
OWEN WISTER
RED MEN AND WHITE

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Table of Contents

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SPECIMEN JONES (Page 36)

TO

S. B. W. AND O. J. W.

FROM THEIR SON

PREFACE

Table of Contents

These eight stories are made from our Western Frontier as it was in a past as near as yesterday and almost as by-gone as the Revolution; so swiftly do we proceed. They belong to each other in a kinship of life and manners, and a little through the nearer tie of having here and there a character in common. Thus they resemble faintly the separate parts of a whole, and gain, perhaps, something of the invaluable weight of length; and they have been received by my closest friends with suspicion.

Many sorts of Americans live in America; and the Atlantic American, it is to be feared, often has a cautious and conventional imagination. In his routine he has lived unaware of the violent and romantic era in eruption upon his soil. Only the elk-hunter has at times returned with tales at which the other Atlantic Americans have deported themselves politely; and similarly, but for the assurances of Western readers, I should have come to doubt the truth of my own impressions. All this is most natural.

If you will look upon the term “United States” as describing what we are, you must put upon it a strict and Federal construction. We undoubtedly use the city of Washington for our general business office, and in the event of a foreign enemy upon our coasts we should stand bound together more stoutly than we have shown ourselves since 1776. But as we are now, seldom has a great commonwealth been seen less united in its stages of progress, more uneven in its degrees of enlightenment. Never, indeed, it would seem, have such various centuries

been jostled together as they are to-day upon this continent, and within the boundaries of our nation. We have taken the ages out of their processional arrangement and set them marching disorderly abreast in our wide territory, a harlequin platoon. We citizens of the United States date our letters 18—, and speak of ourselves as living in the present era; but the accuracy of that custom depends upon where we happen to be writing. While portions of New York, Chicago, and San Francisco are of this nineteenth century, we have many ancient periods surviving among us. What do you say, for example, to the Kentucky and Tennessee mountaineers, with their vendettas of blood descending from father to son? That was once the prevailing fashion of revenge. Yet even before the day when Columbus sailed had certain communities matured beyond it. This sprout of the Middle Ages flourishes fresh and green some five hundred miles and five hundred years from New York. In the single State of Texas you will find a contrast more violent still. There, not long ago, an African was led upon a platform in a public place for people to see, and tortured slowly to death with knives and fire. To witness this scene young men and women came in crowds. It is said that the railroad ran a special train for spectators from a distance. How might that audience of Paris, Texas, appropriately date its letters? Not Anno Domini, but many years B.C. The African deserves no pity. His hideous crime was enough to drive a father to any madness, and too many such monsters have by their acts made Texas justly desperate. But for American citizens to crowd to the retribution, and look on as at a holiday show, reveals the Inquisition, the Pagans, the Stone Age,

unreclaimed in our republic. On the other hand, the young men and women who will watch side by side the burning of a negro shrink from using such words as bull or stallion in polite society; many in Texas will say, instead, *male cow* and *caviard horse* (a term spelled as they pronounce it), and consider that delicacy is thus achieved. Yet in this lump Texas holds leaven as sterling as in any State; but it has far to spread.

It were easy to proceed from Maine to California instancing the remote centuries that are daily colliding within our domain, but this is enough to show how little we cohere in opinions. How many States and Territories is it that we count united under our Stars and Stripes? I know that there are some forty-five or more, and that though I belong among the original thirteen, it has been my happiness to journey in all the others, in most of them, indeed, many times, for the sake of making my country's acquaintance. With no spread-eagle brag do I gather conviction each year that we Americans, judged not hastily, are sound at heart, kind, courageous, often of the truest delicacy, and always ultimately of excellent good-sense. With such belief, or, rather, knowledge, it is sorrowful to see our fatal complacence, our as yet undisciplined folly, in sending to our State Legislatures and to that general business office of ours at Washington a herd of mismanagers that seems each year to grow more inefficient and contemptible, whether branded Republican or Democrat. But I take heart, because often and oftener I hear upon my journey the citizens high and low muttering,

“There’s too much politics in this country”; and we shake hands.

