MEDICINE LODGE PEACE COUNCIL

Although more than a half-century has passed since the Medicine Lodge Peace Council was held, in the fall of 1867, I readily recall many interesting events of the trip and many exciting scenes I witnessed on that ever memorable occasion. In my teens at the time, and, like most boys, full of the spirit of adventure, I sought, together with my friend Henry M. Stanley, some sort of position with the Commission that would afford me an opportunity to go along. Stanley was then a Washington correspondent of the New York Tribune, with whom I had become acquainted when he first came to the capital. Having access, by reason of the fact that my father was Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and being acquainted with the officials, I used to get items for Stanley for his paper, in the Interior Department. Mr. Ashe White of the Indian Office—a good friend—was elected secretary of the Commission. Though the influence and active efforts of this most valuable friend Stanley was designated by his paper to go as its official correspondent, and I was appointed as an assistant secretary. So the door of opportunity was now wide open to us and our hearts went to our throats!

The Commission, authorized by Act of Congress and appointed by the President, consisted of Generals Sherman, Harney, Terry, Auger and Sanborn; United States Senator John B. Henderson, of Missouri; Colonel Samuel Tappan, of Massachusetts, and Nathaniel G. Taylor, of Tennessee—the last named having been chosen president. General "Kit" Carson was originally appointed a member, but became ill and could not serve, and General Augur was appointed in his place.

The task of this Commission was a most important and difficult one, involving, as it did, the settlement of a war which had been going on for more than three years; the settlement of claims for damages growing out of the massacre of peaceable Indians by Chivington at Sand Creek, Colorado—which caused the war; and claims growing out of the destruction by Hancock's troops of the Cheyenne "Dog Soldier" village at Pawnee Fork, Kansas—which prolonged the war and made the pacification of the Indians much more difficult; the adjustment of claims for back annuities, and the removal of the various tribes from old to new reservations.

The question of getting the warring Indians together at a given point was a problem that gave the Commission more concern than any other feature of the undertaking, for it felt sure that if it could secure an audience with them it could ultimately win their confidence and induce them to join in a treaty of peace. To give plenty of time to get word to all the tribes concerned and to give them ample "cooling time," the date for the assembling was fixed three months in advance and the place agreed upon was Medicine Lodge. Military operations were suspended and all the civil and military authorities, agents, traders, interpreters, half-breed scouts and friendly Indians at or near the theatre of war, were put to work to carry out the plans of the Commission. In the formulation of these plans, Colonel Leavenworth, Colonel A. G. Boone—grandson of Daniel Boone—General Kit Carson, Colonel Denman, Major E. W. Wynkoop, Senator E. G. Ross, Governor S. J. Crawford, Governor Root, A. C. Hunt and many others, were in constant co-operation, and in executing them.

Major Edward W. Wynkoop, James R. Mead, William Matthewson, Black Beaver—the scout and guide—Jesse Chisholm, John S. Smith and George Bent were conspicuous. Major Wyncoop was agent of the Araphoes and Cheyennes, and was very popular with these tribes, as well as all neighboring tribes, and his services, from beginning to end, were immensely valuable.

The first council held by this Commission was with the Ogallalla and Brule Sioux and some of the Northern Cheyennes at North Platte, Nebraska, in September, 1867. On the way to this meeting there was only one untoward circumstance that impeded our progress. In the vicinity of Boone and Council Bluffs, the grasshoppers actually stopped the train! They lit on the tracks so thickly that they were converted into *grease* as they were mashed by the wheels: the wheels would turn with a whiz all right, but would refuse to go forward. The process of sanding the tracks enabled the train to proceed "by fits and jerks," but we were detained for hours in getting to Omaha. The reader will no doubt question the accuracy of this statement when the fact is stated that the farmers of that region in those days often looked up into the sky and beheld flying clouds of grasshoppers darkening the sun and lowering above the green corn fields; in an hour they looked again and beheld only a desolate waste of bladeless corn-stalks, the melancholy monuments of blasted hopes and vanished prosperity!

Reaching Omaha at last, we "put up" at a hotel which stood near and in sight of the residence of the noted George Francis Train. I believe its name was Hotel Kennedy. It was here that the writer first met William F. Cody, a young man, who subsequently became famous the world over, as "Buffalo Bill."

Arriving at North Platte at the appointed time, the Commission immediately went into council with the Indians there assembled, "Spotted Tail" being the most conspicuous figure. But efforts to negotiate a treaty here failed, after a three day's pow-wow. The failure to agree, as the writer now remembers, was owing partly to the contrariness of "Spotted Tail," and partly to the absence of some of the Northern Cheyennes. At all events, this council adjourned with the understanding that it would meet again and finish the treaty at Fort Laramie, where the Commission was to meet and treat with the Crows, Northern Cheyennes, Utes, and other tribes, the following spring.

All eyes were now turned toward Medicine Lodge, where the great council was soon to take place, with the wild and hostile tribes of the Southern Plains. So the Commission and its entourage set out from Omaha, late in September, for Medicine Lodge, its final destination. Its immediate destination was Ellis, Kansas, the end of the Kansas Pacific Railway, then being constructed.

I presume Medicine Lodge took its modern name from an old Kiowa medicine lodge then still existing, intact, five miles below the point, on the Nescatunga River,[1] where this council was to be held. The location is in Kansas, only a short distance from the Oklahoma line. Vast stores of supplies of every kind had been previously shipped to Ellis, to be transported to their destination in army wagons.

Arriving at Ellis on schedule time, we found Major Elliott, of the Seventh U. S. Cavalry, with conveyances and a military

Governor Alfred A. Taylor

escort of five hundred regulars and four mountain howitzers, in waiting. The leading newspapers of the country had sent special representatives to attend the council, and they were also on hand—Baker, of a St. Louis daily; Bulkley, of the New York Herald; Jack Howland, of Harper's Weekly; Stanley, of the New York Tribune; and James E. Taylor, of Frank Leslie's, were conspicuous among these correspondents. It was about the first of October when the expedition formed and started on its long journey.

