

Meanwhile, the death of Bear Ribs brought Sitting Bull more immediate employment.

As we have seen, the traders on the Missouri had been having a bad time with the Sioux. This was about to culminate on Christmas Eve in the attack upon Fort Berthold, when some Kankton Sioux destroyed the old stockade, and very nearly captured the new trade-house close by. But before this final blow fell, the traders had already realized that the regime of friendly relations with Bear Ribs was ended, that they must ally themselves with some strong man of the National Party. Some influential Sioux must be hired to act as their agent among the untamed bands.

Accordingly, Pierre Garrean, the tricky Frenchman who had sent the Hidatsa against the Sioux four winters, back kept a sharp lookout for such a man.

One autumn day he stood at the gate of the stockade, watching the Nees ferry over some visiting Sioux, who had stopped to trade on their way home from a successful foray. And when Garreau saw the young partisan, full of the pride of victory, striding up the path in his white capots, his weapons carried by officious friends, his sturdy figure the admiration of all the young women, and the envy of all the young men, the trader asked who this champion might be.

"Sitting Bull," they told him, "nephew of Chief Four Horns, and himself a chief of the Munkapa Strong Hearts." A man with heaps of relatives, with a growing reputation for courage and good judgement. So far as Garrean could learn, he had never attacked a trader.

Sitting entered the stockade, and stood grave and steady as a statue while his warriors made their trade. Garreau, from the wide space behind the long counter which divided the room, watched the young chief's face, studying the high cheek-bones, the strong nose, the firm, good-humored mouth, the quick, intelligent eyes. Garreau had been among the Sioux long enough to understand the emotions which flickered across their features --