earth again.

A tall, strong man arose. His loose robe hung in folds over his right shoulder. A pair of snapping black eyes fastened themselves

like the poisonous fangs of a serpent upon me. He was the medicine-man. A tremor played about my heart and a chill cooled the fire in my veins.

Scornfully he pointed a long forefinger in my direction and asked, "What loyal son is he who, returning to his father's people, wears a foreigner's dress?" He paused a moment, and then continued: "The dress of that foreigner of whom a story says he bound a native of our land, and heaping dry sticks around him, kindled a fire at his feet!" Waving his hand toward me, he exclaimed, "Here is the traitor to his people!"

I was helpless. Before the eyes of the crowd the cunning magician turned my honest heart into a vile nest of treachery. Alas! the people frowned as they looked upon me.

"Listen!" he went on. "Which one of you who have eyed the young man can see through his bosom and warn the people of the nest of young snakes hatching there? Whose ear was so acute that he caught the hissing of snakes whenever the young man opened his mouth? This one has not only proven false to you, but even to the Great Spirit who made him. He is a fool! Why do you sit here giving ear to a foolish man who could not defend his people because he fears to kill, who could not bring venison to renew the life of his sick father? With his prayers, let him drive away the enemy! With his soft heart, let him keep off starvation! We shall go elsewhere to dwell upon an untainted ground."

With this he disbanded the people. When the sun lowered in the west and the winds were quiet, the village of cone-shaped tepees was gone. The medicine-man had won the hearts of the people.

Only my father's dwelling was left to mark the fighting-ground.

IV

From a long night at my father's bedside I came out to look upon the morning. The yellow sun hung equally between the snow-covered land and the cloudless blue sky. The light of the new day was cold. The strong breath of winter crusted the snow and fitted crystal shells over the rivers and lakes. As I stood in front of the tepee,

thinking of the vast prairies which separated us from our tribe, and wondering if the high sky likewise separated the soft-hearted Son of God from us, the icy blast from the north blew through my hair and skull. My neglected hair had grown long and fell upon my neck.

My father had not risen from his bed since the day the medicine-man led the people away. Though I read from the Bible and prayed beside him upon my knees, my father would not listen. Yet I believed my prayers were not unheeded in heaven.

"Hā, hā, hā! my son," my father groaned upon the first snowfall. "My son, our food is gone. There is no one to bring me meat! My son, your soft heart has unfitted you for everything!" Then covering his face with the buffalo-robe, he said no more. Now while I stood out in that cold winter morning, I was starving. For two days I had not seen any food. But my own cold and hunger did not harass my soul as did the whining cry of the sick old man.

Stepping again into the tepee, I untied my snow-shoes, which were fastened to the tent-poles.

My poor mother, watching by the sick one, and faithfully heaping wood upon the centre fire, spoke to me:

"My son, do not fail again to bring your father meat, or he will starve to death."

"How, Ina," I answered, sorrowfully. From the tepee I started forth again to hunt food for my aged parents. All day I tracked the white level lands in vain. Nowhere, nowhere were there any other footprints but my own! In the evening of this third fast-day I came back without meat. Only a bundle of sticks for the fire I brought on my back. Dropping the wood outside, I lifted the door-flap and set one foot within the tepee.

There I grew dizzy and numb. My eyes swam in tears. Before me lay my old gray-haired father sobbing like a child. In his horny hands he clutched the buffalo-robe, and with his teeth he was gnawing off the edges. Chewing the dry stiff hair and buffalo-skin, my father's eyes sought my hands. Upon seeing them empty, he cried out:

"My son, your soft heart will let me starve before you bring me meat! Two hills eastward stand a herd of cattle. Yet you will see me die before you bring me food!"

Leaving my mother lying with covered head upon her mat, I rushed out into the night.

With a strange warmth in my heart and swiftness in my feet, I climbed over the first hill, and soon the second one. The moonlight upon the white country showed me a clear path to the white man's cattle. With my hand upon the knife in my belt, I leaned heavily against the fence while counting the herd.

Twenty in all I numbered. From among them I chose the best-fattened creature. Leaping over the fence, I plunged my knife into it.

My long knife was sharp, and my hands, no more fearful and slow, slashed off choice chunks of warm flesh. Bending under the meat I had taken for my starving father, I hurried across the prairie.