Besides the immense wagon train, fifteen or twenty ambulances were provided, to transport the Commission, attaches, newspaper men and their necessary belongings. We young men, knowing that we were going to pass through the buffalo range, each provided himself with a trained horse for chasing buffalo. General Harney, by reason of his experience as an Indian fighter, was made commander of the expedition. General Sherman was detained by official business and did not rejoin the Peace Commission until after the council on the Medicine Lodge.

We proceeded on our journey by way of Old Fort Ellsworth, Fort Harker and Fort Larned—then the outer military post. The expedition spent the night at Harker, also at Fort Larned. From this point we proceeded south, crossing the Arkansas River nine miles from the fort at what was then called "Big Bend." Travelling in a southerly direction after crossing the river, camps were pitched at Walnut Creek, where we were accessible to water and where we spent the night. We were compelled to resume our journey very early the next morning, in order to reach Cherry Creek, which was the next nearest watering place. Leaving Cherry Creek next day at our leisure, we reached Rattlesnake Creek in the middle of the afternoon, where it was necessary, on account of water, to again pitch camp to remain over night.

Rattlesnake Creek at that time was the center of the buffalo range. We stood on a sand hill as the buffalo were gathering toward the stream for water in the evening, and it was estimated by old buffalo hunters in the party that there were a hundred thousand within our view. This was the herd that used the Republican River in the winter, and came southward to that region in the spring and summer. General Harney detailed those of us who desired the sport, to kill for our camp. The writer and Henry M. Stanley were among those detailed to perform this service. We were commanded not to slay indiscriminately, but to select such of the herd we might be pursuing as would make tender, good beef. Wagons and butchers were sent along to take care of the big game; also a detachment of soldiers for our protection. It is needless to say that our camp fared sumptuously every day we were in that region, on the choicest buffalo beef and buffalo veal.

In the meantime, we encountered numerous prairie dog towns, so vast in extent that I wondered they did not call them cities instead of towns. Strange to say, that rattlesnakes are close companions of these little animals, as they occupy the same apartments, which consist of a little hole in the ground, with a mound of the waste dirt built up around it. We derived a great deal of pleasure in shooting these rattlesnakes, coiled on top of these mounds. Frequently we would run across a blacktail deer, and some one of the party would usually bring him down.

Leaving Rattlesnake Creek very early the next morning, travelling altogether by compass, as there were no defined roads, leaving the sand hills behind us, passing over a vast stretch of level prairie, sometime in the afternoon we came to a point where we began to descend into the valley of the Neskatunga. From this point we could see the fringe of cottonwood and underbrush along the river, eight miles away. We could see the teepees (tents) of the various tribes, assembled.

General Harney, being familiar with the Indian character, and always suspicious, sought to bring our entire forces into full view of the Indians. To accomplish this, he gave the order for the column to so proceed forward as to form an "S," composed of the escort of soldiery, the ambulances carrying the Commission and attaches, and the horsemen of the party, the artillery, and the immense wagon train. When all was in full view, a halt was ordered. By this time, thousands of mounted warriors could be seen concentrating and forming themselves into a wedge-shaped mass the edge of the wedge pointing toward us. In this sort of mass formation, with all their war paraphernalia, their horses striped with war paint, the riders bedecked with war bonnetts and their faces painted red, came charging in full speed toward our columns.

Here was performed a feat of horsemanship which, for dexterity, perfection of plan, skill and precision in execution, I dare say has never been equalled in all the history of military maneuvers, by any race of men. When within a mile of the head of our procession, the wedge, without hitch or break, quickly threw itself into the shape of a huge ring or wheel without hub or spokes, whose rim consisted of five distinct lines of these wild, untutored, yet inimitable, horsemen. This ring, winding around and around with the regularity and prescision of fresh oiled machinery, approached nearer and nearer to us with every revolution. Reaching within a hundred yards of us at breakneck speed, the giant wheel or ring ceased to turn and suddenly came to a standstill.

It turned out that the inner line was composed of the head "medicine men," chiefs and sub-chiefs, of the various tribes, who alighted and proceeded to the vacant space in the center and formed themselves into a circle, reserving sufficient space in the center to accommodate the Commission and its secretaries. Through the quickly opening lines the commissioners and secretaries, led by Black Kettle, chief of the Cheyennes, who had been sent as a messenger and guide, marched down through the opening, with folded arms, and took the position assigned them, thus constituting the extreme inner circle and being completely surrounded by, and at the mercy of, a foe which had faced three years of war and had not as yet been suppressed by our army. These savages could doubtless now realize, more than ever before that they were in the immediate presence of veritable "pale faces." The whole maneuver was planned and executed with a view—as afterwards admitted—of its operating as a guarantee of safety from an attack by our military, and, also, as a *test* of the good faith of the "white man."

