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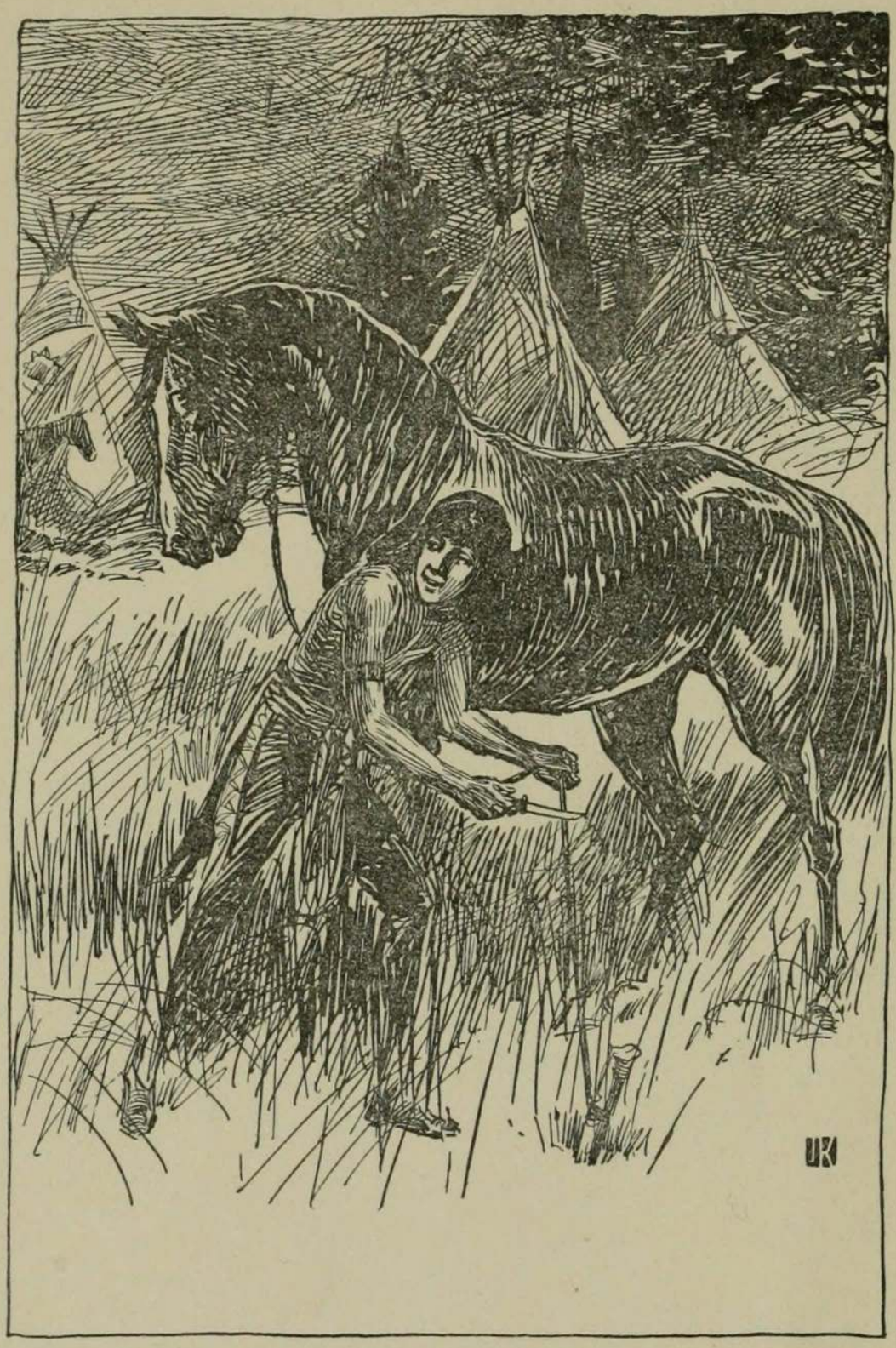
Apauk, Caller of Buffalo



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I CUT HIS ROPE AT THE STAKE

APAUK
Caller of Buffalo

By

James Willard Schultz

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INTRODUCTORY

ALTHOUGH I had known Apauk — Flint Knife — for some time, it was not until the winter of 1879–80 that I became intimately acquainted with him. He was at that time the oldest member of the Piegan tribe of the Blackfeet Confederacy, and certainly looked it, for his once tall and powerful figure was shrunken and bent, and his skin had the appearance of wrinkled brown parchment.

In the fall of 1879, the late Joseph Kipp built a trading-post at the junction of the Judith River and Warm Spring Creek, near where the town of Lewistown, Montana, now stands, and as usual I passed the winter there with him. We had with us all the bands of the Piegans, and some of the bands

of the Blood tribe, from Canada. The country was swarming with game, buffalo, elk, antelope, and deer, and the people hunted and were care-free and happy, as they had ever been up to that time.

Camped beside our trading-post was old Hugh Monroe, or Rising Wolf, who had joined the Piegans in 1816, and it was through him that I came to know Apauk well enough to get the story of his remarkably adventurous and romantic youth. The two old men were great chums. Old as they were — Monroe was born in 1798, and Apauk was several years his senior — on pleasant days they mounted their horses and went hunting, and seldom failed to bring in game of some kind. And what a picturesque pair they were! Both wore capotes — hooded coats made from three-point Hudson Bay Company blankets — and leggins to match, and each carried an ancient Hudson Bay fuke, or flint-lock gun. They would have nothing to do with cap rifles, or the rim-fire cartridge, repeating weapons of modern make. Hundreds — yes, thousands of head of various game, many a savage grizzly, and a score or two of the enemy —

Sioux, Cree, Crow, Cheyenne, and Assiniboine, had they killed with the sputtering pieces, and they were their most cherished possessions.

Oh, that I could live over again those buffalo days! Those winter evenings in Monroe's or Apauk's lodge, listening to their tales of the long ago! Nor was I the only interested listener: always there was a complete circle of guests around the cheerful fire; old men, to whom the tales brought memories of their own eventful days, and young men, who heard with intense interest of the adventures of their grandfathers, and of the "calling of the buffalo," which strange and wonderful method of obtaining at one swoop a whole tribe's store of winter food, they were never to witness. For the luring of whole herds of buffalo to their death had been Apauk's sacred, honored, and danger-fraught avocation. He had been the most successful caller the confederacy of tribes had ever known, and so close to the gods was he believed to be that the people accorded him a position more honored than that of the greatest chief. As will be seen, the man himself had most

implicit faith in his medicine; his dreams, the wanderings of his shadow while his body slept, were as real to him as was any act of his in broad daylight.