Toward home I fairly ran with the life-giving food I carried upon my back. Hardly had I climbed the second hill when I heard sounds coming after me. Faster and faster I ran with my load for my father, but the sounds were gaining upon me. I heard the clicking of snowshoes and the squeaking of the leather straps at my heels; yet I did not turn to see what pursued me, for I was intent upon reaching my father. Suddenly like thunder an angry voice shouted curses and threats into my ear! A rough hand wrenched my shoulder and took the meat from me! I stopped struggling to run. A deafening whirl filled my head. The moon and stars began to move. Now the white prairie was sky, and the stars lay under my feet. Now again they were turning. At last the starry blue rose up into place. The noise in my ears was still. A great quiet filled the air. In my hand I found my long knife dripping with blood. At my feet a man's figure lay prone in blood-red snow. The horrible scene about me seemed a trick of my senses, for I could not understand it was real. Looking long upon the blood-stained snow, the load of meat for my starving father reached my recognition at last. Quickly I tossed it over my shoulder and started again homeward.

Tired and haunted I reached the door of the wigwam. Carrying the food before me, I entered with it into the tepee.

"Father, here is food!" I cried, as I dropped the meat near my mother. No answer came. Turning about, I beheld my gray-haired father dead! I saw by the unsteady firelight an old gray-haired skeleton lying rigid and stiff.

Out into the open I started, but the snow at my feet became bloody.

V

On the day after my father's death, having led my mother to the camp of the medicine-man, I gave myself up to those who were searching for the murderer of the paleface.

They bound me hand and foot. Here in this cell I was placed four days ago.

The shrieking winter winds have followed me hither. Rattling the bars, they howl unceasingly: "Your soft heart! your soft heart will see me die before you bring me food!" Hark! something is clanking the chain on the door. It is being opened. From the dark night without a black figure crosses the threshold. . . . It is the guard. He comes to warn me of my fate. He tells me that tomorrow I must die. In his stern face I laugh aloud. I do not fear death.

Yet I wonder who shall come to welcome me in the realm of strange sight. Will the loving Jesus grant me pardon and give my soul a soothing sleep? or will my warrior father greet me and receive me as his son? Will my spirit fly upward to a happy heaven? or shall I sink into the bottomless pit, an outcast from a God of infinite love?

Soon, soon I shall know, for now I see the east is growing red. My heart is strong. My face is calm. My eyes are dry and eager for new scenes. My hands hang quietly at my side. Serene and brave, my soul awaits the men to perch me on the gallows for another flight. I go.

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Charles A. Eastman
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During his imprisonment, Many Lightnings converted to Christianity and took the name Jacob Eastman. Upon his release he joined other Sioux to form an Anglo-oriented community named Flandreau. In 1873 he fetched his fifteen-year-old son from Canada and enrolled him at the mission school in Flandreau. Ohiyesa, who had been brought up entirely in a traditional Sioux manner, thereupon became Charles Eastman. He attended the mission school for two years and then transferred to the Santee Normal Training School. In 1876 he entered Beloit College in Wisconsin, where he studied for the next three years. Between 1879 and 1881 he attended Knox College in Illinois and Kimball Union Academy in New Hampshire from 1882 to 1883. He was then awarded a scholarship to Dartmouth, where he graduated in 1887. Finally, he enrolled at the Boston University School of Medicine and earned his M.D. in 1890 at the age of thirty-two. Eastman was undoubtedly one of the most educated Indians of his time and was therefore often held up by progressives as a model.

95

vivors. In 1891 he married Elaine Goodale, who was the supervisor of education for the Sioux. Two years later he resigned following a dispute with the reservation agent and moved with his wife to St. Paul, where he practiced briefly.

Between 1894 and 1898 he served as a field secretary of the YMCA, during which time he organized some forty local YMCAs for Indians. He was also appointed to represent the Santee in an effort to recover overdue annuity payments, a position that ultimately led to disputes between the tribe and him. Eastman then worked at the Carlisle Indian School for a short period as an outing agent prior to becoming a government physician at the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota. In 1903 he again resigned because of disagreements with the local agent. The federal government then hired him to assign anglicized names to the Sioux, a task he had completed by 1908.