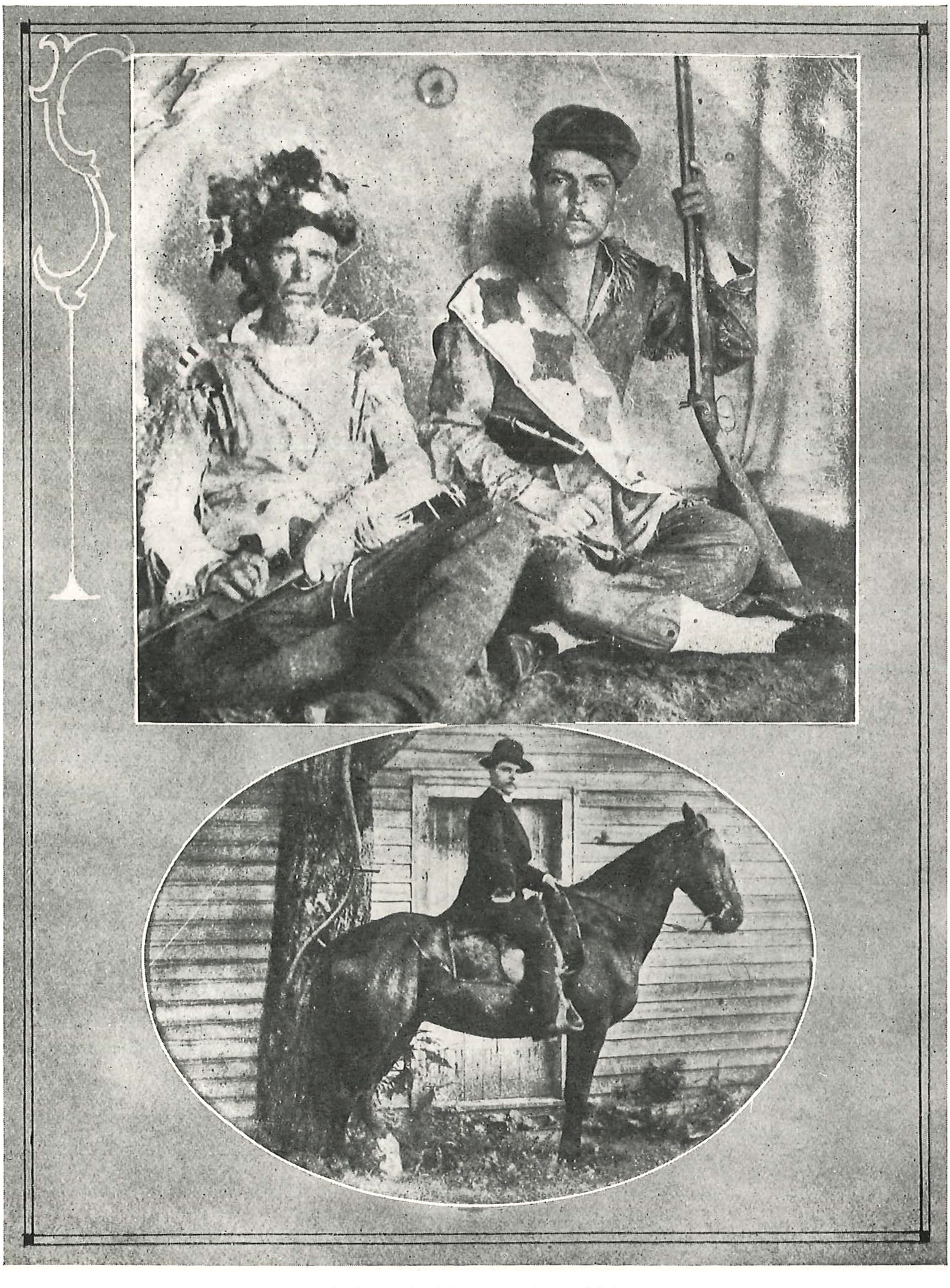
After a friendly though dignified "How!" was said—a greeting then in vogue among all the tribes, and evidently an abbreviation of the white man's salutation "How are you?" or "Howdy do?"—the "sacred calumet" (pipe of peace) was brought out by the chief "medicine man" of the occasion, and the ceremony of smoking the pipe of peace was duly performed. The ponderous pipe was filled with "kil-a-ka-nik" and passed first from mouth to mouth among the chiefs, each chief taking one puff. When it reached White Antelope, he refused to smoke, turning the bowl of the pipe downward, which was a sign of unwillingness to make peace. He had a brother who, it was said, was killed in the battle of Ash-Hollow, fought by General Harney, and seeing and recognizing Harney on this occasion caused his sudden disaffection. His father, too, had been killed at the Chivington massacre, on Sand Creek. Following this unpleasant episode, the pipe was handed to the commissioners who likewise, passing it from mouth to mouth, each took a whiff. When they had finished and passed the pipe back to its custodian, the silent and solemn ceremony was over, and the tomahawk was buried—except in the case of White Antelope.

The commissioners returned to the head of our colnmn, highly pleased with the outlook. The Indians rapidly withdrew in ordinary formation, and proceeded to their encampment.

Our march was resumed, and as it was a gradual slope to the river, the slight down grade enabled us to reach our objective before night. Selecting the highest ground overlooking the immediate surrounding region, we corraled our wagons and ambulances four deep around it, planted our artillery on the summit and pitched our tents inside of the corral.

Finding that the bulk of the Cheyennes, under the influence of the younger chieftians, failed to appear, but were camped some fifty miles away, toward the Staked Plains, sullenly refusing to make peace, the Commission decided that it was useless to call a council of the tribes assembled, in the absence of the warlike Cheyennes. Black Kettle, then their principal chief, and a conspicuous peace advocate, was only able to bring in a few small bands of followers, who had participated with him in the wonderful demonstration of the day. All the energy and tact of the Commission was now centered in an effort to pacify the belligerent absentees and induce them to come in and attend the council and join in the signing of a treaty of peace.

The burden of General Harney's soul was to reconcile and win over White Antelope, to which task he devoted his individual efforts. After many days of wooing, bestowal of choice gifts—such as saddles, blankets, beads, red ribbons and the like, he at last accomplished his purpose, but it was only by degrees. The first intimation of a change of heart was when he came to the General's headquarters and extended his little finger. He was handed another present. The next day he came and ex-



Alfred A. Taylor, in 1867
Above—With a fellow deer hunter
Below—Mounted on his favorite saddle horse

tended three fingers: he promptly received another present. On the third day he offered his whole hand, and it was warmly grasped. Then he put his arms around the General's neck and, with a hearty grunt, hugged him first on one side and then on the other. He departed that morning, counting himself a rich Indian; for the wealth of an untamed Indian consists of ponies, dogs, blankets, red ribbons, and all kinds of trinkets.

