

The commonly accepted idea that Sitting Bull's diplomacy and cunning made him a laggard in battle, is erroneous, according to Grouard. When the latter met the great chief of the Uncapapas, Sitting Bull was in his prime, being about thirty-six years of age. He was a very cunning Indian. In stature he was not much over five feet, and he weighed close to two hundred pounds. His body tapered from the shoulders down. His nose was the prominent feature of his face. His eyes, which were steel blue in color, looked through and not at you. They were very large, and in his anger became bloodshot, like a mad animal's. His face was massive and was somewhat rounding, with a great width of lower jaw. His mouth was large, but his lips were thin, though firm. He had a low, broad forehead. His head was crowned with a profusion of long, black hair.

386 His father was a noted Sioux warrior, and met death in battle with the Crows on Grand river several years before Grouard's capture. In 1870 his mother, who was over eighty years of age, lived in the Uncapapa village with her only daughter, White Cow, then a woman of thirty, a widow with two children, one, a daughter, being a deaf mute.

Sitting Bull was a great practical joker, and even in serious council, he found immense delight in telling a joke on some chief or warrior present. Among his own people he was constantly laughing. He was quick tempered, but soon recovered his good nature. He was totally unforgiving and never forgot an injury. As an Indian, says Grouard, he was a mighty shrewd one, and in all his councils looked to and talked of the future of his tribe and people. He had a set idea that the Sioux nation was doomed and that there was no salvation for it. He constantly maintained that the life of the Indian meant war at all times, and boasted that he would be the last of the Sioux chiefs to surrender. He gloried in his chieftancy and the renown his deeds had brought him. So firmly was this sentiment implanted in his breast that even his bitterest foes respected him for it. All the young warriors worshiped him. His life and deeds were the beacon lights that guided them on to victories. As a general rule, he was a good-natured Indian.

387 At the time of Grouard's capture Sitting Bull had three children--two boys and a little girl--the latter named Plenty Horses, whose mother had died on Tongue river when the little one was three years old. This child was a perfect blonde, and Grouard always thought she was a white captive. Grouard says the chief always treated all the children well, especially this little girl. Sitting Bull seemed to have a penchant for acquiring wives from the ranks of widows. Both his squaws had a son each of their own before they accepted situations as sagebrush burners in the tepi of the Uncapapa. Each of these squaws had borne the chief a son.

Sitting Bull was nothing if not diplomatic. He placed a peculiar value upon the friendship of all the old squaws. He knew their influence amounted to nothing in council or on the warpath, but he was shrewd enough to understand that the women were the school teachers of the children. He never lost an opportunity of playing the gallant toward the squaws, who sang his praises to the exclusion of every one else. What the children learned at the knee of their mothers, they remembered in their youth and manhood, so that the lessons taught yesterday bore fruit on the morrow, and Sitting Bull's fame and prowess as a warrior grew by what it fed on.

He was no laggard in camp. He took a lively interest in the young braves, and organized hunts and distributed prizes; got up feasts, and gave off his stolen plenty to the poor. The name of Sitting Bull was a "tepi word" for all that was generous and great. The bucks admired him, the squaws respected him highly, and the children loved him and were taught to emulate his example. He would have proved a mighty power among our present