

I have heard old Indians relate that S.B. never plucked flowers, because he thought that flowers should not be severed from the place where they grew. There was, and now is, something of this attitude among all Indians.

From Notebook, June 29, 1925

"This Sunday a group of old Indians came in. Talking about Sitting Bull: All sorts of opinions. Some said he was the greatest Indian that ever lived while others mentioned that Red Cloud had more coups than any other Indian. All agreed that as early as 1866, and earlier to considerable extent, a Sioux going into a battle (even a skirmish of no great sort) would dash upon the enemy or opponent crying out "Tatanka Iyotanka he miye" (Sitting Bull, I am he) and that this was supposed to, and did, give dismay to the enemy attacked, whoever the enemy was (since all knew of Sitting Bull). They mentioned how this happened when meeting Crows, Chippeways, and Fort Berthold Indians, particularly. Some said it was this habit of so crying-out that greatly increased the fame of Sitting Bull. This outcry did not mean literally that the one using it was actually Sitting Bull, or claimed to be Sitting Bull, any more than a soldier of the famous Joe Bush regiment of N.Y. crying out "I'm Joe Bush" meant that he claimed to actually be Joe Bush; it meant that, far and wide, Sitting Bull was believed to have mystic or mysterious power that could, and did, when thus invoked by "calling on the name of Sitting Bull" (as Israelites also called upon the name of the Lord) come into the person of the one so invoking the name of Sitting Bull (See instances of similar personification in other races than Indians. If pardonable, think of this in relation to our very modern "Christian Science" --- which has come to stay, and which has its hold with the literati, not with "mudsills"; & deserves deep study). All the old Indians agreed as to this fact, however it is to be interpreted. So here is a fact, call it "superstition," "religion" "hero-worship" or whatever. All agreed that in habits & dress he was entirely common, that in his manner there was no attempt at claimed superiority. That he could seldom be persuaded to "tog-up" (shaigluza). That there was never in him any insolence toward anyone, as some chiefs had learned to be since whitemen with armies came. That he was astonishingly successful in hunting, and liberal with his game. That women liked him, practically unanimously (They were emphatic in this). That he did not talk much, generally, though at times he would talk freely. That he was a "good listener" to other persons talking -- and was never known to break-in upon a person talking until such person had entirely finished. That he was pleasing in appearance, from early youth on. That some chiefs were jealous of him; while he did not notice it, apparently. That he distrusted whitemen, all of them, and believed that the success of whitemen in the country would completely destroy the Sioux, & other, Indians. That he often soliloquized while performing mystic rites, and that sometimes persons managed to secrete themselves so as to hear what he said. That his rites which he used consisted largely of the medicine bowl and the sacred fire (made of cedar). That he seldom referred to these performances. That he was often in "vision" (wihanble) while performing such rites. That he had spells or moods when he was very gloomy, and sorrowful. That if others disregarded his opinions, he did not argue, or resent it. That at times he had great sense of humor, which showed in his eyes, his face and the tone of his voice. That he seldom actually prayed. And (possibly ought to be omitted) that on a couple of occasions he did go over the Missouri to Winona, and cohabit with the white whores there; though he became intensely disgusted with it."

So much now, and more within a week or ten days, which may aid somewhat.

I feel it in my bones that you will bring out a work that will live

Sincerely

A. McG. Beede *A. McG. Beede*