I did not, of course, get Apauk's story of his life in the sequence in which it is here laid down. On consecutive evenings he would relate incidents far apart in time, and only by later questionings would I be able to fill in the gaps. But at last I got together the whole of it, to my own satisfaction, and I hope the reader may get as much pleasure from the story as I did in the hearing of it.

Apauk, bringer of plenty, died with five hundred of his people during the Starvation Winter, 1881–83, on the Blackfeet Reservation.

CHAPTER I

TWO of the sayings of my people are burned into my memory. One is, "Poverty is unhappiness"; the other, "Those without relatives are very poor." Both were more than true of Pitaki, my twin sister, and me, in our tenth winter, for it was then that we lost our good father and mother and all their property, and we had not one relative, man or woman.

It happened this way: We, the Pikuni, were encamped on the Two Medicine River, and our brother tribe, the Kaina, were hunting on Milk River, two days' ride away. Came from there a messenger to my father

saying he could now have the medicine pipe that he had so long been trying to buy from Low Wolf. The price was one horse, three tails of eagle feathers, a pair of shell earrings, and a steel spear that my father had captured in a raid against the people of the always-summer land, far to the south.

It was a big price that Low Wolf asked for the medicine, and my father considered it for three days before he made up his mind what to do. On top of the other things, to ask a horse seemed unreasonable. Horses were rare and valuable animals in those days; many of our people were still using dogs for carrying burdens; our young men were just beginning to bring in big herds of horses from the far south country of the Spaniards, so very far away that the war trail thence and back was two summers and a winter in length. We had only six horses, three for packing our lodge and property, and three for riding, my sister and I riding double when camp was moved.

After all, it was my mother who settled my father's mind. She knew how much he wanted that pipe, because it was truly great medicine and would cure the pain he suf-

fered from an old wound in his side. So she said: —

"Give the horse, my man, give it. Let us have the pipe. Nearly all my life I have walked beside the dogs when camp was moving, and I can do so again."

"You are truly generous," my father told her. "As you say, so I shall do, but you shall not walk. Hereafter, when we move camp, we will mount the children behind us. And then, in the spring, I shall again go to war and do my best to capture a big herd of horses from the enemy."

Because the weather was very cold, and the trip to the Kai'na camp and back would be a short one, it was arranged that Pitáki and I should stop in the lodge of No Runner during our parents' absence. Pitáki was glad to do that, for No Runner had five little girls, all her friends, and she loved to be with them. But I pleaded to go with my father; I wanted to see the beautiful ceremony of his taking over the medicine pipe. The ways of the gods are strange. Maybe they put it into my father's mind to tell me no, that I must remain there and take care of my sister. He and my mother hurried

the next morning to make an early start. At daylight I brought in the horses. When I came in they had the lodge down, and everything ready to pack, and just at sunrise they struck out south.

"Be good children while we are gone," said my mother, as she got into the saddle.

"Yes, be good. We shall be gone only five nights," said my father. We answered that we should be good, and watched them out of sight, and then ran to No Runner's lodge for our morning meal.

The five nights passed. Came the sixth day, and at noon, as the day was sunny and warm, Pitáki and I went up from the valley to the edge of the plain to watch for our parents' coming, that we might run and greet them as soon as they were near. They did not come.

"Well, they will come to-morrow," said Pitáki, as we hurried down to camp as night shadows began to darken the valley.

"Yes, to-morrow, sure," I answered.

But they came not on that day. Nor the next day. Nor the day after that, although from sunrise to sunset we two watched from the rim of the plain for sight of them. And

the longer we watched the more we worried; it was not like my father to say five nights and not mean that number exactly. We began to fear that one or the other of them was sick, or maybe hurt from the fall of a horse.

Late in the afternoon of the sixth day of our watch, we saw with tired eyes a band of eight riders coming on the trail, one of them a woman. We were sure that she was our mother, and one of the others our father, that they were coming with some of the Kai'na people on a visit to our camp. But when they had come closer, we saw that they were all Kai'na and our hearts were like heavy stones inside us.

But we should have news of the long absent ones. We ran and met the riders, crying, "Where are our father and mother? What news of them can you tell us?"

They just sat on their horses and stared at us, and at last the woman asked: —

"Your father — your mother. Who are they?"

"Two Bears! Sings Alone!" I shouted. "You know them. They went ten days ago to your camp to buy Low Wolf's medicine pipe. You must have seen them there."

They all stared at us, and at one another a long time in silence, and one by one each shook his head; and at last one of them said: —

"There is a mistake somewhere, children. Your father is not in our camp, nor has he been there this winter. And I know that Low Wolf still has his medicine pipe: I saw the sacred bundle of it only two nights ago."

At that Pitáki sat down and began to cry, "They are dead. My mother, my father, they are dead."

The Kai'na woman got down and tried to comfort her. "Take courage, little girl," she said. "Most likely they somewhere on the trail lost their horses, and are looking for them."

And then she took Pitáki up behind her, and we all went down the hill to camp. Pitáki did take courage; but right then I knew that our father and mother were lost forever.

When good-hearted No Runner heard from me that the Kai'na had seen nothing of the absent ones, he went straight to the chief's lodge with the news, and the chief

at once sent for some of the Kai'na visitors. When he learned from their own mouths that my father and mother were not in their camp, nor had been there, he ordered out the Siezer band of the All Friends Society to search for them. They left camp that very evening, forty or fifty young men. Every one of the band that had a horse, or could borrow one, joined in the search.

They were gone five nights. Five nights of hope for my sister, of despair for me. I knew what they would say when they returned. No, perhaps I did have a little hope, a little, faint, secret hope that I would see our loved ones again, but that quickly died when I looked upon the faces of the searchers as they came riding through camp to the chief's lodge. Hand in hand Pitáki and I followed them, and heard the chief ask: —

"Well, what learned ye?"

And the leader's answer: —

"Nothing. There is no trace of them along the trail, nor on Badger, Birch, Back Fat, and Scattering Timber Creeks. We went even to the Kai'na camp. They had not been there."

