

This was a terrible blow on the Ojibways who had taken possession of the Upper Mississippi country, and they felt it severely. But it did not have the effect of causing them to evacuate the hunting grounds, which cost them so much blood. On the contrary, they held their vantage ground against the Dakotas with greater determination and tenacity, and their warriors who had been slain at Cross Lake being soon replaced by others from Lake Superior, they were enabled, in a few years, to inflict a terrible retribution on the Dakotas.

It is at this time that the celebrated chief, Ba-be-sig-aundib-ay, or "Curly Head," first made his appearance on the Upper Mississippi. He belonged to the Crane family, and removed to this region with a small camp of his relatives from the shores of the Great Lake. He did not stop at Sandy Lake, but proceeded down the Mississippi, and located his camp in the vicinity of Crow Wing, on a plentiful hunting ground, but in dangerous proximity to the Dakotas. The bravest warriors and hunters of the Mississippi Ojibways joined his camp and they soon formed a formidable body of hardy and fearless pioneers, who, ever wary against the advances of their enemies, were never attacked by them with impunity. Twice the Dakotas endeavored to destroy this daring band by sudden night attacks, but each time they were repulsed with severe loss.

Curly Head was much respected and loved by his people. In the words of one of their principal warriors, "He was a father to his people; they looked on him as children do to a parent; and his lightest wish was immediately performed. His lodge was ever full of meat, to which the hungry and destitute were ever welcome. The traders vied with one another who should treat him best, and the presents which he received at their hands, he always distributed to his people without reserve. When he had plenty, his people wanted not."