Through Black Kettle, a line of communication with the warlike Cheyennes was established, and conciliatory messages began to be forwarded and answers received. Black Kettle and his aides were kept busy day and night. The parley was kept up in this manner for more than two weeks.

Meantime, everybody was required to remain inside of our improvised fortifications. No one was allowed to go outside, especially at night; and during the day we were not permitted to get beyond our picket lines. We were, therefore, during all this time, virtually prisoners of war. We did have the opportunity, however, of cultivating the acquaintance of such Indians as we desired to know and of studying the Indian character generally.

But the newspaper man and young student of our party longed for an opportunity to explore that wild and uninhabited region where no white man had ever before put his foot. There was one point we desired particularly to visit, investigate and "write up," and that was the notable Kiowa medicine lodge, located on the north bank of the Nes-ka-tun-ga, only five miles below our encampment. We had adready acquired a knowledge of what a medicine lodge stands for, from the more intelligent chiefs and interpreters, with whom we were in daily contact. It is a place where the tribe assembles once a year to go through with their religious ceremony called "renewing their medicine."[2] Among the Cheyennes each warrior had three sets of arrows, viz: war arrow, game arrow, and sporting or gambling arrow. When these arrows were completed and each quiver was filled. they were passed around and each warrior, chief and medicine man invoked a blessing upon each quiver, from the Great Spirit. Each quiver was held sacred for the purpose intended, and it was against the law to shoot an arrow from the war quiver except at the enemy, in war.

It required "five sleeps" (five days and nights) to complete such a ceremony, during which time they fast. It closed with a feast; after which and, as they departed, each one deposited some trinket of which he thought more of than any other, that the Great Spirit might constantly look upon it and be with and bless the owner wherever he might chance to be, either in war or on the chase.

Strange that these wild nomads of the plains should have had ideas about a Superior Being—about a "Great Spirit," and a "Happy Hunting Ground" in the hereafter! Where did they get them? They had them before Columbus came. They had them before the sunrise of the Christian era—before the dawn of civilization. Where did they get them?

One October evening, Black Kettle came in with the glad tidings that the belligerent Cheyennes had agreed to quit the warpath, come in and attend the council, and sign the treaty of peace. He brought with him Charlie Bent, a half-breed, who it was said had been the chief promotor of discord among them, as an earnest of good faith. This was Tuesday. The day fixed when they were to come in was Thursday. Everybody shouted. The diplomacy of the wise and adroit commissioners had won; peace was going to be secured, and our long, weary days of suspense and dread were ended!

That night we made up a party to visit the famous Medicine Lodge. So next morning, bright and early, with our Winchesters strapped to our backs and our Remington and Colt revolvers buckled around us, expecting to find big game, we started on our way to the Lodge.

This Lodge was simply a grove of cottonwood trees, bushes and various undergrowth, all planted in circular form, with open spaces in the center, more or less shaded. There were many circles of these trees and bushes—in fact the entire grove must have covered more than an acre of ground. There were all kinds of trinkets tied with rawhide strings to the bodies of the trees and limbs, and securely fastened and hanging all over the bushes.

We had with us, as a guide and to explain things a white man of middle age, named McCusker—a Kentuckian who, many years previously, had identified himself with the Comanches, having married a squaw, and was raising a family of half-breed children. He was a very intelligent man, and was the official interpreter for the Comanche tribe.

Although we knew it was against the rule for an outsider to invade this Lodge, some of us could not resist the temptation to slip in and pilfer such of these trinkets as we could conceal about our persons, with a view to taking them home with us as souvenirs.

After spending an hour or more at the Lodge, the newspaper men procuring much valuable data for articles for their respective papers, we started leisurely back to camp. We had not proceeded far until we saw an Indian coming toward us as fast as his horse could carry him. He was apparently excited, for he would look back every few yards. As he approached, McCusker recognized him as Tosh-a-way, chief of one of the Comanche bands. As he swept by within twenty yards of us, McCusker called to him, in the Comanche tongue, to know what had happened. Recognizing McCusker he replied in these words of exclamation: "Mack! Mack! Cheyennes! Cheyennes! Hock-ka-nie! Hock-ka-nie!" I give these words exactly as they were spoken and just as, as I now remember, they sounded.

"McCusker, what did he say?" was on every lip.

"He says the Cheyennes have come and are fighting," replied McCusker. "I now see through their scheme," he continued in a trembling voice: "They fixed to-morrow as the day, but have come in to-day to catch us napping. They have fooled everybody, and certainly us, for here we are cut off and our camp doubtless surrounded!"

It is needless to say that there was now another aggregation of "pale faces"—of the genuine article.

"What will we do? What can we do?" This was the question addressed to McCusker.

"We must charge through the hostile lines and get into our corral; this is our only hope of safety," he answered. "All keep together and follow me," he commanded; and off we started in a double-quick.

The country here was slightly rolling; and when we reached the first high ground, looking across a little basin or valley on the higher ground beyond, we saw a body of some two or three hundred warriors moving in our direction. We quickly turned and back-tracked a short distance; then turned again, increasing our speed, and made for the jungles of the Neskatunga River a few hundred yards away. Penetrating the thick cottonwood growth along the margin. plunging across the numerous prongs of the stream, lunging through thickets of scrubby bushes, and tearing through the entangled undergrowth which covered the little inlands, we finally landed on the south bank of the stream, only to find ourselves in the midst of throngs of fleeing Indians of the camps. These were made up mostly of squaws and the younger set, large numbers of squaws carrying pappooses in buckskin wallets on their backs. Tens of thousands of wild geese had flown over our encampment a few days before; and if they had returned and lit in our midst, they could not have produced a greater confusion of similar sounds than the intermingled yelps and shrieks of these terrified Indians. On they came, like "chaff before the wind."