"Now, this is strange, that a man, a woman,

six horses, lodge and lodge poles and property, should cross the country and leave no trace of their passing," the chief cried. "Are you sure that you used your eyes?"

The leader was patient with the old man and softly answered: "You forget that there have been snows, and warm black-winds since Two Bears and his woman left us. These alone, to say nothing of the passing of riders, and countless herds of buffalo and antelope, were enough to wipe out the foot-prints of their horses."

"Then, what can have happened to them?" the chief asked.

He received I know not how many different answers. There are a thousand ways for people to disappear. Death in many, many forms is ever lurking by the trails. My own belief is that a war party killed them, then cached their lodge and lodge poles, and rode away with their horses and property. At the time I had no thought but that we were certainly never to see father and mother again. I felt Pitáki's hand slip from mine. She fell, and for a little while was dead. No Runner picked her up and we went to his lodge. There, when life

came back to her, she began to cry, to mourn for our lost ones, and for days could not be comforted. And, if I did not cry, I felt as badly as she did. For long days, and moons, for many a winter and summer, we were to know what it is to be without father's and mother's loving care — and the trail that we were to follow was to be a hard one.

Said No Runner and his woman: "Take courage, children. We are poor, but this lodge shall be your lodge. We will do all we can for you. Anyhow, there is plenty of meat; you shall not starve."

Yes, of food there was plenty. No Runner was a good hunter. But there were so many in that lodge, he and his woman, five daughters, a grandfather and grandmother, that there was little room for us. And must I tell it? Yes. As the days passed, the five daughters of the lodge began to let us see in many ways that they did not want us there. The two oldest, when their father and mother were not around, would say mean things to us about our poverty, our poor clothes, and order us to do things as though we were slaves. Myself, I did not

much mind that, but many a time I found Pitáki crying because of their arrow-sharp words, and that did hurt me. I knew that we must soon leave that lodge, and began to look about for one where we might be welcome.

Came an evening when No Runner loudly scolded his daughters because of their bad words to us. All the near lodges, all passers heard him, and when he had done and the two oldest daughters had gone out behind the lodge to cry, there came in a little, slender, old woman named Suyaki, she of pleasant voice. A beautiful, singing voice she had.

As women do, she took her seat near the doorway, and No Runner cried out: "Welcome, Suyaki. Welcome you are in this lodge. Now, what can I do for you?"

"Oh, chief! Good heart! You can do much for me. You can give me these two fatherless and motherless ones to be my children," she answered. "As you know, my good old man is dead. His shadow has gone to the Sand Hills. My daughters, my sons, want me to live with them, but I cannot give up my own little lodge, my little

properties, my habit of long years to go and come, and do always as I please. Give me the children, chief, to be company to me — to make laughter in my lodge once more. Oh, I promise you, I will be good to them."

Now, when she said that, so earnestly that her voice trembled; when, as she talked, I saw tears gather in her eyes and roll down her fine wrinkled face, why, my heart was hers at once. I looked at Pitáki. Her eyes were shining; she was anxiously watching No Runner to hear what he would say. And he said: —

"The gods are good. My woman and I, we love these fatherless and motherless ones, and we know that they are not happy here. Our lodge is crowded — there are other things — no matter. I was just praying to be shown what to do with them — for them, and you come straight in with the answer. Take them, if they will go with you, take them."

Almost before he had said the last word, Pitáki cried out, "We will go with you, Suyaki, oh, yes, we will go with you." While saying so she was turning and begin-

ning to gather up the buffalo robes that made her bed. Every one laughed at her haste.

The old woman looked at me. I just made the sign for yes. I could not speak. I could not tell how glad I was that she wanted us.

Said No Runner, as we were going out, "Suyaki, be not sparing with the meat. A plenty you shall have of my own killing."

As it was, we were carrying a parflèche full of fine dried meat and back fat that his good woman had given us. So it was that we left our father's band, the Small Robes, and went to live in the upper end of camp with the Lone Eaters, itself a very large band. Why the ancient ones gave the band that name I do not know. Certainly its members did not eat alone; they gave as many feasts as any others of our tribe.

"There, my children, *my* children!" said Suyaki when we were come into her lodge and she had uncovered the coals in the fireplace and laid wood upon them. "My lodge is your lodge. I will move my couch to the right of the doorway. You, my son, are the man here, so your couch shall be at the rear. And you, my daughter, make your bed there at the left of the doorway."

So it was that Suyaki gave us a home in her little, worn, old lodge. Except for a few parflèches containing her few clothes, her woman trinket-savings of many winters, and her tanning implements, it was quite bare, and more than large enough for the three of us. All her man's things had been buried with him, or had been taken by the three married sons. Horses she had not, but she did have eight fine, big dogs of the ancient, wolf-like breed, for packing her lodge and things when camp was moved.

True to his promise, No Runner gave us much meat of his killing, and Suyaki's sons and daughters gave us some, and all the buffalo hides and skins of the deer kind we needed for clothing and bedding. My sister had never done any tanning, but now, without being asked, she began work on the lighter skins and was soon able to make soft leather. When, with a little help, she made a pair of moccasins for me, and saw how well they fitted when I put them on, she was so pleased that she cried. After that she made all my footwear, of buffalo robe for winter, and of leather with parflèche soles for summer.

Nor was I idle. Whenever they would let me, I went hunting with No Runner and Suyaki's sons, and helped them butcher and bring in the meat. When there was nothing else to do, I practiced shooting with the bows and arrows that No Runner made for me, and oh, how good I felt when I killed my first rabbit and brought it to our lodge. Also, I joined the Mosquitoes, the boys' band of the All Friends Society, and never failed to attend the meetings which the old men called for the purpose of teaching us to become good warriors and hunters.

What did they teach us? Well, I shall never forget an early morning when an old man named Red Crow went from lodge to lodge, calling us out to bathe in the river with him, and then led us to the rim of the valley from which we could see far up and down it, and away out on the plains in all directions. As we came near the top the old man said, "Get down on hands and knees now, all of you, and crawl the rest of the way. Only the foolish ones walk boldly to the rim of a valley, or the summit of a butte, to become a mark for the eyes of every living thing in the country. The good

hunter sees the game without being seen, and looks out a way to get within short bow range of it. The successful warrior is he who discovers the enemy without being discovered, and finds a way to surprise and attack them — or safely retreat if the party be too large to attack."