But all this is growing too serious for a book of short stories. They are about Indians and soldiers and events west of the Missouri. They belong to the past thirty years of our development, but you will find some of those ancient surviving centuries in them if you take my view. In certain ones the incidents, and even some of the names, are left unchanged from their original reality. The visit of Young-man-afraid-of-his-horses to the Little Big Horn and the rise and fall of the young Crow impostor, General Crook’s surprise of E-egante, and many other occurrences, noble and ignoble, are told as they were told to me by those who saw them. When our national life, our own soil, is so rich in adventures to record, what need is there for one to call upon his invention save to draw, if he can, characters who shall fit these strange and dramatic scenes? One cannot improve upon such realities. If this fiction is at all faithful to the truth from which it springs, let the thanks be given to the patience and boundless hospitality of the Army friends and other friends across the Missouri who have housed my body and instructed my mind. And if the stories entertain the ignorant without grieving the judicious I am content.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Table of Contents

RED MEN AND WHITE

LITTLE BIG HORN MEDICINE

Table of Contents

Something new was happening among the Crow Indians. A young pretender had appeared in the tribe. What this might lead to was unknown alike to white man and to red;

but the old Crow chiefs discussed it in their councils, and the soldiers at Fort Custer, and the civilians at the agency twelve miles up the river, and all the white settlers in the valley discussed it also. Lieutenants Stirling and Haines, of the First Cavalry, were speculating upon it as they rode one afternoon.

“Can’t tell about Indians,” said Stirling. “But I think the Crows are too reasonable to go on the war-path.”

“Reasonable!” said Haines. He was young, and new to Indians.

“Just so. Until you come to his superstitions, the Indian can reason as straight as you or I. He’s perfectly logical.”

“Logical!” echoed Haines again. He held the regulation Eastern view that the Indian knows nothing but the three blind appetites.

“You’d know better,” remarked Stirling, “if you’d been fighting ’em for fifteen years. They’re as shrewd as Æsop’s fables.”

Just then two Indians appeared round a bluff—one old and shabby, the other young and very gaudy—riding side by side.

“That’s Cheschapah,” said Stirling. “That’s the agitator in all his feathers. His father, you see, dresses more conservatively.”

The feathered dandy now did a singular thing. He galloped towards the two officers almost as if to bear them down, and, steering much too close, flashed by yelling, amid a clatter of gravel.

“Nice manners,” commented Haines. “Seems to have a chip on his shoulder.”

But Stirling looked thoughtful. “Yes,” he muttered, “he has a chip.”

Meanwhile the shabby father was approaching. His face was mild and sad, and he might be seventy. He made a gesture of greeting. “How!” he said, pleasantly, and ambled on his way.

“Now there you have an object-lesson,” said Stirling. “Old Pounded Meat has no chip. The question is, are the fathers or the sons going to run the Crow Nation?”

“Why did the young chap have a dog on his saddle?” inquired Haines.

“I didn’t notice it. For his supper, probably—probably he’s getting up a dance. He is scheming to be a chief. Says he is a medicine-man, and can make water boil without fire; but the big men of the tribe take no stock in him—not yet. They’ve seen soda-water before. But I’m told this water-boiling astonishes the young.”

“You say the old chiefs take no stock in him *yet*?”

“Ah, that’s the puzzle. I told you just now Indians could reason.”

“And I was amused.”

“Because you’re an Eastern man. I tell you, Haines, if it wasn’t my business to shoot Indians I’d study them.”

“You’re a crank,” said Haines.

But Stirling was not a crank. He knew that so far from being a mere animal, the Indian is of a subtlety more ancient than the Sphinx. In his primal brain—nearer nature than our own—the directness of a child mingles with the profoundest cunning. He believes easily in powers of light and darkness, yet is a sceptic all the while. Stirling knew

this; but he could not know just when, if ever, the young charlatan Cheschapah would succeed in cheating the older chiefs; just when, if ever, he would strike the chord of their superstition. Till then they would reason that the white man was more comfortable as a friend than as a foe, that rations and gifts of clothes and farming implements were better than battles and prisons. Once their superstition was set alight, these three thousand Crows might suddenly follow Cheschapah to burn and kill and destroy.

“How does he manage his soda-water, do you suppose?” inquired Haines.

“That’s mysterious. He has never been known to buy drugs, and he’s careful where he does his trick. He’s still a little afraid of his father. All Indians are. It’s queer where he was going with that dog.”