When we ran into the Comanches, they tried to take McCusker with them. They tried to pull him off his horse. But Mack was faithful; he tore loose from them, refusing to desert us; and onward we sped, spurring our horses to full speed; and were soon within a mile of our goal. Then we heard a volley of shots at camps. This brought us to a halt and a hurried council of war. Then there was another volley, and another, in quick succession. There was now some silent but earnest praying done. One of our men prayed audibly: he asked God to take us through safely. "O, God," he implored; "let not our bones bleach on this God-foresaken desert!"

We drew our revolvers and examined them to see that they were intact. With revolvers now in hand, we resumed our dreaded charge. Arriving opposite our camp, we found that everything was quiet. We crossed to the north bank of the river and through the openings in the timbers we could see the line of Cheyennes close to our quarters, but there was no fighting, no shooting, no sign of struggle. We passed out of the timber in full view and seeing that everything was orderly and peaceful we put up our revolvers, rode leisurely to the still mounted lines which were promptly opened for us, to pass inside and on to our quarters. When the ceremony of smoking the pipe of peace, which was in progress when we arrived, was finished, the Cheyennes withdrew, went into camps and the excitement of the day was ended.

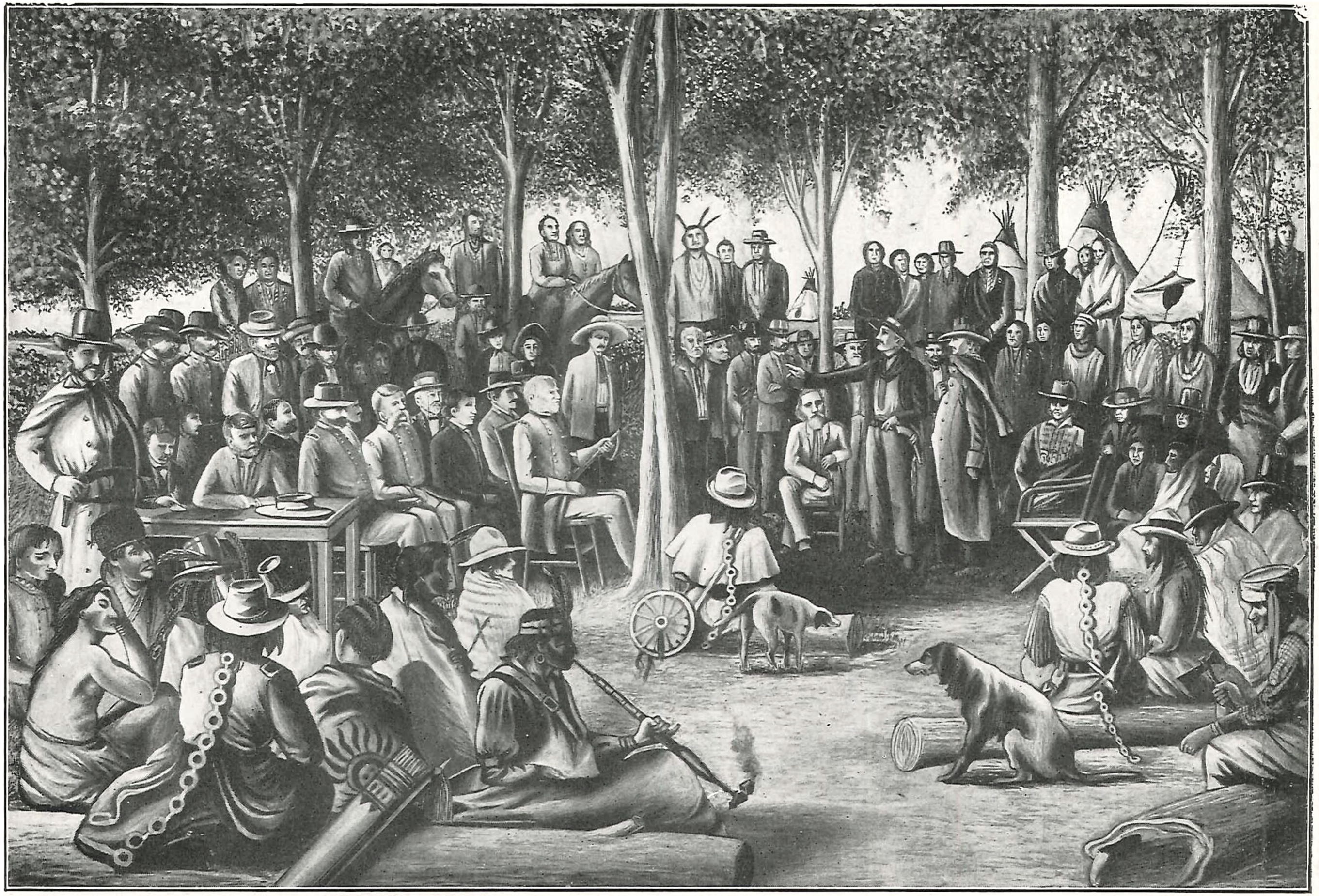
The Cheyennes had come in sure enough, but they came in a day in advance of the time fixed. They certainly "fooled us." The tribes on the ground thought they were going to fight. They gave every sign of fight when they appeared. These tribes actually believed that the Cheyennes could annihilate our forces, and when this was accomplished, they would then turn upon them and exterminate them because they had determined to make peace. Thus believing, they fled when the Cheyennes came in sight. Tosh-a-way led in the stampede and others, mostly squaws, followed. The bulk of the warriors of most of the tribes already on the ground shied off a respectful distance, but did not stampede. The two hundred warriors we saw, that caused us to take to the bushes and across to the south bank of the river were Kiowa warriors, who were on the trail of a band of Kaw Indians who, it was said, had slipped in and stolen some of their ponies the night before. The throngs we ran into when we crossed the river were the fleeing bands of all the tribes. The firing we heard were volleys fired by the Cheyennes themselves, as a salute, in honor of the occasion.

