

noticable point in the accounts is that he was timid about telling his dreams and, further, that, not only in boyhood, but always, he had no ill-feelings when his dreams were disregarded (as some dreamers certainly did have " "). (In the Island of New Castle, N.H. opposite Portsmouth Harbor, I knew a youth, reputed something of a fool, who, in "spells" would locate everyone of the fishing boats that had gone ~~to~~ away before snow went---to return after snow came-- and describe the fortune of each boat correctly. Have known other persons similar. Now the more I've heard of S.B. as he was in his teens, he might be, under normal circumstances--- without the unusual times in which he lived--- characterized as a sort of "fool" with unusual power of dreams and visions. Certainly nothing in him in his earliest years made him "a bright mark to shoot at", as was the case of plenty of other youths who aroused jealousy.) If persons spoke against S.B., he seldom or never seemed to notice it, or to be capable of appreciating it. Of course one phenomenally successful in hunting had jealous "foes" (according to accounts, S.B. nearly always went hunting alone, stealing away in the nighttime, often; did not take along with him at least one "chum", as was customary). A good example of his imperviousness to criticism is as follows. When, here on the reservation, in his mature years years of course, his camp and the camp of Running Antelope (one of the finest orators ever among the oratorical Sioux) were a few miles apart., the Agency desired to get-up trouble between S.B. & R.A. And so had persons go and tell S.B. what R.A. had said against him and carry back what S.B. had said against R.A. But they failed to make it work, for the reason that S.B. never said anything at all about or against R.A., his reported sayings being all made-up; and Running Antelope found-out this, in time. S.B. would listen, and smile (or "grin", as his enemies expressed it) & could not be induced to say anything at all. This was related to me by John C. Leach, later County Commissioner for two terms, who actually knew all about it---And I may add that this method by an Agency was fairly common. Within the last four years this very Agency here at Fort Yates did set one group of Indians against another, purposely, and in a similar way; the occasion being that so many were getting against the Agent that he wanted to get them occupied otherwise. Now I think we can start off with the certain fact that S.B.'s puberty revelation was that he was to become an unusually successful hunter ("a mighty hunter") and that he was to dispense his game among the poor and the sick & inefficient. And a puberty vision of that sort, or any sort, would cling with inconceivable (to a white man) tenacity. Now when, if ever, and under what circumstances, did S.B. awake to the realization that his "mission" was something other than this, or something in addition to this, IF EVER? Grant in his Memoirs states that after taking Vickburg he realized that he was to be the one to bring the war to a close. Where, and when, and by what occasion did S.B. awake to a "mission" such as he actually fulfilled, IF at all? Edward Ashley, now 75, missionary among Western Sioux in S.D. for a half century, a keen Welch observer of men, said to me, recently, in substance "The more I know of Indians the less I know about them. Their minds and characters do not respond to conditions at all as do the minds of white people of any race, and when I feel fairly sure that I know how the minds of Indians will respond in some matters, then is when I get let down." How are we to get at the working of S.B.'s own mind, or psychosis? How uncover the character of a man which is mystery to his own people? My own notion is that S.B. never regarded himself otherwise than as he was revealed to himself in his puberty revelation of himself; that he regarded all the rest (and as we view matters a plenty of it) as something thrust upon him by conditions beyond his control, things incidental which he must try to get along with, or through with, as best he could; that he himself never realized the importance of these things (on account of which he himself, while he lived, heard and realized hardly anything more than the execrations of triumphant white men); that his grief and chagrin at having to meet these things was keen, and that he always and to his death, realized himself according to his puberty revelation, the matter of the Messiah Dance being a last desperate vault with vain hope to rescue himself and his people from what had become, to him "black despair". Of course he did have a sense of humor, even more than that of the Western Sioux ordinarily, which relieved his grief and chagrin and despair. One must view these matters as they were "in the air", at the time 40 years ago, not as they are "in the air" now, with S.B. being regarded as actually fighting for people & home, rather than as a rebel and an outcast. He never had any realization of matters as you and I, and millions of others now realize them. In his own time the and with the conditions, there was not much to arouse ambition, though he may have been good soil in which ambition might have flourished. Surely nothing I am writing is any aid to you in writing his Life, to be read by white persons. Any flattering things that might be said to S.B. by interviewers, he saw through clearly, and was not misled, whether we call him "fool" or wise man. (Correction, as to his being "popular". He was "popular" with mature women, which meant much in his career, considering the great influence of women among the Western Sioux)