Hard galloping sounded behind them, and a courier from the Indian agency overtook and passed them, hurrying to Fort Custer. The officers hurried too, and, arriving, received news and orders. Forty Sioux were reported up the river coming to visit the Crows. It was peaceable, but untimely. The Sioux agent over at Pine Ridge had given these forty permission to go, without first finding out if it would be convenient to the Crow agent to have them come. It is a rule of the Indian Bureau that if one tribe desire to visit another, the agents of both must consent. Now, most of the Crows were farming and quiet, and it was not wise that a visit from the Sioux and a season of feasting should tempt their hearts and minds away from the tilling of the soil. The visitors must be taken charge of and sent home.

“Very awkward, though,” said Stirling to Haines. He had been ordered to take two troops and arrest the unoffending visitors on their way. “The Sioux will be mad, and the Crows will be madder. What a bungle! and how like the way we manage Indian affairs!” And so they started.

Thirty miles away, by a stream towards which Stirling with his command was steadily marching through the night, the visitors were gathered. There was a cook-fire and a pot, and a stewing dog leaped in the froth. Old men in blankets and feathers sat near it, listening to young Cheschapah’s talk in the flighty lustre of the flames. An old squaw acted as interpreter between Crow and Sioux. Round about, at a certain distance, the figures of the crowd lounged at the edge of the darkness. Two grizzled squaws stirred the pot, spreading a clawed fist to their eyes against the red heat of the coals, while young Cheschapah harangued the older chiefs.

“BOASTING IN INDIAN FASHION”

“And more than that, I, Cheschapah, can do,” said he, boasting in Indian fashion. “I know how to make the white man’s heart soft so he cannot fight.” He paused for effect, but his hearers seemed uninterested. “You have come pretty far to see us,” resumed the orator, “and I, and my friend Two Whistles, and my father, Pounded Meat, have come a day to meet you and bring you to our place. I have brought you a fat dog. I say it is good the Crow and the Sioux shall be friends. All the Crow chiefs are glad. Pretty Eagle is a big chief, and he will tell you what I tell you. But I am bigger than Pretty Eagle. I am a medicine-man.”

He paused again; but the grim old chiefs were looking at the fire, and not at him. He got a friendly glance from his henchman, Two Whistles, but he heard his father give a grunt.

That enraged him. “I am a medicine-man,” he repeated, defiantly. “I have been in the big hole in the mountains where the river goes, and spoken there with the old man who makes the thunder. I talked with him as one chief to another. I am going to kill all the white men.”

At this old Pounded Meat looked at his son angrily, but the son was not afraid of his father just then. “I can make medicine to bring the rain,” he continued. “I can make water boil when it is cold. With this I can strike the white man blind when he is so far that his eyes do not show his face.”

He swept out from his blanket an old cavalry sabre painted scarlet. Young Two Whistles made a movement of awe, but Pounded Meat said, “My son’s tongue has grown longer than his sword.”

Laughter sounded among the old chiefs. Cheschapah turned his impudent yet somewhat visionary face upon his father. “What do you know of medicine?” said he. “Two sorts of Indians are among the Crows to-day,” he continued to the chiefs. “One sort are the fathers, and the sons are the other. The young warriors are not afraid of the white man. The old plant corn with the squaws. Is this the way with the Sioux?”

“With the Sioux,” remarked a grim visitor, “no one fears the white man. But the young warriors do not talk much in council.”

Pounded Meat put out his hand gently, as if in remonstrance. Other people must not chide his son.

“You say you can make water boil with no fire?” pursued the Sioux, who was named Young-man-afraid-of-his-horses, and had been young once.

Pounded Meat came between. “My son is a good man,” said he. “These words of his are not made in the heart, but are head words you need not count. Cheschapah does not like peace. He has heard us sing our wars and the enemies we have killed, and he remembers that he has no deeds, being young. When he thinks of this sometimes he talks words without sense. But my son is a good man.”

The father again extended his hand, which trembled a little. The Sioux had listened, looking at him with respect, and forgetful of Cheschapah, who now stood before them with a cup of cold water.

“You shall see,” he said, “who it is that talks words without sense.”

Two Whistles and the young bucks crowded to watch, but the old men sat where they were. As Cheschapah stood relishing his audience, Pounded Meat stepped up suddenly and upset the cup. He went to the stream and refilled it himself. “Now make it boil,” said he.

