

Wood - pp.466-475 cont'd.

I asked SB to tell me something of his early life. In the first place, where he was born, 'I was born on the Missouri River; at least I recollect that somebody told me so - I don't know who told me or where I was told of it.'

"Of what tribe are you?' 'I am an Uncpapa.'

"Of the Sioux?' 'Yes; of the great Sioux nation.'

"Who was your father?' 'My father is dead.'

"Is your mother living?' 'My mother lives with me in my lodge.'

"Great lies are told about you. White men say that you lived among them when you were young; that you went to school; that you learned to write and read from books; that you speak English; that you know how to talk French?' 'It is a lie.'

"You are an Indian?' (Proudly) 'I am a Sioux.'

"Then suddenly relaxing from his hauteur, SB began to laugh. 'I have heard,' he said, 'of some of these stories. They are all strange lies. What I am I am,' and here he leaned back and resumed his attitude and expression of barbaric grandeur. 'I am a man. I see, I know; I began to see when I was not yet born - when I was not in my mother's arms. It was then I began to study about my people. I studied about many things. I studied about the smallpox, that was killing my people - the great sickness that was killing my people - the great sickness that was killing the women and children. I was so interested that I turned over on my side. The Great Spirit must have told me at that time (and here he unconsciously revealed his secret), that I would be the man to be the judge of all the other Indians - a big man, to decide for them in all their ways.'

"And you have since decided for them,' 'I speak. It is enough.'

"Could not your people, whom you love so well, get on with the Americans?' 'No.!!'