For two hours we experienced exactly what we would have experienced if the whole thing had been a reality. Our only source of regret, in the wind up, was that when we were crossing the islands of Neskatunga, notwithstanding our great tribulation, we did not forget to turn our pockets wrong side out, open our shirt bosoms, that we might get rid of our highly prized souvenirs which we had acquired during our never-to-be-forgotten sojourn at the Kiowa "medicine lodge."

Scouts were sent out to "round up" and bring back the victims of the false alarm, which task was quickly accomplished, except in the case of old Tosh-a-way, who was slow to return. Only thoughts of what he was missing induced him to return at all. It will be seen that the Commission knew exactly how to handle wild Indians, such as these, to get them in a good humor and how to keep them in such a state of feeling. They had coffee on hand all the while, where they could come and eat, and drink at will. A row of iron kettles, at least a hundred yards in length, each kettle holding fifteen to twenty gallons, was provided. Fires made with "buffalo chips" were started under these kettles every morning, the kettles filled, and the cooks would proceed to make the coffee. This process would be repeated as often as required. They feasted the Indians on food to their liking; it was issued to them every day. To keep up the supply, wagon trains were kept busy from Fort Larned to our camp and from the railroad to Fort Larned.

The chiefs of all the tribes being now thoroughly reconciled and looking upon the members of this Commission as friends and benefactors, in recognition of the kind treatment they had received, they combined to provide a "dog feast" for the civil and military officials of our expedition. Now, for a feast, dog was to the wild Indian what turkey was to the white man. As the white man had to have turkey for Thanksgiving and Christmas, so the Indian had to have dog for his festive occasions. This feast, tendered in honor of the Commission and officers of its military escort, seemed to be looked upon by these Indians as the biggest event in their history.

At the hour appointed, the invited guests proceeded from their quarters to the place designated, which was on the grass among the cottonwoods on the bank of the now calm and peaceful Neskatunga. There were some ludicrous happenings here, but we were compelled to reserve our laughter until another time,—which was something akin to impossibility. Among many other articles distributed among the Indians, as presents, was a suit of blue army clothes. It was the policy of the government to teach them to wear clothes. It seemed that every one, on this occasion, was expected to appear in his best attire: so some of these Indians had put on their new pants, but before doing so they had taken their butcher knives and deliberately cut out the seats. Their appearance presented a spectacle, the like of which we never had looked upon before! Somehow or other, a silk hat belonging to the president of the Commission, which he had taken with him to Omaha, was dumped in among the luggage, as we started on our trip, and carried all the way to Medicine Lodge—where it was a useless burden. Ton-ne-en-ko (Kicking Bird), second chief of the Kiowa nation, got a glimpse one day of this hat, and took a great liking to it. He was a daily visitor to the tent, and seeing that he manifested such a lively interest in this hat—in other



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words, that he craved to possess it—the owner gladly made him a present of it, box and all. He was already the proud possessor of whole bolts of red ribbon which had been given him, from time to time. Just as we had about survived the incident of the vacant seats, who should appear but Ton-ne-en-ko, in full evening dress! It was his idea of full evening dress. The only apparel under the heavens, adorning his person, was his breech-clout and that stove-pipe hat! To cap the climax, a half bolt of red ribbon was folded around the hat and four streamers of it—each three yards long—trailed behind him as he strutted down the line!

Scores of boxes of crackers were issued to all the tribes. Stacks of pewter plates and tin cups had been distributed among them and each tribe possessed a supply. These crackers, plates and cups came in handy at the feast. The plates, filled with cold fat dog, were placed in rows on the ground. The guests were seated on each side of these rows, likewise, on the ground. Each guest was supplied with a plate and helped to a slice, or a rib of dog; also a cup filled with black coffee and, in addition, a plate of crackers. This was the menu, and so the greatest feast of the period was begun. It continued until the supply of dog was exhausted, every one having more than enough.

Everybody pretended to enjoy it: some, I think, really did. It so happened that the writer sat near one of the most prominent members of the Peace Commission. I believe the General actually relished it. He ate what was on his plate and helped himself to more. No one could eat it as heartily as he did, unless he really enjoyed it. The truth is, you could not distinquish cold, fat dog, prepared as at this feast, from a dish of cold mutton prepared at home.

The writer succeeded in masticating and swallowing his first mouthful, but when he thought of old "Boss," a dog at home, tolerated for his faithfulness and old age, whose body was so afflicted with festering sores that when he would lay down a while and get up, the scabs would pull off and stick to the floor, the second morsel began to swell and, at length, swelled so large, that his swallow refused to function. By a dexterous movement of the hand he managed to land it in his palm, and from thence into the grass. But the funniest incident of all occurred when one of the young chiefs sought to pay a special compliment to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who was regarded by the Indians with much reverence. They refer to him as "Big Chief," "Great Father" and the like. The young chief approached him on this occasion, softly patted him on the cheek, rubbed him slowly and gently on the shoulder, saying at the same time in a low mellow tone of voice, "Chi-he-ka, Wash-ta, Mooch-a-wa-no"—"Heap big d—n son of a b—h!"

A half-breed among them, who could talk English, was thrown from the pony one day. After administering a few vigorous punches with his big toe, he finally sought to "make up" with the terrorized pony and proceed on his way. But every time he would get close enough to mount, the pony would shy off: he would then pet him—ease up to him and gently rub him on the nose, then on his neck, saying at the same time, "Whoa! You d—n son of a b—h." The young chief watching the performance and hearing the words, thought the half-breed was "making much" of the pony and conceived the idea that what he was saying was an expression meant for compliment. With this explanation by an interpreter standing by, the Commissioner became composed. This is a lesson showing the force of example. We should be careful what we do and say in the presence of children, for wild Indians not on the war-path were, in many respects, like children.

