

## Talk of Peace

We have the satisfaction to present before our readers transcripts of the speeches delivered at the council held by the Secretary of War on October 5, 1837, with the Sioux, Sacs and Foxes, and Ioways. The assembling of the council was prompted by a desire to impress upon them, when thus brought together, face to face, the importance and advantages of their living at peace with each other. For many years they have committed predatory incursions upon the land of each other, in which blood has been shed. The evidences of unfriendly feelings still cherished by them, were so apparent, as to indicate the inexpediency of inducing them to sign formal articles of amity and peace. The Secretary of War, therefore, confined himself to an earnest exhortation to them to cultivate a friendly feeling towards each other.

The speeches have been written out from full notes, and have been revised by the interpreters and agents. They contain a correct account of the substance of each talk, but without the spirit and imagery in which every speaker indulged. The length of the sentences, the imperfect acquisition of the

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THE EDITOR]



English language by the interpreters, and the consequent want of confidence in some of them, are the reasons that probably prevent the complete translation of the Indians' speeches.

The calumet of peace was passed by the Secretary of War, J. R. Poinsett, — specially authorized commissioner on the part of the United States — to the different delegations, after which the commissioner addressed them as follows:

My Red Brethren, Chiefs and Warriors: as some of you (the Sioux) are about to leave us, I have assembled you in council, before your departure, that I might exhort you to remain at peace when you return to your own homes. Your great father has heard with pain that you have struck each other in your lodges and hunting grounds, and have shed each other's blood. He regards all his red children with equal affection, and is always displeased when one of you seeks to injure or outrage the other. He bids me tell you, that whichever of you shall hereafter strike at the other, will not only incur his displeasure, but will offend the Great Spirit that loves peace.

If you desire to learn the arts by which the white men have acquired wealth, and enjoy prosperity, you must abstain from war. If you desire to learn to cultivate the earth, and to raise abundance of corn, so that you may have plenty to eat, when the game shall fly beyond the mountains, you must not seek each other's blood.



This great country you have so lately passed through, has reached the power and prosperity you have witnessed by the tribes within it maintaining peace with each other. If the white men on your borders, the tribes that inhabit Arkansas and Missouri, were to strike each other as you do, and destroy each other's villages, both those states would become a wilderness. If the white men around you, instead of being at peace, were to attack each other as you do, the road you have travelled, now lined with populous towns and flourishing villages, and fertile fields would be desolate, and the country filled with the beasts of the forest.

Let me exhort you then to maintain peace with each other when you return to your homes, and if any cause of quarrel arises, instead of killing each other, to refer the dispute to the agents your great father has sent to watch over you, and to hear and abide their word.

Eehahkaakow, or "He that comes last", a Sioux chief replied.

My Father: I have something to say, and I wish you to believe that what I shall say is the truth.

We have made peace, and have a good understanding with all the tribes here present; but a part of these are always the first to undo what is done.

When we address our great father, we like to speak the truth; we wish to be at peace, but these people are the first to commence war. If you will



stop them, my father, all will be well. We live at a great distance from you on the plains. There they create the difficulties of which you hear; they killed twenty-seven of my people; but we did not go to war immediately, but listened to the words of our great father, and have kept peace so long. We have always listened to the counsel of our great father, and have had no part in the fighting; it has all been done by a small party of our people; had we commenced in earnest, affairs might have changed long ago.

I am pleased with the talk you have made to us: our people will remember it; but we would not like to be troubled too much when we get home.

My father, we have but one word when we make a promise — we go by it.

The people, who live near me, have been struck four times (here he placed four sticks on the table) without our striking back: it has made me ashamed.

Marcpuahnasiah, or the "Standing Cloud", spoke next.

My Father: Looking round at your children, you think all their ears are open to what you say; but I think part of them are deaf; they act like men that have no ears at all. I have heart and ears, and take into them all I hear from you. These people have struck us often, but we have sat with our arms folded: still they strike, and we remain quiet.

What I say I do not say with a forked tongue; we are willing to hold back, as you have counselled us; our agent has given us the same counsel, and



has partly held my hands. We have been struck many times, without revenging ourselves; but we have not refrained from fear. We are numerous enough, but we do not wish to do any thing to offend our great father.