We crawled after him to the top, and looked over the country from the shelter of the sagebrush, and he soon allowed us to sit up, because, he said, the country seemed to be peaceful. A war party, however, might be somewhere around. And after a time he asked, "What do you all see?"

"Buffalo."

"Antelope."

"A band of elk."

"Yes, so you do," he said; "but there is something else. Look again."

We looked and looked, all over the plains and in the valley until our eyes became tired, but could see nothing else, and when we gave up he pointed to the north where two buzzards were sailing round and round not far above the plain. "Watch the birds as well as the animals," he told us. "Were you a war party now, you would go over

there and see what those two are hovering over. You would learn if the animal had been killed by a traveling war party, or by a hunter from some camp, and when and in what direction the hunter or party had gone."

So it was that the old men taught us. We learned caution; we learned that there was a meaning for everything we saw. A dust cloud, for instance, if slow moving, was caused by a moving camp. If fast, it was raised by a band of frightened game, or by riders pursuing it, or traveling rapidly over the country. Oh, I liked well those teachings in the early mornings. And just as interesting were the evenings by the lodge fire, where these same old men told us all about the gods, and dreams and strong medicines, and the war trails of great medicines.

As the old men taught me the ways of the hunter and warrior, so Suyaki and her old women friends taught my sister the ways of a woman, and she eagerly learned to cook, and sew, and make her dresses and moccasins, and to do beautiful embroidery work of colored porcupine quills. Later, she was to learn all about different roots and leaves and

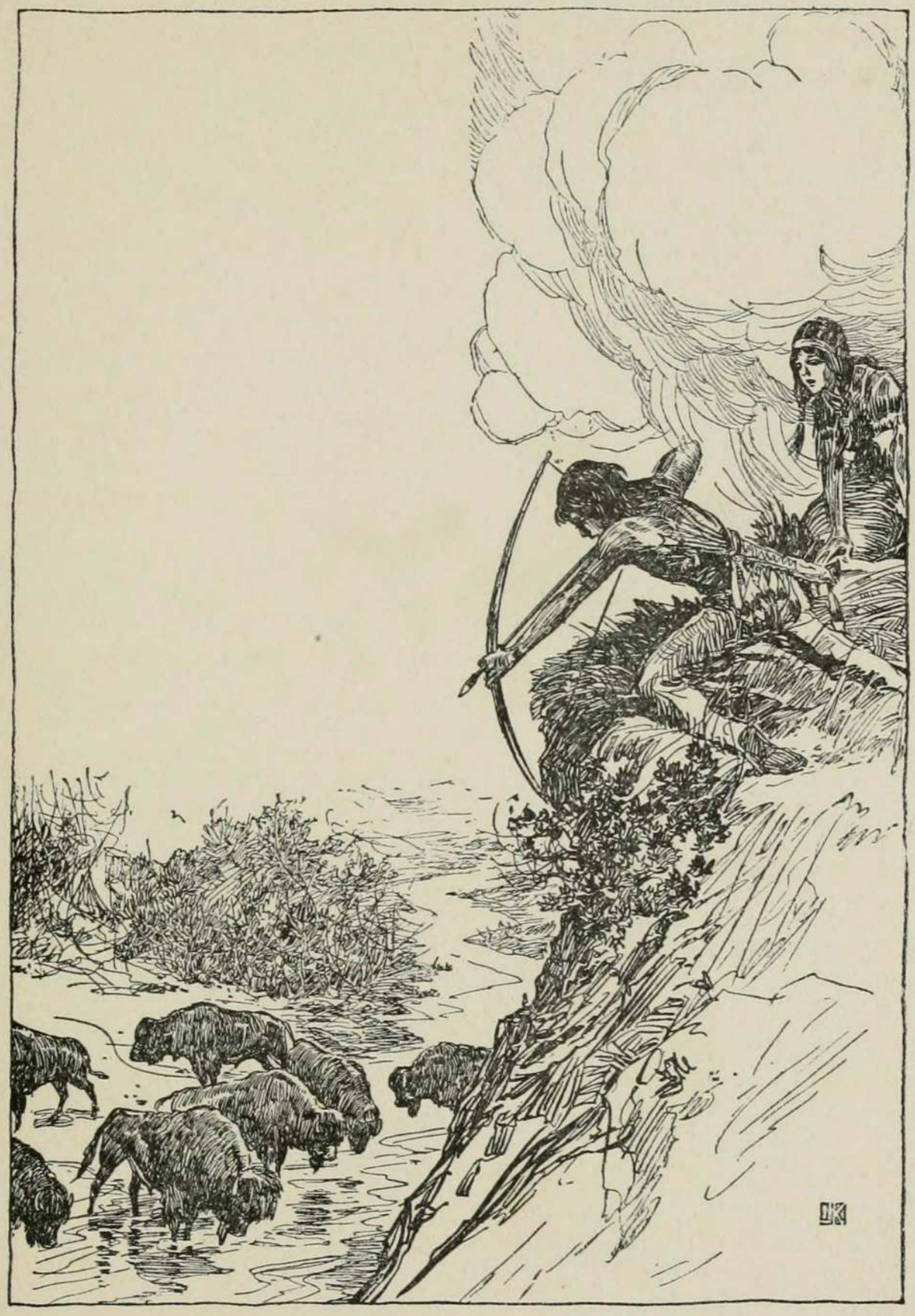
flowers, and become a great doctor of the sick; but that time was still far off.

Suyaki was good to us, and always cheerful. When we mourned for our lost ones she did her best to comfort us. She made fun of her poverty, and ours, and kept talking of the things we should have when I became old enough to go to war and take horses, and to hunt and trap fur with which to buy goods from the white traders recently come into the northern part of our country. There were not yet traders on the Missouri and its streams.

Poor we were. True, we always had enough meat to eat, mostly the poorest parts of the animals. But we had no fine clothes. Beside the boys and girls of our age we were like two brown buffalo birds in a flock of hummingbirds. Worst of all, we had no horses, and were always trudging along behind with our dogs when camp was moved. Nothing hurt me so much as that, especially when some of the boys I played with would prance by on their horses and make jokes about my being on foot. At such times I would pray the gods to make me grow fast, and comfort myself by vow-

ing that some day I would have more horses than any of them.