When the feast was over it was made known to the chiefs and all present that the Commission had met in the afternoon and decided to fix the following day for the assembling of the Peace Council. Due notice had already been given to all concerned. A large tent, similar in shape to a modern Chautauqua tent, but not so large, had been provided in which to hold the Council. Improvised tables made of goods boxes for the secretaries were placed, and camp chairs for seating the members of the Council were arranged in circles. So, promptly at the hour appointed, the great Peace Council of Medicine Lodge met and was called to order by the President of the Commission—Hon. N. G. Taylor, who stated its object in a few brief sentences which were repeated to the chiefs in their respective tongues by the interpreters, as they were pronounced.

It was a memorable day. Foes of yesterday were friends today. Chaos had given way to orderly procedure. Peace had supplanted war. The time had come when the red man and the "pale face" could meet and exchange arguments instead of blows, and supplement argument with mutual concession. It was a remarkable gathering. I doubt if a body of abler men, of both races, ever met before or since. The intrepid General Terry, of Fort Fisher fame, was there; General Harney, the "rough and ready" Indian fighter was there; the two star general, Augur, the quiet, superb planner and organizer, was there; the practical General Sanborn, with a big head filled with common sense, was there; Nathaniel G. Taylor, the scholar, orator, Commissioner of Indian Affairs and former congressman, was there; the renowned United States Senator John B. Henderson, of Missouri, and the adroit Colonel Sam Tappan, were there; Senator E. G. Ross, Governor S. J. Crawford and Lieutenant-Governor Root, were all there as representatives of the State of Kansas. The Cheyennes, Araphoes, Comanches, Apaches, and Kiowas, and their numerous guests—many of them distinguished guests from other tribes, were gathered there. Satanta, Satank, Black Eagle, Ton-a-en-ko, Fish-e-more, Woman's Heart, Stumbling Bear, One Bear, Corbeau, Sat-a-more, Wolf's Sleeve, Poor Bear, Bad Back, Brave Man, Iron Shirt, White Horn, Ten Bears, Painted Lips, Tosh-a-way, Standing Feather, Gap-in-the-woods, Horse's Back, Wolf's Name, Little Horn, Iron Mountain, Dog Fat, Bull Bear, Black Kettle, Little Bear, Spotted Elk. Buffalo Chief, Slim Face, Gray Beard, Little Rock, Curly Hair, Tall Bull, White Horse, Little Robe, Whirlwind, Heap-of-Birds, Yellow Bear, Storm, White Rabbit, Spotted Wolf, Little-Big-Mouth, Young Colt, Tall Bear, Red Cloud, Charlie Bent, Turkey Leg, Man-that-feeds-his-horses, Man-that-walks-under-the-ground, Black Bear, White Antelope, Roman Nose, Standing Elk, George Bent, and many others, were present.

Towering above all in native intellect and oratory—exact image of Andrew Johnson —barring his color, Little Raven, chief of the Araphoes, was there. His speech before the Commission on the question of damages, back annuities, and the cause of the war, would have done credit to any enlightened statesman. His reference to the Chivington massacre and the ill treatment the Indians had received at the hands of white men of the frontier, who, he alleged, had been continuously infringing upon their reservation rights in the past, were scathing, and his plea for protection and better treatment in the future, was the most touching piece of impassioned oratory to which the writer has ever listened, before or since.

The chiefs of all the tribes presented their complaints and claims from day to day, as each tribe was reached, and they were considered, discussed and disposed of as they came up. When agreements were reached, in each case, they would be put in proper form and written into the treaty. Everybody knew that Chivington's unjustifiable slaughter at Sand Creek caused the war, but it was necessary for the Commission to take testimony showing it, which they did, to justify them in agreeing to pay the annual allowances which had accumulated during the war. These settlements in the case of each tribe were made with a view of satisfying all of them as nearly as possible; but to satisfy the wants of all, as in the case of children, is an impossibility.

The question which gave more trouble than any other was the question of new reservations; each tribe wanting the line changed so as to take in this strip or that strip, or that stream, or this corner or that corner, and so on. The surveyors, draughtsmen and maps were at hand and, finally, after days of parley, persuasive argument, heart to heart talks, and equalization of values, agreements were reached and the lines definitely fixed and the agreement embodied in the treaties.

On the final day of the council the treaties, as framed, were read over and over and explained to the chiefs by the interpreters, until they were thoroughly understood by every one, and then, by all parties concerned, duly signed, sealed and delivered.

The expedition returned to the railroad at Ellis, by the same route it came, and after the commissioners and secretaries had bidden an affectionate farewell to the officers and soldiers of the escort, boarded a special train for Washington, by the way of St. Loius.

The following spring—April, 1868—the Commission proceeded via Omaha and North Platte to Fort Laramie then Dakota, (now Wyoming), to meet its engagement with the Crows, Utes, Northern Cheyennes, and the Brule and Ogallalla Sioux. The Utes had made a request which was granted, that their head men be allowed to hold their council at Washington, as they were very desirous of an opportunity for a trip east, and especially to see the white man's "Big Village." So the treaty with the Utes was negotiated at Washington, D. C., in February and March, 1868.

To get to Fort Laramie from Omaha, we went over the Union Pacific Railroad, then being constructed, via North Platte to Julesburg, then the terminus, where we detrained and found a military escort and conveyances in waiting. We then proceeded by way of "Gocean's Hole" to our destination.

We camped over night at "Gocean's Hole" and the sportsmen of our party reaped a rich harvest in the way of large and small game, consisting of elk, deer and prairie chickens. An elk was killed here whose horns measured seven feet from tip to tip; many deer were secured, and scores of prairie chickens were bagged.