By this time Eastman had established a reputation as an author and lecturer. He began his literary career with a number of autobiographical sketches in *St. Nicholas* magazine, having been prompted by his wife, who was to be the chief editor of his future works. These stories appeared collectively under the title *Indian Boyhood* (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1902; reprint, New York: Dover, 1971), and they were soon followed by the publication of two additional collections of short stories, entitled *Red Hunters and the Animal People* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1904; reprint, New York: AMS, 1976) and *Old Indian Days* (New York: McClure Co., 1907; reprint, Rapid City, S.D.: Fenwyn, 1970). Together with his wife he produced a collection of traditional stories, *Wigwam Evenings* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1909). His later publications dealt with traditional and contemporary Indian life and included *The Soul of the Indian* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), *The Indian To-day: The Past and Future of the First American* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1915; reprint, New York: AMS, 1975), *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1916; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977; his second autobiographical volume), and *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1918), as well as countless articles.

Charles Eastman actively supported the Boy Scouts, operating his own summer camp for some time and publishing numerous works for the organization, such as *Indian Scout Talks* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1914). He was also one of the founders of the Society of American Indians, and although his participation in its activities was very sporadic, he occasionally wrote for its journal. In 1911 he represented the North American Indians at the First Universal Races Congress in London. In 1923 he was appointed to the position of U.S. Indian inspector, which he was to hold for nineteen months. That same year he also served as a member of the Committee of One Hundred to investigate Indian policies, which laid the groundwork for the famous 1928 Meriam Report, prepared by the Brookings Institution. He retired for health reasons in 1925 and died on January 8, 1938, in Detroit.

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The Singing Spirit

CHARLES A. EASTMAN [OHIYESA]

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I

"Ho, my steed, we must climb one more hill! My reputation depends upon my report!"

Anookasan addressed his pony as if he were a human companion urged on like himself by human need and human ambition. And yet in his heart he had very little hope of sighting any buffalo in that region at just that time of the year.

The Yankton Sioux were ordinarily the most far-sighted of their people in selecting a winter camp, but this year the late fall had caught them rather far east of the Missouri bottoms, their favorite camping-ground. The upper Jim river, called by the Sioux the River of the Gray Woods, was usually bare of large game at that season. Their store of jerked buffalo meat did not hold out as they had hoped, and by March it became an urgent necessity to send out scouts for buffalo.

The old men at the tiyó teepee (council lodge) held a long council. It was decided to select ten of their bravest and hardiest young men to explore the country within three days' journey of their camp.

"Anookasan, uyeyo-o-o, woo, woo!" Thus the ten men were summoned to the council lodge early in the evening to receive their commission. Anookasan was the first called and first to cross the circle of the teepees. A young man of some thirty years, of the original native type, his massive form was wrapped in a fine buffalo robe with the hair inside. He wore a stately eagle feather in his scalp-lock, but no paint about his face.

As he entered the lodge, all the inmates greeted him with marked respect, and he was given the place of honor. When all were seated,

the great drum was struck and a song sung by four deep-chested men. This was the prelude to a peculiar ceremony.

A large red pipe, which had been filled and laid carefully upon the central hearth, was now taken up by an old man, whose face was painted red. First he held it to the ground with the words "Great Mother, partake of this!" Then he held it toward the sky, saying, "Great Father, smoke this!" Finally he lighted it, took four puffs, pointing it to the four corners of the earth in turn, and finally presented it to Anookasan. This was the oath of office, administered by the chief of the council lodge. The other nine were similarly commissioned, and all accepted the appointment.

It was no light task that was thus religiously enjoined upon these ten men. It meant at the least several days and nights wandering in search of signs of the wily buffalo. It was a public duty and a personal one as well; one that must involve untold hardship, and if overtaken by storm the messengers were in peril of death.

Anookasan returned to his teepee with some misgiving. His old horse, which had so often carried him to victory, was not so strong as he had been in his prime. As his master approached the lodge, the horse welcomed him with a gentle whinny. He was always tethered nearby, ready for any emergency.

"Ah, Wakan, we are once more called upon to do duty! We shall set out before daybreak."

As he spoke, he pushed nearer a few strips of the poplar bark, which was oats to the Indian pony of the olden time.