Passed several winters and summers and came the time when I killed my first buffalo with a real bow and real flint-pointed arrows given me by No Runner, who continued ever to be our good friend. On the morning after he made me the present, I went up the valley with Pitáki and the dogs, some saddled and some drawing travois, my mind made up not to return without meat. Game was not plentiful near camp, and it was not until midday that we sighted a small band of buffalo, standing in the creek. Above them on our side was a cutbank, and crawling to the edge of that I fired an arrow down at the small of the back of a big cow. Away she went, the others with her, splashing up the stream and then out through the brush, my arrow in her almost to the feathering. Pitáki and I followed with the dogs as fast as we could, and out on the grassy bottom found her, dead. Oh, how proud I was! And how Pitáki danced around the big animal, and hugged me, and even the dogs, in her happiness. And then, "Brother," she cried, "here ends our poverty. From



I FIRED AN ARROW DOWN AT THE SMALL OF THE BACK OF A BIG COW

now on we shall have tongues, and boss ribs, and back fat, and all the other choice parts of meat as well as the rest of the people. Oh, let us hurry. Come. Get out your knife."

Luckily, I had a knife, a real iron knife which I had bought from the traders with three beaver skins, which were also given me by No Runner. I soon had the hide off that cow, and the dogs loaded with all the fat meat they could carry. And good old Suyaki was so surprised and so pleased, when we brought the meat to the lodge, that she cried. Ever after that day I was the provider of meat and hides, and in my fifteenth summer I was able to buy three traps from the white traders on credit, and begin trapping beavers. In the following winter Suyaki and Pitáki and I were wearing our first blankets, bought with the skins of many beavers I had caught.

The killing of that first buffalo and, later, the trapping of the beaver gave me courage. During my eighteenth winter I thought much about the future. I made up my mind to become a great warrior, so that in my old age I might be as big a chief as was

Lone Walker, chief of the Small Robes band, and head of the Pikuni. Because of his bravery, every one respected him; and for his kind heart, his goodness to the poor, and his fairness to all, every one loved him.

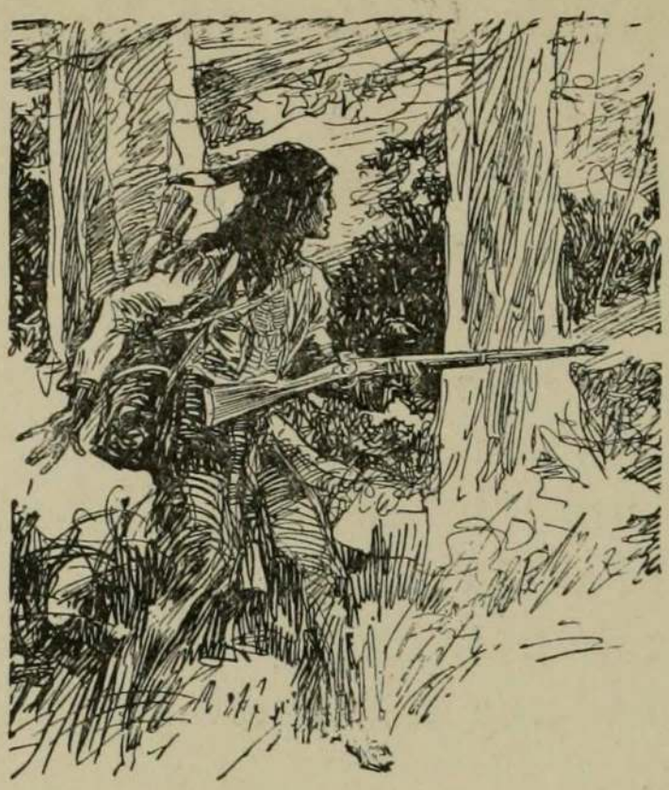
For a beginning, I went as a servant to No Runner, leader of a war party, on a raid against the Crows. We started out just as the new grass was beginning to show green on the plains, and were back home late in the following moon with a fine band of horses, my share being five head. To us three, five horses were riches; we could now ride, and no longer trail along at the tail of the column when camp was moved. But I was not satisfied with myself: I had taken no part in getting the horses out from among the lodges of the sleeping Crows; I had only kept them together at the meeting-place as No Runner and his men gathered them, a few head at a time. I wanted to know if I had the courage to enter the camp of the enemy, and face them in battle.

So it was that, in the Berry moon, I went again on a raid, this time under the leadership of Ancient Badger, a young warrior of great promise. There were fifteen of us.

Apauk, Caller of Buffalo

We crossed the Backbone-of-the-World, entered the country of the Nez Percés and found their camp. I was Ancient Badger's servant. He ordered me to stand at the meeting-place and tie up the horses as he and the others brought them in.

"Not until I have myself once entered the camp," I told him, and after much argument had my way. They thought that I was too young to undertake such dangerous work.



CHAPTER II

THE camp, of about a hundred lodges, was pitched on the east side of a river running through a large plain. Bordering the stream was a narrow growth of cottonwoods and brush. When night fell we left the pine timber in which we were concealed and, crossing the plain, lay down near the first of the lodges to wait until the time came to begin our work. There we were, within short bowshot of the enemy, and they all unaware of our presence. They feasted, and danced, and visited, and we thought that they would never go to sleep.

An all-night moon soon came up, and its light made our undertaking much more dangerous than if the night had been dark, although it would enable us to go quickly among the horses tied in among the lodges and take our choice of them.

It was late when the last one of the lodge fires died out, and later still when Ancient Badger gave the word for us to move. I had no gun. I needed both hands to untie horses and lead them, so I kept my bow and arrows in the quiver at my back, and for defense depended upon the war club swinging from my right wrist. As I passed the first of the lodges, I learned that it was one thing to talk about going into the camp of the enemy, and another thing to do it. I was afraid. Afraid of everything—the shapeless things on the dark, shadowy side of the lodges might be night watchers of the sleeping camp. At any time some one might come out and discover me. My heart beat fast as I stole on to three tethered horses, cut the ends of their tie ropes, and led them out the way I had come, and only three or four steps at a time, until safely out on the plain. People will sleep soundly

while tied horses all around them uneasily stamp the ground; but the sound of just one animal walking steadily away will arouse them.