Finally reaching Fort Laramie, after experiencing one of those dreadful sand storms peculiar to that region, we found all the tribes had assembled, according to appointment. These Indians, like the Sioux, generally peaceable, though at times troublesome, were clamourous for a readjustment of their affairs and a general new deal. The council was called and went into session and the complaints and demands of these tribes were heard and met, so far as it was possible to meet them. It is not the purpose of the writer to go into the details of what was done at these sessions of the council, nor to give even an outline of the proceedings. The records are filed in the archives of the Interior Department, and are accessible to any one who might care to see them. Suffice it to say that, after many days and weeks of parley, satisfactory settlements were reached, and treaties, embodying them, were prepared and signed by all concerned.

The last days of our sojourn at the fort were devoted, by many of us, to a search for moss-agates along the partially naked beds of the Laramie river. Many rare specimens of these precious stones were found. By this time the railroad had been completed to Cheyenne, Julesburg, itself, and all the little portable towns along the line had moved up to the new terminus, which became a city of eight or ten thousand inhabitants within a few days.

The business with the Indians of this region being now finished, the Commission and its escort proceeded from Fort Laramie to Cheyenne where, after spending the night, they boarded the train for Omaha and Washington. This was the first passenger train to leave Cheyenne going east, after the completion of the road to that point. A few miles from the outskirts of the city vast herds of antelope could be seen from the train. The more reckless of our party could not resist the temptation to shoot into these herds from the car windows. Many of these little animals were thus ruthlessly slaughtered all along the road from Cheyenne to O'Fallon's Bluffs.

The last council held by the Commission was with the Navaho Indians, and other tribes, at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, in May and June, and, completing the treaties in June, the Commission returned immediately to Washington.

Thus was completed the strenuous task of this great Commission. Its work at these councils and the treaties negotiated, brought to a close a prolonged and troublesome war, marked the beginning of the end of primitive chaos on the Southern Plains, laid the foundation for the ultimate settlement of the Indian question, so far as the wild tribes were concerned, cleared the way for the settlement of vast boundaries of fertile lands, thus augmenting the populations of Territories, which ultimately enabled them to comply with the requirements and enter the Federal Union as states.

I do not know of a living person, now, of our expedition, who was at Medicine Lodge. A sprightly, pretty girl of French-Araphoe descent, I saw there, who acted as one of the interpreters for the Araphoes, although so young—not over fifteen—I understand is still living. She was a daughter of Mrs. Virginia Adams, by her first husband, Major Thomas Fitzpatrick, who was the first government agent of the Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Comanche and Kiowa tribes. I have not seen any one in recent years, who was there, or at any of the other councils held in other regions.

Among the newspaper men, I saw Stanley twice afterwards. After his reurn from Medicine Lodge, he became connected with the New York Herald, and left Washington as a representative of the Tribune. The first time I saw him was when he had returned from Africa, and was a guest of the

Lotus Club of New York. I called on him then, and was favored with a detailed account, from his own lips, of many of the hardships and hairbreadth escapes he experienced in his hazardous undertaking to find Livingston. He was thinking then of organizing a party to go in search of Emin Pasha, and honored me with an invitation to join. I thanked him, of course, but told him I would be frank with him, and say that I had not lost any Pasha in the jungles of Africa, or anywhere else. The last time I saw him was when he came to Washington to lecture, when I was a member of Congress, on which occasion we breakfasted together on his special car, between Washington and Baltimore, as he was leaving the city.

But he is gone! They are all gone! I am the only one left to "tell the tale"—the only one alive to reproduce the story of the stirring events of that day. Hail and hearty still—more so than then—with appetite unimpaired, and everything good to eat the year round, unmindful of cost because it is produced at home, I feel as though I am yet good for, at least, a quarter of a century of useful life in the flesh. I have stayed on the farm. This is the secret of my happy plight. I go to town whenever I please, but I am not a fixture there, Am not distracted by strikes and movies and every kind of racket. An easy job at town with a big salary, which must be paid out, these days, for eats, drinks, rents and every kind of humbug, hath no charms for me. I have "stuck" to the farm—where there is comparative peace of mind, and "where milk and honey flow." The only thing that mars is the distress of fellowmen. "Back to the farm" is the only permanent solution of the high cost of living—the only solution of the question of how best to prolong life. If town and city victims of conscienceless profiteers and grafters will only take the hint and act wisely, they will be happier, fare better, and live longer!

A. A. Taylor.

EDITORIAL NOTES

[1] The imperfect knowledge of the geography of the Plains region at that period resulted in confusion concerning the identity of certain streams. The Medicine Lodge Peace Council was actually held in the valley of the Medicine Lodge River, instead of in that of the Nescatunga as stated by Governor Taylor. The Medicine Lodge is a tributary of the Nescatunga, which is better known in Oklahoma as the Salt Fork of the Arkansas. The name Nescatunga is derived from the Osage Ne-skua-tonga, which, literally translated, is "River Salt Big," or Big Salt River if

rendered into proper English. The French trappers and traders of the eighteenth century Gallicized the Osage name without impairing its signification by calling it the Grand Saline and, as the Nescatunga, or Grand Saline, it was designated on maps of the Indian Territory down to about 1870. The more commonly accepted Salt Fork is believed to have had its origin in the usage of the freighters and cattle drovers who had occasion to ford it on the Chisholm Trail.

[2] The people of each tribe arranged their own annual sun dances, which were seldom, if ever, held twice in the same place and never in succession. The particular medicine lodge, mystery house or sacred tabernacle from which the Medicine Lodge River received its name was in reality an arbor-like shelter of tree trunks and leafy branches which was erected by the Kiowa people for the celebration of their annual sun dance in the summer of 1866, which was over a year before it was visited by Governor Taylor's party. It was located in the valley of the Medicine Lodge River, several miles below the present town of Medicine Lodge, which is at the mouth of Elm Creek. The site of the Peace Council camp was about three miles above that of the town and on the same side of the river. In their own language, the Kiowa people called this stream A-ya-dalda P'a, meaning "Timber-hill River." "The Calendar History of the Kiowa," by James Mooney, Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, pp. 183-6 and 318-22, gives considerable detailed information concerning the Medicine Lodge Peace Council.