Anookasan had his extra pair of buffalo-skin moccasins with the hair inside, and his scanty provision of dried meat neatly done up in a small packet and fastened to his saddle. With his companions he started northward up the river of the Gray Woods; five went on the east side and five on the west.

The party had separated each morning, so as to cover as much ground as possible, having agreed to return at night to the river. It was now the third day; their food was all but gone; their horses much worn, and the signs seemed to indicate a storm. Yet the hunger of their friends and their own pride impelled them to persist, for out of many young men they had been chosen, therefore they must prove themselves equal to the occasion.

The sun, now well toward the western horizon, cast over snow-covered plains a purplish light. No living creature was in sight and the quest seemed hopeless, but Anookasan was not one to accept defeat.

"There may be an outlook from yonder hill which will turn failure into success," he thought, as he dug his heels into the sides of his faithful nag. At the same time, he started a "Strong Heart" song to keep his courage up.

At the summit of the ascent he paused and gazed steadily before him. At the foot of the next coteau, he beheld a strip of black. He strained his eyes to look, for the sun had already set behind the hill-tops. It was a great herd of buffalo, he thought, which was grazing on the foothills.

"Hi, hi, uncheédah! Hi, hi, tunkásheedah!" he was about to exclaim in gratitude, when looking more closely he discovered his mistake. The dark patch was only timber.

His horse could not carry him any farther, so he got off and ran behind him toward the river. At dusk he hailed his companions.

"Ho, what success?" one cried.

"Not a sign of even a lone bull," replied another.

"Yet I saw a gray wolf going north this evening. His direction is propitious," remarked Anookasan, as he led the others down the slope and into a heavy timber. The river just here made a sharp turn, forming a densely wooded semi-circle, in the shelter of a high bluff.

The braves were all down-hearted because of their ill-luck, and only the sanguine spirit of Anookasan kept them from utter discouragement. Their slight repast had been taken and each man had provided himself with abundance of dry grass and twigs for a bed. They had built a temporary wigwam of the same material, in the center of which there was a generous fire. Each man stretched himself out upon his robe in the glow of it. Anookasan filled the red pipe, and having lighted it he took one or two hasty puffs and held it up to the moon which was scarcely visible behind the cold clouds.

"Great Mother, partake of this smoke! May I eat meat to-morrow!" he exclaimed with solemnity. Having uttered this prayer, he handed the pipe to the man nearest him.

For a time they all smoked in silence; then came a distant call.

"Ah, it is Shunkmanito, the wolf! There is something cheering in his voice tonight," declared Anookasan. "Yes, I am sure he is telling us not to be discouraged. You know that the wolf is one of our best friends in trouble. Many a one has been guided back to his home by him in a blizzard, or led to game when in desperate need. My friends, let us not turn back in the morning. Let us go north one more day!"

No one answered immediately, and again silence reigned while one by one they pulled the reluctant whiffs of smoke through the long stem of the calumet.

"What is that?" said one of the men, and all listened intently to catch the delicate sound. They were familiar with all the noises of the night and voices of the forest, but this was not like any of them.

"It sounds like the song of a mosquito, and one might forget while he listens that this is not midsummer," said one.

"I hear also the medicine-man's single drum-beat," suggested another.

"There is a tradition," remarked Anookasan, "that many years ago a party of hunters went up the river on a scout like this of ours. They never returned. Afterward, in the summer, their bones were found near the home of a strange creature, said to be a little man, but he had hair all over him. The Isantees call him Chanótedah. Our old men give him the name Oglúgechana. This singular being is said to be no larger than a newborn babe. He speaks an unknown tongue.

"The home of Oglúgechana is usually a hollow stump, around which all of the nearest trees are felled by lightning. There is an open spot in the deep woods wherever he dwells. His weapons are the plumes of various birds. Great numbers of these variegated feathers are to be found in the deserted lodge of the little man.

"It is told by the old men that Oglúgechana has a weird music by which he sometimes bewitches lone travelers. He leads them hither and thither about his place until they have lost their senses. Then he speaks to them. He may make of them great war prophets or medicine men, but his commands are hard to fulfill. If any one sees him and comes away before he is bewildered, the man dies as soon

as he smells the camp-fire, or when he enters his home his nearest relative dies suddenly."

The warrior who related this legend assumed the air of one who narrates authentic history, and his listeners appeared to be seriously impressed. What we call the supernatural was as real to them as any part of their lives.

