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HISTORY OF THE DAKOTAS.

JAMES W. LYND'S MANUSCRIPTS.

It is known by many persons in Minnesota, that for many years previous to the Sioux outbreak, James W. Lynd was engaged in the preparation of a work on the North American Indians, especially those of the Dakota family. This was in such a state of preparation that the winter before his violent death, he expected to have had it published.

The manuscript has been found in a somewhat damaged condition.

Bearing date Fort Ridgley, Jan. 6, 1864, I received a letter from Captain L. W. Shepherd. He says: "I have briefly to state that in the course of the spring of 1863, an enlisted man who was employed under my direction, at the Lower Sioux Agency saw-mill, there or near Little Crow's village, found six bundles of manuscript History of the Dakotas and other North American Indians, which he gave to me, and I yet have in my possession. Many pages seem to be gone. He said some of the same soldiers, under the mistaken idea that it was valueless, used the same for cleaning arms."

In reply to this letter I suggested that the manuscript be placed in the rooms of the Minnesota Historical Society, subject to the reclamation of Mr. Lynd's father or brothers.

JAMES WILLIAM LYND was possessed of an acquisitive and well balanced mind, and had the advantage of a good education. He was said to have been a good mathematician, and his talent for acquiring languages was certainly

of a high order. He had also cultivated music to some extent. But with all this mental cultivation, he attaches himself to the Indian trade, and for a number of years may be said to have lived in a wigwam. Whatever disadvantages morally and religiously must have attended this manner of life, there can be no question that it gave him an opportunity of learning the inside of Dakota life and Dakota legend, such as missionaries did not have, and *could not have enjoyed.*

It is known that Mr. Lynd's aim was to write a historical work, embracing in its scope the origin and destiny, the manners and customs, the language and religion, the character and the legends of the Dakota tribes. For myself, after an examination of what remains of his manuscript, I can say truly that I am better satisfied with his success than I expected to be. He expresses himself clearly and forcibly; and every page attests his diligent investigation. Although in some of his statements and conclusions I should be obliged to differ from him, yet, on the whole, I regard him as truthful and trustworthy.

The first chapter of Mr. Lynd's work is entitled "The Dakota Tribes of the Northwest." This portion of the manuscript is nearly perfect, consisting of more than fifty pages. Mr. Lynd first takes a general view of the different Indian *stocks*, in this part of North America—as the Algonquin, the Iroquois, the Mobilian, and the Dakota. And then turning his attention to the latter, he gives some account of the various tribes which are regarded as belonging to this great family. These he arranges as follows:—

The Sioux, or Dakota proper; the Assinaboines; the Mandans; Upsarokas, or Crows; the Winnebagoes; the Osages; the Kansas; the Kappaws; the Ottoes; the Missourias; the Iowas; the Omahas; the Poncas; the Arickarees; the Minnetarees or Gros-Ventres; the Arkansas and the Pawnees. Some of the California tribes, he thinks,

belong to this family. Whether the Chiennes find a place here or not, is still a question.

The Ahahaway and the Unktoka are mentioned as two lost tribes. The former were a branch of the Upsarokas, and lived on the Upper Missouri. The Unktoka, meaning "our enemies," all said to have lived in Wiskonsan, south of the St. Croix, and to have been destroyed by the Iowas about the commencement of the present century.

"The Sioux and their Country" is the subject of the second chapter. It is quite fragmentary—only a dozen pages remaining out of more than thirty.

The legend of the Red Pipe Stone Quarry, contained in this chapter, is not devoid of interest. "The Pipe Stone Quarry is a place of great importance to the Sioux. From it they obtain the red stone clay—Catlinite—of which their pipes and images are formed; and a peculiar sacredness is, in their minds, attached to the place. Numerous high bluffs and cliffs surround it; and the alluvial flat below these, in which the quarry is situated, contains a huge boulder that rests upon a flat rock of glistening, smooth appearance, the level of which is but a few inches above the surface of the ground. Upon the portions of this rock not covered by the boulder above and upon the boulder itself are carved sundry wonderful figures—lizzards, snakes, otters, Indian gods, rabbits with cloven feet, muskrats with human feet, and other strange and incomprehensible things—all cut into the solid granite, and not without a great deal of time and labor expended in the performance. The commoner Indians, even to this day, are accustomed to look upon these with feelings of mysterious awe, as they call to mind the legend connected therewith.

