

As they resumed business, a dead silence occurred of some minutes, all waiting for his final answer. At length he rose up with impetuosity, as if shot out of a gun. His blanket, innocent of water since he owned it, was drawn over his left shoulder and round his body; his right arm swinging in the air, his eyes flashing like lightning, his brow scowled as if a thunder gust had settled on it, with his long hair literally snapping in the air from the quick motion of his head. I thought of Hercules, with every hair a serpent, and every serpent hissing. He came forward, as is their custom, and shook hands with the Agent and all the whites present, and then stepping back a short distance, orator like, to give himself room for motion, and swinging his right arm, said addressing the Agent:

“My Father! I don’t keep this prisoner out of any ill-will to you; nor out of ill-will to my Great Father at Washington; nor out of ill-will to these men, (gracefully waving his hand back and round the circle;) but I hate the Sioux. They have killed my relatives, and I’ll have revenge. You call me chief, and so I am, by nature as well as office, and I challenge any of these men, (again waving his hand towards them,) to dispute my title to it. If I am chief, then my word is law, otherwise you might as well put this medal, (showing the one he received from Gov. Cass,) upon an old woman.” He then threw himself upon a pile of brush, and all was again silent for some minutes, no one daring to dispute him. The worst forebodings seemed to occupy each mind. Seven hundred men expected to pounce suddenly on about fifty; the displeasure of the Agent, and consequently of the Government and troops in the garrison, but a few day’s march from them, and possibly the troops would accompany the Sioux, for all felt that this outrage of their chief was a breach of faith and solemn pledges to the Government, as well as to the Sioux. Finally he rose again, but a little milder in manner, and said:

“My Father! for *your* sake; and for the sake of these men, (waving his hand round the circle,) I’ll give up the prisoner, and go myself and deliver her at the Fort.”

This was but little better than a refusal; for all knew that