"This thing does not stop to breathe at all. His music seems to go on endlessly," said one, with considerable uneasiness.

"It comes from the heavy timber north of us, under the high cliff," reported a warrior who had stepped outside of the rude temporary structure to inform himself more clearly of the direction of the sound.

"Anookasan, you are our leader—tell us what we should do! We will follow you. I believe we ought to leave this spot immediately. This is perhaps the spirit of some dead enemy," suggested another. Meanwhile the red pipe was refilled and sent around the circle to calm their disturbed spirits.

When the calumet returned at last to the one addressed, he took it in a preoccupied manner and spoke between labored pulls on the stem.

"I am just like yourselves—nothing more than flesh—with a spirit that is as ready to leave me as water to run from a punctured water-bag! When we think thus, we are weak. Let us rather think upon the brave deeds of our ancestors! This singing spirit has a gentle voice, I am ready to follow and learn if it be an enemy or no. Let us all be found together next summer if need be!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" was the full-throated response.

"All put on your war paint," suggested Anookasan. "Have your knives and arrows ready!"

They did so, and all stole silently through the black forest in the direction of the mysterious sound. Clearer and clearer it came through the frosty air, but it was a foreign sound to the savage ear. Now it seemed to them almost like a distant waterfall; then it recalled the low hum of summer insects and the drowsy drone of the bumble bee. Thump, thump, thump! was the regular accompaniment.

Nearer and nearer to the cliff they came, deeper into the wild

heart of the woods. At last out of the gray formless night a dark shape appeared! It looked to them like a huge buffalo bull standing motionless in the forest, and from his throat there apparently proceeded the thump of the medicine drum, and the song of the beguiling spirit.

All of a sudden, a spark went up into the air. As they continued to approach, there became visible a deep glow about the middle of the dark object. Whatever it was, they had never heard of anything like it in all their lives.

Anookasan was a little in advance of his companions, and it was he who finally discovered a wall of logs laid one upon another. Half way up there seemed to be stretched a *par-fleche* (raw-hide) from which a dim light emanated. He still thought of Oglúgechana, who dwells within a hollow tree, and determined to surprise and if possible to overpower this wonder-working old man.

All now took their knives in their hands and advanced with their leader to the attack upon the log hut. "Wa-wa-wa-wa, woo, woo!" they cried. Zip! zip! went the *par-fleche* door and window, and they all rushed in.

There sat a man upon a roughly hewn stool. He was attired in wolf skins and wore a fox skin cap upon his head. The larger portion of his face was clothed with natural fur. A rudely made cedar fiddle was tucked under his furred chin. Supporting it with his left hand, he sawed it vigorously with a bow that was not unlike an Indian boy's miniature weapon, while his moccasined left foot came down upon the sod floor in time with the music. When the shrill war-whoop came, and the door and window were cut in strips by the knives of the Indians, he did not even cease playing, but instinctively he closed his eyes, so as not to behold the horror of his own end.

II

It was long ago, upon the rolling prairie south of the Devil's Lake, that a motley body of hunters gathered near a mighty herd of the bison, in the Moon of Falling Leaves. These were the first genera-

tion of the Canadian mixed-bloods, who sprang up in such numbers as to form almost new people. These semi-wild Americans soon became a necessity to the Hudson Bay Company, as they were the greatest hunters of the bison, and made more use of this wonderful animal than even their aboriginal ancestors.

A curious race of people this in their make-up and their customs! Their shaggy black hair was allowed to grow long, reaching to the broad shoulders, then cut off abruptly, making their heads look like a thatched house. Their dark faces were in most cases well covered with hair, their teeth large and white, and their eyes usually liquid black, although occasionally one had a tiger-brown or cold gray eye. Their costume was a buckskin shirt with abundance of fringes, buckskin pantaloons with short leggings, a gay sash, and a cap of fox fur. Their arms consisted of flint-lock guns, hatchets and butcher knives. Their ponies were small, but as hardy as themselves.

As these men gathered in the neighborhood of an immense herd of buffalo, they busied themselves in adjusting the girths of their beautifully beaded, pillow-like saddles. Among them there were exceptional riders and hunters. It was said that few could equal Antoine Michaud in feats of riding into and through the herd. There he stood, all alone, the observed of many others. It was his habit to give several Indian yells when the onset began so as to insure a successful hunt.

