

In May and June of 1877 Assistant-Commissioner Irvine had several interviews with the Sioux chief. "I was particularly struck with Sitting Bull," he says. "He is a man of somewhat short stature, but with a pleasant face, a mouth showing great determination, and a fine, high forehead. When he smiled, which he often did, his face brightened up wonderfully. I should say he is a man of about forty-five years of age. The warriors who came with him were all men of immense height and very muscular."

(47)

At these interviews Sitting Bull was confronted with some Americans delegated by the authorities at Washington to treat with the Indians. The chief was firm in repelling their advances, and in recapitulating his grievances and meeting their arguments showed himself to be possessed of much capability. The scene at the second conference at the Indian camp, as we have it described for us by Adjutant Dalrymple Clark of the Force, was an effective one. The first proceeding was the lighting of the peace pipe. This was done by means of a buffalo chip, a match being considered to be deception. Then, taking his pipe, ⁷⁶ Sitting Bull pointed it to the four quarters, and handed it to Colonel Irvine, holding the end himself and saying: "My grandfather, (Note - In Indian oratory the term "Grandfather" sometimes signifies the spirit of the speaker's grandfather, and sometimes the Creator.) have pity on me; we are going to be raised with a new people." All the officers present smoked, and so did the others of the party, the smoking of the pipe being the strongest form of oath.

Marty?

Sitting Bull now rose up and made a speech proclaiming how badly he had been treated by the Americans. In this he was supported by Sweet Bird and Spotted Eagle, members of his band, both of whom claimed the protection of the White Mother (the Queen), upon whose mercy they threw themselves. Later on, after one of the Americans, a priest, had pleaded with him, Sitting Bull spoke again in the following words: -

"O God, remember this is the land I was brought up on, me and a woman. That is the reason I came back; I was brought up here. God brought up things from the ground for my children. I was brought where God made food for me. I sit on the ground and hold it strong now. When my grandfather lived I came back. Listen to me. Look into my eyes. Look straight at me. Do you know what you tell me is going to be so?