Cheschapah smiled, and as he spread his hand quickly over the cup, the water foamed up.

“Huh!” said Two Whistles, startled.

The medicine-man quickly seized his moment. “What does Pounded Meat know of my medicine?” said he. “The dog is cooked. Let the dance begin.”

The drums set up their dull, blunt beating, and the crowd of young and less important bucks came from the outer circle nearer to the council. Cheschapah set the pot in the midst of the flat camp, to be the centre of the dance. None of the old chiefs said more to him, but sat apart with the empty cup, having words among themselves. The flame

reared high into the dark, and showed the rock wall towering close, and at its feet the light lay red on the streaming water. The young Sioux stripped naked of their blankets, hanging them in a screen against the wind from the jaws of the cañon, with more constant shouts as the drumming beat louder, and strokes of echo fell from the black cliffs. The figures twinkled across each other in the glare, drifting and alert, till the dog-dance shaped itself into twelve dancers with a united sway of body and arms, one and another singing his song against the lifted sound of the drums. The twelve sank crouching in simulated hunt for an enemy back and forth over the same space, swinging together.

Presently they sprang with a shout upon their feet, for they had taken the enemy. Cheschapah, leading the line closer to the central pot, began a new figure, dancing the pursuit of the bear. This went faster; and after the bear was taken, followed the elk-hunt, and a new sway and crouch of the twelve gesturing bodies. The thudding drums were ceaseless; and as the dance went always faster and always nearer the dog pot, the steady blows of sound inflamed the dancers; their chests heaved, and their arms and bodies swung alike as the excited crew filed and circled closer to the pot, following Cheschapah, and shouting uncontrollably. They came to firing pistols and slashing the air with knives, when suddenly Cheschapah caught up a piece of steaming dog from the pot, gave it to his best friend, and the dance was done. The dripping figures sat quietly, shining and smooth with sweat, eating their dog-flesh in the ardent light

of the fire and the cool splendor of the moon. By-and-by they lay in their blankets to sleep at ease.

The elder chiefs had looked with distrust at Cheschapah as he led the dance; now that the entertainment was over, they rose with gravity to go to their beds.

“It is good for the Sioux and the Crows to be friends,” said Pounded Meat to Young-man-afraid-of-his-horses. “But we want no war with the white man. It is a few young men who say that war is good now.”

“We have not come for war,” replied the Sioux. “We have come to eat much meat together, and remember that day when war was good on the Little Horn, and our warriors killed Yellow Hair and all his soldiers.”

Pounded Meat came to where he and Cheschapah had their blankets.

“We shall have war,” said the confident son to his father. “My medicine is good.”

“Peace is also pretty good,” said Pounded Meat. “Get new thoughts. My son, do you not care any more for my words?”

Cheschapah did not reply.

“I have lived a long while. Yet one man may be wrong. But all cannot be. The other chiefs say what I say. The white men are too strong.”

“They would not be too strong if the old men were not cowards.”

“Have done,” said the father, sternly. “If you are a medicine-man, do not talk like a light fool.”

The Indian has an “honor thy father” deep in his religion too, and Cheschapah was silent. But after he was asleep, Pounded Meat lay brooding. He felt himself dishonored, and

his son to be an evil in the tribe. With these sore notions keeping him awake, he saw the night wane into gray, and then he heard the distant snort of a horse. He looked, and started from his blankets, for the soldiers had come, and he ran to wake the sleeping Indians. Frightened, and ignorant why they should be surrounded, the Sioux leaped to their feet; and Stirling, from where he sat on his horse, saw their rushing, frantic figures.

“Go quick, Kinney,” he said to the interpreter, “and tell them it’s peace, or they’ll be firing on us.”

Kinney rode forward alone, with one hand raised; and seeing that sign, they paused, and crept nearer, like crafty rabbits, while the sun rose and turned the place pink. And then came the parley, and the long explanation; and Stirling thanked his stars to see they were going to allow themselves to be peaceably arrested. Bullets you get used to; but after the firing’s done, you must justify it to important personages who live comfortably in Eastern towns and have never seen an Indian in their lives, and are rancid with philanthropy and ignorance.

