

-2-

And so it was said that the authorities now deemed it safe to accord the vanquished and vanishing race a little more latitude.

But, after all, was this really the truth? As far as we ranchers were concerned, at least, we were hardly taking it at its face value. Among us were a number in a position to know what they were talking about, who stoutly maintained that the Indians were thus being systematically encouraged to leave their reservations on passes so that during their absence their rations might easier be drawn and misappropriated by those in charge of the distribution at the agencies.

However it may have been, from '85 on, we saw a good deal of them at the ranch. And they were always hungry. Hungry, because they had no food with them, that we ever saw; because game was steadily growing scarcer, and because such rifles as they were permitted to carry were more or less antiquated and inadequate.

203

/ At the outset they were shy on coming around the ranch. But finding as they came to know ~~as~~ that we were holding nothing against them and disposed to treat them like <sup>the</sup> human beings we believed them to be, their distrust quickly wore off.

Particularly they took to my mother, as I would know in due time. From the start she liked and sympathized with them, often inviting them into the house and always doing her best to allay the ravages of the hunger-wolf. In our experience with them as a race, they never were unwilling to accord at least as good as they received, which, alas, however they may seek to conceal or evade it, is more than can be said for vast numbers of so-called Christian white men.

As a rule, the southern cattleman cordially hated the Indians, as did many others along the river, so that they had but few friends. Frequently we had been warned to watch them. Had been told that they were natural thieves. That