

The Conservative.

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therefrom as far as they extended were menaced with a demand for ten dollars each which the Indians claimed could alone remunerate them for the occupation of the lands until the succeeding spring, in lieu of the deferred payment by the government. So persistently was this claim of the Indians made and so general did the fright become among all the squatters on the described territory, that a convocation at the office of Governor Mark W. Izard, in Omaha, of prominent white citizens and the headmen and braves of the Omaha tribe was authoritatively assembled. Henry Fontanelle acted as interpreter. Many speeches were made by both Indians and white men. At last the orator White Cow took the floor. He was of commanding figure, standing about six feet three inches in his moccasins. His chest was broad and deep and strong. His head was well set on, and symmetrically proportioned. His hair was perfectly black, though here and there were threads which indicated that Time with its dye of years was beginning to tell that youth had departed, that middle life had also passed and that age was soon to drift its snow all over his locks. His pose was always one of gracefulness and strength. He wore a breechclout and leggings of buckskin and a large and beautiful buffalo robe. While speaking he allowed the robe to rest wholly upon the left shoulder and exposed his right arm and right breast which were scarred with battle wounds so that all the audience could see that he was a veteran in war. His hands were delicate and well molded. He moved them and his forearm in gesturing with all the flexible gracefulness that the more civilized Delsarte method has given to the gestures of Bernhardt. His oration was delivered one sentence at a time in the Omaha language. The interpreter then gave it to Governor Izard and the audience in English. After speaking for some minutes, standing squarely in front of Governor Izard, telling him with great vehemence, and at times with touching pathos, of the wrongs which had been inflicted by the white men upon his race,

he at last said: "You remember only two months ago I came and had a talk with you, my brother." To this the governor nodded his head in assent. White Cow proceeding said: "Then you must remember the words which I gave to you from down deep in my heart."

The governor was not a man of much tact, nor did he understand Indian character or the best methods of dealing with Indians. Therefore very honestly and in a somewhat apologetic tone he said to Henry Fontanelle: "Tell him I have forgotten what he said." No sooner had this been translated into the Omaha tongue and given to White Cow than he folded his arms and with a look of the utmost derision and scorn upon his features, whirled on his heel like a top and with his back to the governor, said to Fontanelle: "Tell him that a man who thinks and feels for his people as I think and feel for the Omahas cannot afford to waste his time in talking to a person who has not mind enough to remember what was said to him for even two moons."

The effect of this savage sarcasm and the imperturbable look of superiority and disdain which pervaded the countenance of the speaker were superb and beyond description. It was some moments and after a good deal of diplomatic parleying before the composure of the governor and the audience in general was restored. At last, however, a satisfactory conclusion was reached and the meeting adjourned.

WHITE COW GOES TO WASHINGTON. Several years after the foregoing event White Cow accompanied some other leading Omahas to Washington, in charge of General J. B. Robertson, the then agent of the tribe. Everywhere on the route and in Washington the majestic figure and stately walk of this splendid specimen of aboriginal manliness and strength attracted attention. White Cow, as he walked Pennsylvania avenue or Broadway, a real Indian, seemed the incarnation of the ideal Indian whom Cooper and others had portrayed. Much attention was paid to him. His picture was taken by many artists. Presents were made to him by men and by women in nearly every city where he sojourned going and coming while *en route*.

But at last the excursion was completed and White Cow was again on his native plains. For years he was known to all the settlers of Dakota county on the north and Burt county on the south of the Omaha reservation. No other thoroughbred Omaha had achieved so marked and distinctive an individuality. He was always the friend of the white man and generally an entertaining conversationalist if one could speak his language or if an apt interpreter was at hand.

Finally, after the election of President Lincoln, Governor Robert W. Fur-

nas was made agent of the Omaha tribe and located on the Blackbird reservation. Very soon there sprang up between him and White Cow a genuine friendship which grew out of mutual respect. Many and many were the talks which the old Indian and the young agent had together. Generally they were of the most satisfactory and agreeable nature. At last the agent came to understand pretty thoroughly the facial expression of his aboriginal ward and chum. It came to such a pass that Furnas could almost forecast the object of any visit or proposed council which Mr. White Cow evolved. But he has admitted to me that he never was more embarrassed by any speaker than by this aboriginal orator. The occasion was this:

White Cow called at the agency storehouse with the interpreter, who informed Governor Furnas that they had come on business of great importance to White Cow and that he hoped Furnas would give them time for a big talk. To this the agent assented. Thereupon White Cow, shaking hands with Furnas, squared himself for a verbal assault and said:

"My brother, I have come to you on a matter of great importance to me and my people. You know I have always been your friend and the friend of every white man. Not one drop of blood of your people ever stained my hands. Always I have been to you and to your race like a real brother. Our Great Father at Washington knew this and so he had me make him a visit there. Going and coming I saw all of your big villages. In every one of them the headmen and braves saw and talked with me. They all know me. Everybody, from our Great Father back to the Missouri river, knows about White Cow. All of the Indians on the plains know of White Cow, the great Omaha speaker. The Brule-Sioux the Yanktons, the Dakotas, the Mandans, the Cheyennes, the Arapahoes, the Otoes and the Pawnees—all Indians everywhere—they, too, know White Cow. And now, my brother, I came to tell you that I am going up to see the Poncas at the mouth of the Niobrara river. I am going to make them a visit. They are looking for me now. And when a man of such distinction goes visiting he must make large presents to the people among whom he stays. Therefore I have come to ask you to give me three caddies of plug tobacco that I may distribute them among the Poncas while I am their guest."

The speech, as Furnas now declares, was somewhat verbose and long-drawn-out and he had become rather tired of the resonant flow of aboriginal eloquence long before the peroration had ended. Consequently in a rather listless sort of tone and with no expression of any particular satisfaction on his face, Agent Furnas said to a clerk in the of-