I took my three horses across the plain to the edge of the pines, and was soon joined by my companions, each bringing two or three or four animals. Said Ancient Badger:—

"You took three? That is good. Well, stay here now and hold what we have, while the rest of us make one more entry into the camp. The night is far gone. We have time for only one more taking."

I pleaded to be allowed to go, too, arguing that every one of the horses we had was safely fastened there in the pines with its own rope, and it was not necessary to guard them. And again I got my way. I had learned that, although I feared the danger in it all, there was something — something more than the taking of the horses, that impelled me to go back. It was the danger itself— the excitement of it all, that drew me.

Big, black clouds began to drift from the west as we again came to the camp, and with the clouds came a warm wind that

told of rain. We separated, and I took my first trail, and went past the place where I had found the three, and on to another bunch of staked horses. One of them was a large black horse tied all by himself. I could see several bunches of the animals a little farther on, but I said to myself that if I could only get away with that lone, big, handsome black I should be satisfied — more than satisfied with my night's work. I was sure that he was a swift runner, a real racer.

I cautiously approached the black. He did not snort, or try to edge away from me. I put out my hand and stroked his smooth neck, and he liked it; he was gentle. So then I cut his rope at the stake to which it was fastened, made two half hitches around his nose with it, and started to lead him out of the camp.

Another swift-moving cloud hid the moon. When it passed, and I had reached about the center of the camp on my way out, I came upon Ancient Badger approaching some tied horses. He motioned me to go on and I slowly passed him, keeping a good watch ahead and on all sides of me. I had not gone far when I heard a shout behind me, and upon

looking around I saw a man running toward Ancient Badger, who had just cut the tie rope of a horse. The two met and Ancient Badger gave him a push that sent him flat on his back, and then he sprang onto the horse, and found that its front feet were short-hobbled. It was too late then to get down and cut the fastening, the fallen man was rising and shouting for help. So his heel thumped the animal and made it start off on the jump that a hobbled horse must make, or else shuffle along at half-length step. All this happened much more quickly than I can tell it. The whole camp was aroused; as I sprang on the black I could see men rushing from their lodges, weapons in hand, and my horse knocked one of them down as he sprang from his doorway. Several guns were fired, and I heard the swish of arrows as I cleared the camp and then looked back to see how it was with Ancient Badger. He was coming quite swiftly on his hobbled-feet horse, and leaving farther and farther behind some men who were running after him and firing arrows. But I knew that there would soon be riders after us, and I slowed up to do what I could to help him.

"I am hurt. Help me. Jump down and cut those hobbles," he cried as he came close to me, and by the time I had done so, and was back on my horse, a number of the enemy had mounted and were after us. I thought that we could not escape from them. "Take courage," said Ancient Badger. "Ride as fast as you can. There is a chance for us, the storm is near."

Sure enough, a storm was about to break upon us. In my excitement I had not noticed it. Almost as he spoke the wind increased, lightning flashed and thunder bellowed, and the moon suddenly was hidden behind the solid black of clouds. By the last of its light I saw that four of the enemy were gaining upon us, one quite a little distance ahead of the others. Of the two horses that we rode, mine was much the faster; I held him back all the time, that Ancient Badger might keep up with me. He noticed it and asked, "You will not leave me? There is an arrow in my arm, I cannot draw my bow."

What could I answer to that but, "I am with you!"

"Then you must try to stop that nearest rider, fast gaining upon us," he said.

I looked back, kept looking back, and after a short time could make out the dim form of him in the darkness, and then a flash of lightning showed him very close to us, gun in hand. Oh, how fear came upon me then, fear of the man, fear of the gun, far more terrible weapon than the bow. I had never faced an enemy. I had heard our warriors tell about it, and how great and exciting a thing it was to do; how eager one became for the fight, but I did not feel that way. I wished that I was back in the far-away little lodge with my sister and good Suyaki.

And then Ancient Badger cried out, "Turn on him. Ride low and turn on him. Don't let him poke his gun in our backs."

His words made me shiver. Then, suddenly, I cried silently to the gods for help, for courage, and it came to me. I grasped the handle of my war club and made the big black begin a half circle. Around I went and straight at the Nez Percé. Another flash of lightning came and he fired at me, where he had seen me by its strong blaze. But I had by that time bent low on my horse's neck, and pulled him to one side, and the ball did not touch me. I turned the horse back at him

then, and coming close, was about to swing my war club, when another lightning flash showed the butt of his gun almost touching my right thigh as he was holding its muzzle and putting powder into it. I reached out and grasped the weapon just above the lock, and jerked, and it was mine. He reached over and, his hands just grazing my arm, grasped hold of my leggin. I struck with the gun barrel and must have hit his wrists. He yelled and let go of me, and his horse swerved off. He began shouting for his comrades. I did not pursue him. On I went, shouting for Ancient Badger until I got his answer, and then saw him by the lightning flashes.

"Oh, chief, I have his gun," I cried as I rode up beside him. "I have his gun and he is harmless."

"Good. But he still follows. He keeps calling the others," he said, and just then the storm came upon us, fierce wind and blinding rain, and almost constant lightning, which showed the gunless man still after us, still shouting for the others, whom we could not see.

"We must lose that man," he soon shouted

to me. "Come, let us ride north for a time."

We turned north, riding as fast as we could through the heavy rain, and by the lightning flashes saw the man turn with us. But the lightning soon ceased, and then we turned east again, with the wind and beating rain at our backs, and in a little while came to the edge of the pines. There we stopped and listened, heard no longer the shouts of the enemy, nor the thud of his horse's feet, and were sure that we had lost him. But we could not tell whether our party and our horses were to the right or the left of us. We turned to the right, riding slowly along the edge of the timber and softly calling them, and lo! Almost at once we came upon them where they waited for us. Then it was that Ancient Badger for the first time complained of his wound, and had us break and pull out the arrow fast in his arm and the flesh of his back.

