

"'What are you?'

"'I am,' said he, crossing both hands upon his chest, slightly nodding, and smiling satirically, 'a man.'

"'What does he mean?' I inquired, turning to Major Walsh. 'He means,' responded the major, 'to keep you in ignorance of his secret if he can. His position among his bands is anomalous. His own tribe, the Uncpapas, are not all in fealty to him. Parts of nearly twenty different tribes of Sioux, besides a remnant of the Uncpapas, abide with him. So far as I have learned, he rules over these fragments of tribes, which compose his camp of twenty-five hundred, including between eight hundred and nine hundred warriors, by sheer compelling force of intellect and will. I believe that he understands nothing particularly of war or military tactics, at least not enough to give him the skill or the right to command warriors in battle. He is supposed to have guided the fortunes of several battles, including the fight in which Custer fell. That supposition, as you will presently find, is particularly erroneous. His word was always potent in the camp or in the field, but he has usually left to the war-chiefs the duties appertaining to engagements. When the crisis came he gave his opinion, which was accepted as law.'

"'What was he then?' I inquired, continuing this momentary dialogue with Major Walsh. 'Was he, is he, a mere medicine man?'

"'Don't for the world,' replied the major, 'intimate to him, in the questions you are about to ask him, that you have derived the idea from me, or from any one, that he is a mere medicine man. He would deem that a profound insult. In point of fact he is a medicine man, but a far greater, more influential medicine man than any savage I have ever known. He has constituted himself a ruler. He is a unique power among