In this instance, Antoine gave his usual whoops, and when they had almost reached the herd, he lifted his flint-lock over his head and plunged into the black, moving mass. With a sound like the distant rumbling of thunder, those tens of thousands of buffalo hoofs were pounding the earth in retreat. Thus Antoine disappeared.

His wild steed dashed into the midst of the vast herd. Fortunately for him, the animals kept clear of him; but alas! the gap through which he had entered instantly closed again.

He yelled frantically to secure an outlet, but without effect. He had tied a red bandanna around his head to keep the hair off his face, and he now took this off and swung it crazily about him to scatter the buffalo, but it availed him nothing.

With such a mighty herd in flight, the speed could not be great; therefore the "Bois Brule" settled himself to the situation, allow-

ing his pony to canter along slowly to save his strength. It required much tact and presence of mind to keep an open space, for the few paces of obstruction behind had gradually grown into a mile.

The mighty host moved continually southward, walking and running alternately. As the sun neared the western horizon, it fired the sky above them, and all the distant hills and prairies were in the glow of it, but immediately about them was a thick cloud of dust, and the ground appeared like a fire-swept plain.

Suddenly Antoine was aware of a tremendous push from behind. The animals smelled the cool water of a spring which formed a large bog in the midst of the plain. This solitary pond or marsh was a watering place for the wild animals. All pushed and edged toward it; it was impossible for any one to withstand the combined strength of so many.

Antoine and his steed were in imminent danger of being pushed into the mire and trampled upon, but a mere chance brought them upon solid ground. As they were crowded across the marsh, his pony drank heartily, and he, for the first time, let go his bridle, put his two palms together for a dipper, and drank greedily of the bitter water. He had not eaten since early morning, so he now pulled up some bullrushes and ate of the tender bulbs, while the pony grazed as best he could on the tops of the tall grass.

It was now dark. The night was well-nigh intolerable for Antoine. The buffalo were about him in countless numbers, regarding him with vicious glances. It was only by reason of the natural offensiveness of man that they gave him any space. The bellowing of the bulls became general, and there was a marked uneasiness on the part of the herd. This was a sign of approaching storm, therefore the unfortunate hunter had this additional cause for anxiety. Upon the western horizon were seen flashes of lightning.

The cloud which had been a mere speck upon the horizon had now increased to large proportions. Suddenly the wind came, and lightning flashes became more frequent, showing the ungainly forms of the animals like strange monsters in the white light. The colossal herd was again in violent motion. It was a blind rush for shelter, and no heed was paid to buffalo wallows or even deep gulches. All was

in the deepest of darkness. There seemed to be groaning in heaven and earth—millions of hoofs and throats roaring in unison.

As a shipwrecked man clings to a mere fragment of wood, so Antoine, although almost exhausted with fatigue, still stuck to the saddle of his equally plucky pony. Death was imminent for them both. As the mad rush continued, every flash displayed heaps of bison in death struggle under the hoofs of their companions. From time to time Antoine crossed himself and whispered a prayer to the Virgin, and again he spoke to his horse after the fashion of an Indian:

"Be brave, be strong, my horse! If we survive this trial, you shall have great honor!"

The stampede continued until they reached the bottom lands, and like a rushing stream, their course was turned aside by the steep bank of a creek or small river. Then they moved more slowly in wide sweeps or circles, until the storm ceased, and the exhausted hunter, still in his saddle, took some snatches of sleep.

When he awoke and looked about him again it was morning. The herd had entered the strip of timber which lay on both sides of the river, and it was here that Antoine conceived his first distinct hope of saving himself.

"Waw, waw, waw!" was the hoarse cry that came to his ears, apparently from a human being in distress. Antoine strained his eyes and craned his neck to see who it could be. Through an opening in the branches ahead he perceived a large grizzly bear lying along an inclined limb and hugging it desperately to maintain his position. The herd had now thoroughly pervaded the timber, and the bear was likewise hemmed in. He had taken to his unaccustomed refuge after making a brave stand against several bulls, one of which lay dead near by, while he himself was bleeding from many wounds.