"A large party of Ehanktonwanna and Teetonwan Dakotas, says the legend, had gathered together at the quarry to dig the stone. Upon a sultry evening, just before sunset, the heavens suddenly became overclouded, accompanied

by heavy rumbling thunder, and every sign of an approaching storm, such as frequently arises on the prairie without much warning. Each one hurried to his lodge expecting a storm, when a vivid flash of lightning, followed immediately by a crashing peal of thunder, broke over them, and, looking towards the huge boulder beyond their camp, they saw a pillar or column of smoke standing upon it, which moved to and fro, and gradually settled down into the outline of a huge giant, seated upon the boulder, with one long arm extended to heaven and the other pointing down to his feet. Peal after peal of thunder, and flashes of lightning in quick succession followed, and this figure then suddenly disappeared. The next morning the Sioux went to this boulder, and found these figures and images upon it, where before there had been nothing; and ever since that the place has been regarded as *wakan* or *sacred*."

But little light is yet thrown on the question of the *origin* of these people. The Mandans are said to have a tradition that they came from *under* the earth. They lived, long ago, down under the crust of the earth, by a large lake. A grape-vine pushed its roots down through. By means of the vine they crawled up through to the beautiful world above. But a large fat woman tried to climb up the vine and broke it, thus preventing the remainder of the tribe from coming up to the light.

The Osages are said to connect themselves in their origin with the beaver. The first father of the Osages was hunting on the prairie all alone. He came to a beaver dam, where he saw the chief of all the beavers, who gave him one of his daughters to wife. From this alliance sprang the Osages.

The Yankton Dakotas have a tradition of the first man, woman, and baby. The man found the woman on the prairie. He hunted for her, and they lived very happily together. The woman grew fatter than the man. By and

by he came home from hunting, and found the woman sitting in a corner of the teepee with something that squalled. He thought it was a bird.

But, tradition aside, Mr. Lynd thinks that the arguments from language and special customs, lead us to connect the North American Indians with the Asiatics, and especially with the Hindoos. In the Faquir of India he finds a brother of the dreaming god seeking Dakota. "The waters of the Mississippi and the Missouri mingle with the Ganges and the Indus."

The chapter on "Early History," which is the third, concludes in this way: "One thing alone is evident through this ancient gloom. A great *past idea*, that has no reference to the present state of the Indian, is still *self-existent* in him, and points with unmistakable finger to an origin beyond the land of his later inheritance. But it passes over him like a dream in a dream, and seems enwrapped in the mantle of silence."

Of Mr. Lynd's chapter on character only about ten pages are preserved. In a note he draws a likeness of the Ta-oya-tay-doo-ta, or Little Crow, which may be interesting.

"Among the present living chiefs of the Dakotas, Ta-oya-tay-doo-ta is the greatest man. He possesses a shrewd judgment, great foresight, and a comprehensive mind, together with that greatest of requisites in a statesman, caution. As an orator, he has not his equal in any living tribe of Indians. His oratory is bold, impassioned, and persuasive; and his arguments are nearly always forcible and logical.

"In appearance Little Crow is dignified and commanding, though at times restless and anxious. He is about five feet ten inches in height, with rather sharp features and a piercing hazel eye, too small for beauty. His head is small, but his forehead bold. Altogether he reminds me

very strikingly, if I may be allowed the expression, of the late ex-Governor Morehead of Kentucky, whom he certainly resembles in physical characteristics, except tallness."

"Religion," is the title of one of the most perfect and valuable chapters in this work, and one which would, in my opinion, make a very good article in some literary review.

One of the last chapters in this work is entitled "The Destiny of the Dakota Tribes." None of the perfected copy of this part, and only a portion of the first leaves remains. Perhaps this is less to be regretted, as the sad occurrences of the past twenty months have materially changed the apparent destiny of the Sioux. When writing these chapters, Mr. Lynd had little thought that he would be the first victim of such an insane uprising.

In regard to this destiny he takes a hopeful view. The "painted face and naked skin" of other peoples have been changed into more civilized appearances—and why not these? Mr. Lynd is very just to our missionary work. "It has been," he says, "a ceaseless and untiring effort to promote their welfare."

Again, he says, "The influence of the Mission among the Dakotas has ever been of a direct and energetic character. The first efforts of the Mission were directed more to the christianizing than to the civilizing of the Sioux; but of late the missionaries, though their exertions in the former respect are not at all abated, have been more earnest in their endeavors to teach the Indians to plant and till."

It is not strange that Mr. Lynd should make this mistake. Our previous efforts in that direction were bringing forth fruit in the latter years of the mission. The Bible carries with it the plough and the hoe.

There is also a well-written introduction to this work, which is nearly complete, of more than twenty pages. The

manuscript, imperfect as it is, I regard as quite valuable. And I would suggest that, in case it is not claimed by Mr. Lynd's friends, the Historical Society would do well to have it published in some form. Illustrated, it would make a valuable book.

Yours truly,

S. R. RIGGS.

ST. ANTHONY, May 13, 1864.

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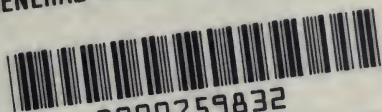
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