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SITTING BULL

While the retreat of 1868 pacified most of the Sioux, and especially the great chiefs Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, with their bands, there was a small portion of the Sioux nation which remained implacable in its enmity to the whites, and kept to its original habits of life, out in the wilderness. This portion was generally known by the title of "the hostiles," and the most powerful chief of the different bands was and is known by the title of Sitting Bull. To explain to the general reader the meaning of the words "nation" "tribe", and "band," a short sketch of Indian polity is here necessary.

The Indian tribes of the plains bear a strong likeness, in their modes of government, to the Arabs and Tartars. Abstractly it may be termed patriarchal; but actually, it is nearly a pure republic. Every member of a band does just about what he pleases, and obeys his chief when it pleases him, subject always to the verdict of popular opinion and the physical ability of the chief to thrash him. While the dignity of his chieftainship appears to be hereditary, it is subject to so many checks, and depends so much on personal ability to persuade one's followers to pursue a certain line of conduct, that it may be called a mere delusion, in the hands of any but a great warrior; and prowess in war is the only sure road to real power among Indians. While the Indians, as a mass, are thus independent of all but persuasive influences, the patriarchal element so far prevails that the family is the basis of the organization for war and peace. The members of a family, in all its ramifications of brothers and cousins, uncles and nephews, generally travel together, hunt together, and fight together, agglomerating in time, with their connections by marriage, into a "band," varying from two to twenty or thirty lodges. These "bands" have a remoter