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The reservation extends up and down the river forty miles, on which there are estimated to be seven thousand Sioux, all of whom, except those since born, composed the body that massacred Custer. Sitting Bull is, of course, the central figure of his tribe, but there are many other chiefs whose valor far transcends that with which he is credited, such as Rain-in-the-Face, Low Dog, Gall, and Crow King, who fought Custer with such fatal results.

True democracy flourishes only with the Indians; the chiefs are chosen for their wisdom, by bands, and these bands are great or small according to the chief's popularity; thus, an Indian may be chief of a band of twenty, or of two hundred, for every Indian has the right to forsake his chief and become a member of another band. It often occurs that a chief is entirely abandoned, and then he becomes, practically "a private in the rear ranks."

Sitting Bull is not a chief in the sense the term is used, but is a Moses among his people; he has almost unlimited influence among all the tribe, whether chiefs or bucks; some have pronounced him a medicine man, but this he disclaims, for he is too cunning to be subjected to a daily manifestation of his power. He claims to be a prophet; that he is in direct communion with the Great Spirit, who visits his teepee and talks with him face to face; and not only talks, but smokes his pipe and makes himself otherwise familiar.

The career of Sitting Bull, or that for which he has credit, is eventful, if not remarkable, especially that portion since 1875. His war with the government opened in the spring of that year. Various depredations in the neighborhood of Fort Buford, on the Missouri River, were charged to him, but he denied them. Some settlers began measures of retaliation, when the prophet became greatly enraged, and, gathering about him a strong band, refused to live on a reservation, and went into camp on the Yellowstone.

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