

Moorehead - pp.185-93: cont'd.

To my mind Red Cloud's high character places him on an equality with prominent men of America, irrespective of color,

In considering the Indian, while most persons recognize the disadvantages under which he has labored, yet I am persuaded that very few realize the great, almost overwhelming difficulty, which must be overcome before a truly strong and high character can be developed. With but few exceptions, nearly every white man who went on the frontier as a scout, miner, trader, hunter or explorer, exhibited the worst side of his character when among Indians. It is natural that when a man is in a new and wild country, far from restraint, untrammelled by laws, unchecked by society or the refining influence of women, all that is bad in him comes to the surface. Many men died in defense of a woman or child, underwent great hardship to succor a comrade in danger, exhibited personal bravery in the defense of claims, wagon-trains, ranches, etc., but, admitting all this in their favor, most of them were destitute of a regard for the rights of Indians. Such men inspired hatred in their dealings with the Sioux.

The Indian became acquainted with all that was bad, and saw but little of the real good of civilization. He heard more oaths than prayers, saw more saloons than churches or schools. The men whom he met were not calculated, by their acts, to inspire him with any confidence or respect for the white race. If the Plains tribes had associated with a better class of citizens before they had learned the vices of civilization, I am satisfied that the historian would not be compelled to write so dark and tragic a narrative; nor would he feel constrained to hold them up as subjects for pity and compassion.

Considering that Red Cloud came in contact with a class of white men whose presence would not be tolerated in a respectable community; his high character, his forbearance, his submission to the unjust acts of his conquerors, places him, in my opinion, among the great men of America, regardless of color, birth or ancestry. His career exhibits a degree of mental capacity, a knowledge of human nature and an acquaintance with the affairs of men which we would not expect in the mind of a savage. Red Cloud's bearing towards the Government in the Leavenworth and Fort