Stirling would sooner have faced Sioux than sentimentalists, and he was fervently grateful to these savages for coming with him quietly without obliging him to shoot them. Cheschapah was not behaving so amiably; and recognizing him, Stirling understood about the dog. The medicine-man, with his faithful Two Whistles, was endeavoring to excite the prisoners as they were marched down the river to the Crow Agency.

Stirling sent for Kinney. “Send that rascal away,” he said. “I’ll not have him bothering here.”

The interpreter obeyed, but with a singular smile to himself. When he had ordered Cheschapah away, he rode so as to overhear Stirling and Haines talking. When they speculated about the soda-water, Kinney smiled again. He was a quiet sort of man. The people in the valley admired his business head. He supplied grain and steers to Fort Custer, and used to say that business was always slow in time of peace.

By evening Stirling had brought his prisoners to the agency, and there was the lieutenant of Indian police of the Sioux come over from Pine Ridge to bring them home. There was restlessness in the air as night fell round the prisoners and their guard. It was Cheschapah's hour, and the young Crows listened while he declaimed against the white man for thwarting their hospitality. The strong chain of sentinels was kept busy preventing these hosts from breaking through to fraternize with their guests. Cheschapah did not care that the old Crow chiefs would not listen. When Pretty Eagle remarked laconically that peace was good, the agitator laughed; he was gaining a faction, and the faction was feeling its oats. Accordingly, next morning, though the prisoners were meek on being started home by Stirling with twenty soldiers, and the majority of the Crows were meek at seeing them thus started, this was not all. Cheschapah, with a yelling swarm of his young friends, began to buzz about the column as it marched up the river. All had rifles.

"It's an interesting state of affairs," said Stirling to Haines. "There are at least fifty of these devils at our heels now, and more coming. We've got twenty men. Haines, your Indian experiences may begin quite early in your career."

“Yes, especially if our prisoners take to kicking.”

“Well, to compensate for spoiling their dinner-party, the agent gave them some rations and his parting blessing. It may suffice.”

The line of march had been taken up by ten men in advance, followed in the usual straggling fashion by the prisoners, and the rear-guard was composed of the other ten soldiers under Stirling and Haines. With them rode the chief of the Crow police and the lieutenant of the Sioux. This little band was, of course, far separated from the advance-guard, and it listened to the young Crow bucks yelling at its heels. They yelled in English. Every Indian knows at least two English words; they are pungent, and far from complimentary.

“It’s got to stop here,” said Stirling, as they came to a ford known as Reno’s Crossing. “They’ve got to be kept on this side.”

“Can it be done without gunpowder?” Haines asked.

“If a shot is fired now, my friend, it’s war, and a court of inquiry in Washington for you and me, if we’re not buried here. Sergeant, you will take five men and see the column is kept moving. The rest remain with me. The prisoners must be got across and away from their friends.”

The fording began, and the two officers went over to the east bank to see that the instructions were carried out.

“See that?” observed Stirling. As the last of the rear-guard stepped into the stream, the shore they were leaving filled instantly with the Crows. “Every man jack of them is armed. And here’s an interesting development,” he continued.

It was Cheschapah riding out into the water, and with him Two Whistles. The rear guard passed up the trail, and the little knot of men with the officers stood halted on the bank. There were nine—the two Indian police, the two lieutenants, and five long muscular boys of K troop of the First Cavalry. They remained on the bank, looking at the thick painted swarm that yelled across the ford.

“Bet you there’s a hundred,” remarked Haines.

“You forget I never gamble,” murmured Stirling. Two of the five long boys overheard this, and grinned at each other, which Stirling noted; and he loved them. It was curious to mark the two shores: the feathered multitude and its yells and its fifty yards of rifles that fronted a small spot of white men sitting easily in the saddle, and the clear, pleasant water speeding between. Cheschapah and Two Whistles came tauntingly towards this spot, and the mass of Crows on the other side drew forward a little.

“You tell them,” said Stirling to the chief of the Crow police, “that they must go back.”

Cheschapah came nearer, by way of obedience.

“Take them over, then,” the officer ordered.

“HIS HORSE DREW CLOSE, SHOVING THE HORSE OF THE MEDICINE-MAN”

The chief of Crow police rode to Cheschapah, speaking and pointing. His horse drew close, shoving the horse of the medicine-man, who now launched an insult that with Indians calls for blood. He struck the man’s horse with his whip, and at that a volume of yells chorussed from the other bank.