In the darkness and rain it was impossible for us to go on through the timber with all the horses we had taken, and to remain where we were until day came would be to have the whole Nez Percé

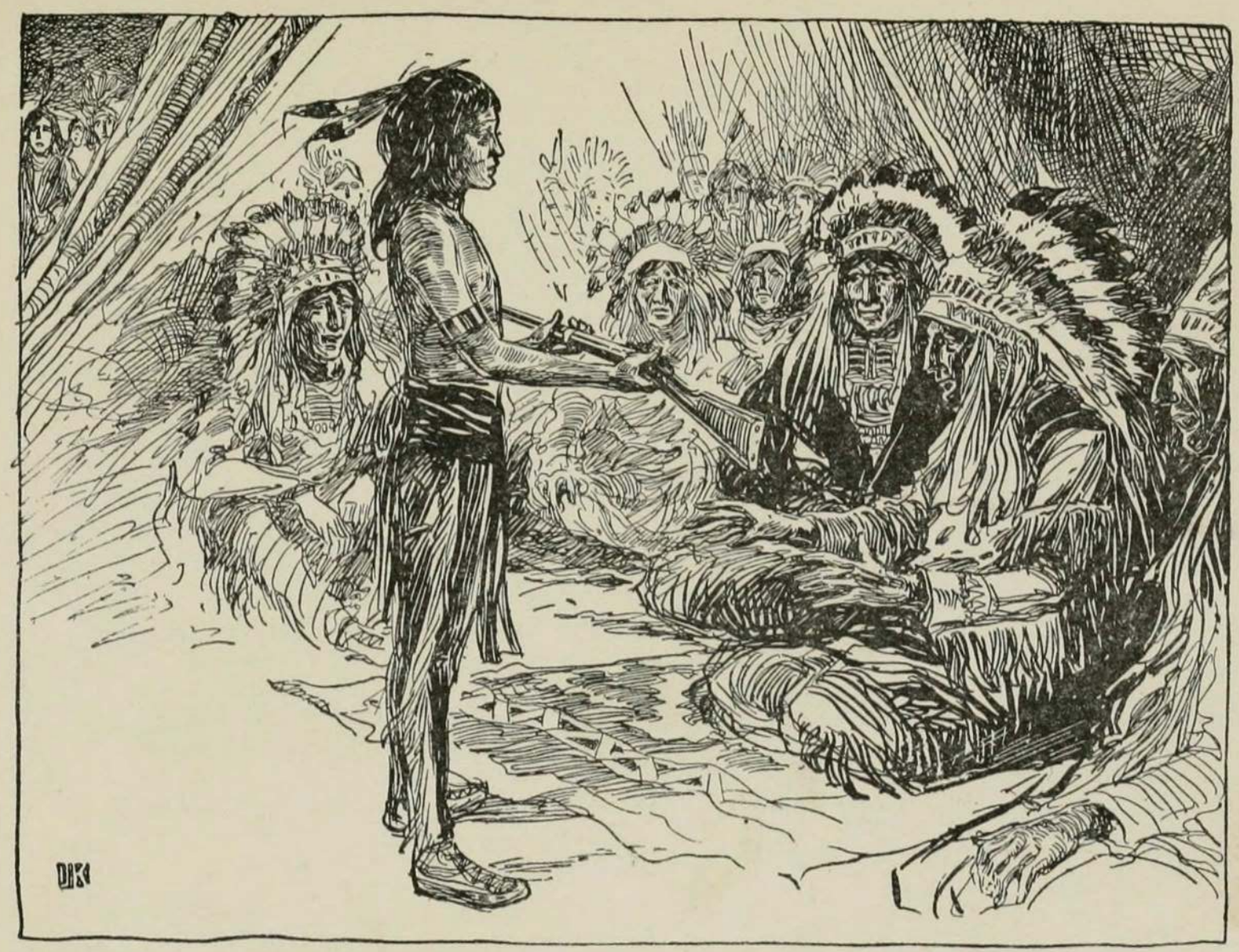
camp after us as soon as they could circle and find our trail. Said our leader, after some talk, "We will wait a little while, it is not more than the middle of the night, and then if the sky does n't clear we will each ride one horse, and lead one, and strike out."

Again the gods were with us. Windmaker kept fanning his big ears and soon drove the rain clouds eastward. The moon came out and we started on our back trail, one or two of us in the lead, the rest driving the loose stock after them. A good-sized band it was, in all a few more than a hundred head, and four of them mine. It was slow traveling through the forest, but that was not very wide, and once we struck the plains on its far side we kept going at a lope all the rest of the night, and all of the following day, stopping only to change horses. No doubt the Nez Percés found our trail and followed it, but they never came within sight of us. Nor did we intend that they should. For four days and nights we were going nearly all the time. It was not until we passed the summit of the Backbone-of-the-World and looked down upon our own buffalo plains

that we had a real rest and sleep, and plenty of fat meat to roast before the fire.

Several days later we sighted the lodges of the Pikuni, and I was a proud boy as I rode my big black in among the shouting people, and heard on all sides my name in praise. It was impossible to ride through the great crowd. I dismounted and my sister seized me and so did the good Suyaki, and both kissed me again and again and cried over me. All around were great warriors, chiefs, medicine men, giving me greeting and praise, men who had never noticed me before, and that was sweet to me. It was fine pay, big pay for all the dangers of the trail.

In our little lodge I was soon resting, and telling the story of our raid, and in other lodges my companions were telling their stories of it. So it was that before dark the whole camp knew that I had counted the greatest coup of all — that I had taken a weapon, and a gun at that, from a living enemy. Evening was no sooner come than No Runner invited me to a feast in his lodge, and sent word for me to bring the gun. While I was there came word for us to visit Lone Walker, and show



ALL ADMIRED THE GUN THAT I HAD TAKEN

him the gun, so we went over. His lodge was crowded with the big men of the camp, and I was asked to tell them all about the raid. I did so, and they all said that I had done well for a beginner.

"Just keep on the way you have started, and you will become as great a warrior as was your father," one old medicine man told me.

All admired the gun that I had taken. It was very different from the round, short-barrel guns of the traders of the North. The barrel was long, and eight-sided, and the slender, polished stock had a little metal-covered place in one side for ball patches. I was offered two horses for it right there, but of course I would not sell.

We had returned home just in time for the medicine lodge ceremonies, the building of the great lodge and the giving of presents to the sun. It is during the four days of prayer and sacrifices that the warriors stand out one after another, and count their coups and with help enact their fights with the enemy. It was a great day for me when I counted my two coups, the taking of the horses and the gun, a friend playing the part

of the Nez Percé. All the rest of the summer I could hear the shouts of the people as they applauded that deed. I dreamed much of becoming a great warrior. Then, in the Falling Leaves moon I happened to hear something that turned my thoughts forever from war. No doubt the gods intended that I should be there in Lone Walker's lodge and hear that talk.