Many of your children are here to-day, to listen to your counsels. Their brethren, whom they have left in their own country, will remain at peace. But our friends here, who also listen to you, I fear some of their young men may be doing mischief at home.

We live at a great distance. When we are struck upon, it is long before you hear it. Before our story reaches you, you hear another, which makes you think we have been to blame; but these people here have always been the aggressors.

I am ready to make any arrangement to keep quiet; but they first take the war-club, and strike us. I can't depend upon their word, unless their hands are tied by their great father.

It is useless to give us much counsel. Our agent, who has been with us a long time, has always given us good advice, and kept us at peace. I hope you will make these people remain quiet. We never strike, unless they strike first. Fourteen times (throwing fourteen sticks upon the table) have they struck us — myself and the Sissetons of the plains.

When Standing Cloud had taken his seat, Mampuweechastah, or "White Man", arose.

My Father: What you say, and what our great father says, I always hear with open ears. When I



received the invitation from our agent, I determined, when I came, to keep my ears open. What I say is all true. Once I acted a little foolishly, but no lives were lost then. My ears are always open to good counsel; but I think my great father should take a stick and bore the ears of these people. They appear to shut their ears when they come here.

I always thought myself and my people would be made happy by listening to your advice. But I begin to think the more we listen, the more we are imposed upon by other tribes. Had I been foolish, and given foolish counsel to my young men, you would not have seen me here to-day; I might have been home doing mischief, seeking the revenge these people have provoked. I have been struck by these men eight times, and have lost many of my people. But I have advised my young men to remain quiet, and let our great father know the whole truth. I am always ready to do the best I can for my people; but it seems to me, the more we listen to the counsels of our great father, the more we are imposed upon by the tribes around us. I hope you will make them keep quiet.

Grown men, like these, ought to be men of sense, but I do not believe they have any sense. I cannot place any confidence in them. I have more confidence in that little child, (pointing to the son of Keokuk, who sat between his father's feet) than in all these large, grown men.

After a pause of some moments, Keokuk, or the



"Watchful Fox," the principal chief of the confederated tribes of Sac and Fox Indians, arose, accompanied by Wapello, "The Prince", principal chief of the Fox Indians, and Appanoose, or "He who was a chief when a child", and also Poweshiek, or "Shedding Bear", one of the principal chiefs of the Fox Indians, went forward to the table, and shook hands with the commissioner. At the same moment, his chiefs and braves rose, and continued standing all the while Keokuk was speaking.

My Father: I have heard the few remarks you have made to your children. You have heard the words of those sitting around you, and you now know the way in which the hearts of the Sioux are placed. You will now hear how my heart, and the hearts of my chiefs and braves, standing around me, are placed.

I should like to know who can make these people who have brought that bunch of sticks, speak so as to be believed. If I were to count up every thing that has taken place, on their part, it would take several days to cut sticks.

You see me, probably, for the first time. I once thought I could, myself alone, make a treaty of peace with these people. Since the first time that I have met my white brethren in council, I have been told the red skins must shake hands. This has always been the word. After I returned home from the treaty of Prairie du Chien, I visited these people in their lodges, and smoked their pipe; within two



days they killed one of my principal braves. They say they have a good heart. I gave them a blue flag — one they professed to estimate highly. The same fall they killed one of my chief men.

My heart is good; these people do not tell the truth when they say their hearts are good. The summer before last you wished to send one of your officers into the Sioux country. I sent two of my young chiefs, who are here, with him and your troops, as we thought it was to make peace. They brought back this pipe (holding up one); do you know it? We received it as a pipe of peace from the Sioux. Yet the same fall they killed my people on our land. I do not think they are good men; for while my chiefs went with your troops, they killed my people on our own hunting grounds.

These people say we are deaf to your advice, and advise you to bore our ears with sticks. I think their ears are so closed against the hearing of all good, that it will be necessary to bore them with iron. (Here he brandished his spear fiercely in the face of the scowling Sioux). They will not listen to you; nor can you make them.

I have told you that it would be useless to count up all their aggressions; that it would take several days to cut sticks. They boast of having kept quiet because you told them not to strike. Since the treaty was made they have come upon our lands and killed our men. We did not strike back because we had given a pledge not to go on to their land.