Antoine had been assiduously looking for a friendly tree, by means of which he hoped to effect his escape from captivity by the army of bison. His horse, by chance, made his way directly under the very box-elder that was sustaining the bear and there was a convenient branch just within his reach. The Bois Brule was not then in an aggressive mood, and he saw at a glance that the occupant

of the tree would not interfere with him. They were, in fact, companions in distress. Antoine tried to give a war whoop as he sprang desperately from the pony's back and seized the cross-limb with both his hands.

The hunter dangled in the air for a minute that to him seemed a year. Then he gathered up all the strength that was in him and with one grand effort he pulled himself upon the limb. If he had failed in this, he would have fallen to the ground under the hoofs of the buffalo, and been at their mercy.

After he had adjusted his seat as comfortably as he could, Antoine surveyed the situation. He had at least escaped from sudden and certain death. It grieved him that he had been forced to abandon his horse, and he had no idea how far he had come nor any means of returning to his friends, who had, no doubt, given him up for lost. His immediate needs were rest and food.

Accordingly he selected a fat cow and emptied into her sides one barrel of his gun, which had been slung across his chest. He went on shooting until he had killed many fat cows, greatly to the discomfort of his neighbor, the bear, while the bison vainly struggled among themselves to keep the fatal spot clear.

By the middle of the afternoon the main body of the herd had passed, and Antoine was sure that his captivity had at last come to an end. Then he swung himself from his limb to the ground, and walked stiffly to the carcass of the nearest cow, which he dressed, and prepared himself a meal. But first he took a piece of liver on a long pole to the bear!

Antoine finally decided to settle in the recesses of the heavy timber for the winter, as he was on foot and alone, and not able to travel any great distance. He jerked the meat of all the animals he had killed, and prepared their skins for bedding and clothing. The Bois Brule and Ami, as he called the bear, soon became necessary to one another. The former considered the bear very good company, and the latter had learned that man's business, after all, is not to kill every animal he meets. He had been fed and kindly treated when helpless from his wounds, and this he could not forget.

Antoine was soon busy erecting a small log hut, while the other partner kept a sharp lookout, and after his hurts were healed, often

brought in some small game. The two had a perfect understanding without many words; at least, the speech was all upon one side. In his leisure moments, Antoine had occupied himself with whittling out a rude fiddle of cedar wood, strung with the guts of a wildcat that he had killed. Every evening that winter he would sit down after supper and play all the old familiar pieces, varied with improvisations of his own. At first, the music and the incessant pounding time with his foot annoyed the bear. At times, too, the Canadian would call out the figures for the dance. All this Ami became accustomed to in time, and even showed no small interest in the buzzing of the little cedar box. Not infrequently, he was out in the evening, and the human partner was left alone. It chanced, quite fortunately, that the bear was absent on the night that the red folk rudely invaded the lonely hut.

The calmness of the strange being had stayed their hands. They had never before seen a man of other race than their own!

"Is this Chanótedah? Is he man, or beast?" the warriors asked one another.

"Ho, wake up, koda!" exclaimed Anookasan. "Maybe he is of the porcupine tribe, ashamed to look at us, as that animal hides his face when he meets with a stranger!"

At this moment they spied the haunch of venison which swung from a cross-stick over a fine bed of coals, in front of the rude mud chimney.

"Ho, koda has something to eat! Sit down, sit down!" they shouted to one another.

Now Antoine opened his eyes for the first time upon his unlooked-for guests. They were a haggard and hungry-looking set. Anookasan extended his hand, and Antoine gave it a hearty shake. He set his fiddle against the wall and began to cut up the smoking venison into generous pieces and place it before them. All ate like famished men, while the firelight intensified the red paint upon their faces.

When he had satisfied his first hunger, Anookasan spoke in signs. "Friend, we have never before heard a song like that of your little cedar box. We had supposed it to be a spirit, or some harmful thing, hence our attack upon it. We never saw any people of your sort. What is your tribe?"

Antoine explained his plight in the same manner, and the two soon came to an understanding. The Canadian told the starving hunters of a buffalo herd a little way to the north, and one of their number was dispatched homeward with the news. In two days, the entire band reached Antoine's place. The Bois Brule was treated with kindness and honor, and the tribe gave him a wife. Suffice it to say that Antoine lived and died among the Yanktons but Ami could not brook the invasion upon their hermit life. He was never seen after that first evening.