

and told that there were some Indians on the shore who had made a fire. We disembarked and breakfasted there, and found that the Indians were four Yanktons, the uncles of the young Indian with us. They had come across the country to meet their nephew, who had been absent two and a half years, and previous to their hearing that he was on his way home, they supposed he was dead. The uncles had made a fire and commenced smoking, when the young Indian walked from the boat to where they were, without saying a word to them, or they to him. The lighted pipe was handed to him, when he smoked; and after it had passed around two or three times, they commenced talking slowly, and the conversation at length became general among them.

In almost every Indian camp, they have what is called the soldier's lodge, where the men of consideration of the village assemble to smoke, and talk over the affairs of the nation. An Indian of consideration arriving from another camp, usually goes to this lodge; but if a young man, and not of sufficient distinction to go there, he stands about among the lodges until some one sees that he is a stranger, and invites him to his lodge. On entering, the pipe is handed to him, and after smoking a few whiffs, something is set before him to eat. After he has eaten awhile, conversation is commenced, but no questions are asked previous to his having smoked and eaten. It was sometime before I could learn so much of Indian politeness as to make no inquiry of an Indian arriving, until after the smoking and eating had been attended to. At first I commenced talking to them before this important preliminary, and always found them sulky and obstinate about entering into conversation.

My interpreter, Frenier, told me that some years previous to the war of 1812, that he resided at the same place where we were then wintering, in the employ of Mr. Cameron; that Cameron had credited a band of Indians to go on the head waters of some of the streams that empty into the waters of Mississippi in the direction of the Red River of the North; and, that in the month