Our difficulty with these people commenced with the drawing of the line in 1825. Before that, we kept the Sioux beyond St. Peter's River. We freely hunted on the great prairie and saw nothing of them. Now they cross the line, and kill us in our own country. If, among the whites, a man purchased a piece of land and another came upon it, you would drive him off. Let the Sioux keep from our lands, and there will be peace.

I now address that old man, (pointing to a Sioux who had spoken). I think he does not know what his young men are now doing at home as well as he thinks he does. I will not say any thing I do not know to be true. I make no promises. If he knows his young men are, at this moment, quiet at home, he knows more than I do about mine, and must have greater powers of knowledge than I have.

I have no more to say at present. The Great Spirit has heard me, and he knows I have spoken truth. If it be not true, it is the first time that I ever told a falsehood.

Wapello, "The Prince", principal Fox chief, spoke for his tribe.

My Father: You have heard our chief speak. In him consists the strength of our nation. He is our arms, our heart, our soul.

When these men (the Sioux) made their charges against us, they must have thought you did not know them as well as I do. What our chief (Keokuk) has said, I know to be true. I have always been with



him, and I have ever been called a chief by those who knew me. This is all I have to say.

Poweshiek, or "Shedding Bear", another Fox chief, addressed the Sioux.

You have heard our chief. (Here he was told he must speak to the commissioner.)

We have all listened to you, (the commissioner). We have never been the aggressors, though they (the Sioux) say we have. When I killed a Sioux, I revenged myself on my own land, not on theirs. These men are like I was when a little boy; there is a great deal of mischief in their heads.

Just before I left home we had a skirmish with these people. There was a dispute as to the place where it occurred. We sent men to see and examine the ground. To listen to them, (the Sioux) it would be supposed we always went on their land to fight; but this man (pointing to Mr. Burtis, one of them sent), and others went to the battle ground. From them you may learn where it was.

Appanoose, or "He who was a chief when a child", a Sac, spoke last.

My Father: You have heard what my chief has said. These men say they listen attentively to you, and keep all your advice. But we know how they have listened, and how they have acted.

All our difficulties have arisen with them since the line was drawn by the treaty of 1825 between them and us. Since then we have sold some land ad-



joining the line, by the treaty of 1830. I think they can't know where the line is; we have been afraid to act as we did when the great prairie was our only boundary. After this line was run, we remained on our side of it. They pressed nearer and came on our lands; we bore it, and they thought we were afraid. We could not stand this always, and we cleared them off our land. I suppose every time we drove them off our land they cut a stick; that will account for that bundle of sticks on the table.

But they must not think we are afraid of them.

We have not struck them since the drawing of the line, except when they came upon our lands. This we can prove. None of our people have crossed the line to hunt or fish. These men do not know the line; we do. If it was marked with stone-coal, they might see the dark line, and keep out of our country.

The commissioner answered the Indians:

I have heard the talk of the chiefs and braves of the Sioux and Sacs and Foxes. I did not assemble them to judge which had attacked the other first, or to determine which was in the wrong. I assembled them to exhort them to keep peace on their return to their own homes, to bury the tomahawk, and attend only to the cultivation of the earth and the hunting of game.

Their great father purchased the land of which they have spoken, to be a neutral ground to keep your tribes apart, and on which neither of you should encroach. This strip of land is forty miles



wide, sufficient to keep you apart. This space can not be passed by either tribe without doing wrong to the other, and displeasing your great father. Whichever of you do cross it, must be considered the aggressor.

I exhort you again, on returning home, to throw away the war-club and bury the tomahawk, and trust that I shall hear that the two great tribes now represented before me have smoked the pipe together, and promised to remain at peace.

The Sacs and Fox Indians were then requested to leave the council, when the commissioner addressed the Sioux Indians, after presenting a medal to each of them, as follows:

You have now received, each of you, a medal of your great father. Whenever you look upon it, you must remember that his eye is upon you; and if you do wrong, he will know it. He expects you to remain at peace in your own country, and not to enter the hunting grounds of the Sacs and Foxes. He wishes that you may cultivate the earth and acquire the arts of the white men, and prosper. I will take leave of you now, wishing you a prosperous and pleasant journey, and that you may find your wives and children, and friends in good health.

The treaty we have made with you shall be fulfilled in good faith. You shall have the kind of money you like, and every thing shall be done for you in a spirit of liberal kindness.