“Looks like the court of inquiry,” remarked Stirling. “Don’t shoot, boys,” he commanded aloud.

The amazed Sioux policeman gasped. “You not shoot?” he said. “But he hit that man’s horse—all the same hit your horse, all the same hit you.”

“Right. Quite right,” growled Stirling. “All the same hit Uncle Sam. But we soldier devils have orders to temporize.” His eye rested hard and serious on the party in the water as he went on speaking with jocular unconcern. “Tem-po-rize, Johnny,” said he. “You savvy temporize?”

“Ump! Me no savvy.”

“Bully for you, Johnny. Too many syllables. Well, now! he’s hit that horse again. One more for the court of inquiry. Steady, men! There’s Two Whistles switching now. They ought to call that lad Young Dog Tray. And there’s a chap in paint fooling with his gun. If any more do that—it’s very catching—Yes, we’re going to have a circus. Attention! Now what’s that, do you suppose?”

An apparition, an old chief, came suddenly on the other bank, pushing through the crowd, grizzled and little and lean, among the smooth, full-limbed young blood. They turned and saw him, and slunk from the tones of his voice and the light in his ancient eye. They swerved and melted among the cottonwoods, so that the ford’s edge grew bare of dusky bodies and looked sandy and green again. Cheschapah saw the wrinkled figure coming, and his face sank tame. He stood uncertain in the stream, seeing his banded companions gone and the few white soldiers firm on the bank. The old chief rode to him through the water, his face brightened with a last flare of command.

“Make your medicine!” he said. “Why are the white men not blind? Is the medicine bad to-day?” And he whipped his son’s horse to the right, and to the left he slashed the horse of Two Whistles, and, whirling the leather quirt, drove them cowed before him and out of the stream, with never a look or word to the white men. He crossed the sandy margin, and as a man drives steers to the corral, striking spurs to his horse and following the frightened animals close when they would twist aside, so did old Pounded Meat herd his son down the valley.

“Useful old man,” remarked Stirling; “and brings up his children carefully. Let’s get these prisoners along.”

“How rural the river looks now!” Haines said, as they left the deserted bank.

So the Sioux went home in peace, the lieutenants, with their command of twenty, returned to the post, and all white people felt much obliged to Pounded Meat for his act of timely parental discipline—all except one white person.

Sol Kinney sauntered into the agency store one evening. “I want ten pounds of sugar,” said he, “and navy plug as usual. And say, I’ll take another bottle of the Seltzer fizz salts. Since I quit whiskey,” he explained, “my liver’s poorly.”

He returned with his purchase to his cabin, and set a lamp in the window. Presently the door opened noiselessly, and Cheschapah came in.

“Maybe you got that now?” he said, in English.

The interpreter fumbled among bottles of liniment and vaseline, and from among these household remedies brought the blue one he had just bought. Cheschapah watched him like a child, following his steps round the cabin. Kinney tore a half-page from an old Sunday *World*, and poured a little heap of salts into it. The Indian touched the heap timidly with his finger. “Maybe no good,” he suggested.

“Heap good!” said the interpreter, throwing a pinch into a glass. When Cheschapah saw the water effervesce, he folded his newspaper with the salt into a tight lump, stuck the talisman into his clothes, and departed, leaving Mr. Kinney well content. He was doing his best to nourish the

sinews of war, for business in the country was discouragingly slack.

Now the Crows were a tribe that had never warred with us, but only with other tribes; they had been valiant enough to steal our cattle, but sufficiently discreet to stop there; and Kinney realized that he had uphill work before him. His dearest hopes hung upon Cheschapah, in whom he thought he saw a development. From being a mere humbug, the young Indian seemed to be getting a belief in himself as something genuinely out of the common. His success in creating a party had greatly increased his conceit, and he walked with a strut, and his face was more unsettled and visionary than ever. One clear sign of his mental change was that he no longer respected his father at all, though the lonely old man looked at him often with what in one of our race would have been tenderness. Cheschapah had been secretly maturing a plot ever since his humiliation at the crossing, and now he was ready. With his lump of newspaper carefully treasured, he came to Two Whistles.

“Now we go,” he said. “We shall fight with the Piegans. I will make big medicine, so that we shall get many of their horses and women. Then Pretty Eagle will be afraid to go against me in the council. Pounded Meat whipped my horse. Pounded Meat can cut his hay without Cheschapah, since he is so strong.”

But little Two Whistles wavered. “I will stay here,” he ventured to say to the prophet.

“Does Two Whistles think I cannot do what I say?”

“I think you make good medicine.”

“You are afraid of the Piegans.”

“No, I am not afraid. I have hay the white man will pay me for. If I go, he will not pay me. If I had a father, I would not leave him.” He spoke pleadingly, and his prophet bore him down by ridicule. Two Whistles believed, but he did not want to lose the money the agent was to pay for his hay. And so, not so much because he believed as because he was afraid, he resigned his personal desires.

The next morning the whole band had disappeared with Cheschapah. The agent was taken aback at this marked challenge to his authority—of course they had gone without permission—and even the old Crow chiefs held a council.

Pretty Eagle resorted to sarcasm. “He has taken his friends to the old man who makes the thunder,” he said. But others did not feel sarcastic, and one observed, “Cheschapah knows more than we know.”

“Let him make rain, then,” said Pretty Eagle. “Let him make the white man’s heart soft.”

The situation was assisted by a step of the careful Kinney. He took a private journey to Junction City, through which place he expected Cheschapah to return, and there he made arrangements to have as much whiskey furnished to the Indian and his friends as they should ask for. It was certainly a good stroke of business. The victorious raiders did return that way, and Junction City was most hospitable to their thirst. The valley of the Big Horn was resonant with their homeward yells. They swept up the river, and the agent heard them coming, and he locked his door immediately. He listened to their descent upon his fold, and he peeped out and saw them ride round the tightly shut buildings in their war-paint and the pride of utter success.

They had taken booty from the Piegans, and now, knocking at the store, they demanded ammunition, proclaiming at the same time in English that Cheschapah was a big man, and knew a “big heap medicine.” The agent told them from inside that they could not have any ammunition. He also informed them that he knew who they were, and that they were under arrest. This touched their primitive sense of the incongruous. On the buoyancy of the whiskey they rode round and round the store containing the agent, and then rushed away, firing shots at the buildings and shots in the air, and so gloriously home among their tribe, while the agent sent a courier packing to Fort Custer.

The young bucks who had not gone on the raid to the Piegans thronged to hear the story, and the warriors told it here and there, walking in their feathers among a knot of friends, who listened with gay exclamations of pleasure and envy. Great was Cheschapah, who had done all this! And one and another told exactly and at length how he had seen the cold water rise into foam beneath the medicine-man’s hand; it could not be told too often; not every companion of Cheschapah’s had been accorded the privilege of witnessing this miracle, and each narrator in his circle became a wonder himself to the bold boyish faces that surrounded him. And after the miracle he told how the Piegans had been like a flock of birds before the medicine-man. Cheschapah himself passed among the groups, alone and aloof; he spoke to none, and he looked at none, and he noted how their voices fell to whispers as he passed; his ear caught the magic words of praise and awe; he felt the gaze of admiration follow him away, and a mist rose like incense in

his brain. He wandered among the scattered tepees, and, turning, came along the same paths again, that he might once more overhear his worshippers. Great was Cheschapah! His heart beat, a throb of power passed through his body, and “Great is Cheschapah!” said he, aloud; for the fumes of hallucination wherewith he had drugged others had begun to make him drunk also. He sought a tepee where the wife of another chief was alone, and at his light call she stood at the entrance and heard him longer than she had ever listened to him before. But she withstood the temptation that was strong in the young chief’s looks and words. She did not speak much, but laughed unsteadily, and, shaking her head with averted eyes, left him, and went where several women were together, and sat among them.

Cheschapah told his victory to the council, with many sentences about himself, and how his medicine had fended all hurt from the Crows. The elder chiefs sat cold.

“Ump!” said one, at the close of the oration, and “Heh!” remarked another. The sounds were of assent without surprise.

“It is good,” said Pretty Eagle. His voice seemed to enrage Cheschapah.

“Heh! it is always pretty good!” remarked Spotted Horse.

“I have done this too,” said Pounded Meat to his son, simply. “Once, twice, three times. The Crows have always been better warriors than the Piegans.”

“Have you made water boil like me?” Cheschapah said.

“I am not a medicine-man,” replied his father. “But I have taken horses and squaws from the Piegans. You make good