Said one of the guests to the chief, "I am doing all that I can to make my son quit his boyish ways, but he seems not to want to do anything but play. I keep telling him about you, and how you began, when younger than he is, to mark out the trail that has made you head chief of our tribe."

There followed a long silence, and then Lone Walker gave a big sigh, and said, "There is something far greater than the chieftainship of a people. Gladly would I this day change places with Little Otter, caller of buffalo, bringer of plenty. I may be able to direct a tribe, to settle quarrels, to lead its warriors, but I cannot feed it. Here is winter almost upon us and we need a great store of meat for the long moons

of snow, and we have not a single caller among us. I shall send messengers to the Kai'na camp to-morrow to ask Little Otter to help us. May I tell him that he shall have rich reward for what he does for us?"

"Ai!" "So tell him!" "Ai! We will pay; pay plenty!" the guests cried out, and soon afterward the camp crier was told to notify the camp that we should move over to the buffalo trap on the Two Medicine. At the time we were north of it, on Cutbank Creek.

I went home and thought much about what I had heard. Of course, I knew about the decoying of buffalo, had myself seen a number of bands lured within the lines of the waiting, hidden people, and then stampeded over the cliffs to their death. And, boy-like, I had taken it all as a matter of course, had given no thought to the wonder of it all — to the greatness of the deed. And Lone Walker had called Little Otter a bringer of plenty. What a beautiful name that was. And then I remembered how honored and loved had been old Raven Chief, our caller, but recently gone to call shadow buffalo in Shadow Land. How dif-

ferent had been his life from that of other men; how peaceful; how full of mystery, and dreams, and nightly doings with the gods. And I said to myself, "Why can't I become a caller of buffalo — a bringer of plenty — provider of food and shelter and clothing for the people?" For the buffalo, their meat and hides, were all that, and more; the different parts of their great bodies supplied almost our every need.

We moved to the Two Medicine next day, and made camp on the edge of the big cottonwood grove in the bottom just under the cliffs of the buffalo trap. Two days later the messengers to the Kai'na camp returned with Little Otter, old but still active, a fine, slender, gray-haired man of quiet manner. He had little to say; his large, beautiful eyes seemed always to be seeing things not given others to see. Came with him his old wife, a medicine woman, and off on the bottom from our big, noisy camp they set up their lodge, the buffalo medicine lodge, on the skin of which was painted, life-size, a buffalo bull and cow. That evening, when Lone Walker invited Little Otter to his lodge, I went over and squeezed myself just within the doorway

with the women, that I might hear what was said.

The old man soon came, and as he passed in through the doorway, Lone Walker cried out, "Welcome, Sun Man, Bringer of Plenty, sit you here by my side." And all the other guests cried, "Welcome! Welcome to our camp, oh, wise one!"

He passed to the left of the fire and took the seat. He was plainly dressed in cow-leather shirt and leggins, plain moccasins, all faintly colored with the sacred, dull-red paint of the earth. He wore a cow-leather wrap, on which was painted his medicine, a buffalo bull and cow in black, the hearts and life lines in bright red. His hair braids were wrapped at the ends with strips of otter fur; a very plain man was he beside the chief and his warriors, all in bright-colored, quill-embroidered garments.

As soon as he was seated, the women of the lodge passed around the little feast of buffalo tongue and pemmican, and I noticed that before eating, the buffalo caller cut a small portion of the tongue, and with a few words of muttered prayer buried it in the ground in front of him. Then, while all ate their por-

tions, he gave the news of the Kai'na camp, and the chief told him what had happened of interest in our camp.

The feast lasted a long time; several more than the customary three pipes went the round of the circle. The talk was mostly about great herds of buffalo that Little Otter had decoyed to the traps on the rivers of the North, and I eagerly listened to it all. I noticed how very respectful the guests — chiefs, medicine men, great warriors, all — were to this caller of the buffalo. Yes, they were more than respectful. There was in the tone of their voices when they addressed him — in their eyes when they looked at him — real love for the man. Rarely did they call him Little Otter. Bringer of Plenty was the name they generally gave him. Again and again I thought what a beautiful name that was, almost a god name.

Later in the evening I went to sit with No Runner.

"Chief," I said, "Little Otter is a great man."

"That is not half the truth," he answered. "That bringer of plenty, he is the greatest man in all the three tribes of us."

"Well, I have been thinking, and have decided. I am going to be a caller of the buffalo, a bringer of plenty," I told him, and waited anxiously to hear what he would say.

"It is best that you keep to the war trail," he told me, after long thought. "You have made a good beginning; you will become a great warrior. The callers of the buffalo, now, how few are they. Only one, only Little Otter this day in the three tribes of us. One has to be great medicine, most favored by the gods, to become a caller, and you have no medicine. Although you tried until your hair becomes gray, you probably would never succeed in getting one herd to the cliffs."

"Still, I must try," I said. "Something seems to be urging me that way."

"Go talk with Little Otter about it," he told me. And I got up and started for the old man's lodge. But as I neared it my steps became slower and slower. Who was I to dare enter that sacred buffalo medicine lodge—to question so great a man? I stopped, turned back, went a little way, and turned again. "Surely, his kind face tells of a kind heart," I said to myself. "I shall anyhow go to the doorway and ask if I may enter."

CHAPTER III

I APPROACHED the lodge. A good fire within lit up its yellow leather cover and made plain the black bull and cow painted upon it. At the doorway I called out: "Little Otter, Bringer of Plenty, are you there?"

"Ai! Ai! Enter! Enter!" he called back, and I went inside.

"Ah! It is you, my son," said he, when the firelight lit up my face. "Welcome you are. Sit you there. Now, what brings youth to an old man's lodge so late at night?"

"Oh, great man, pity me; help me," I cried. "I want to become a caller of the buffalo."

"Ah! So that is it," he exclaimed. "I fear that I cannot help you much. You have to get help from the ancient ones. Long did

I fast and pray, oh, many times, and often did I try to draw the herds before I at last found a medicine that told me how to do it. Have you a medicine?"

"No, I have not yet had my sacred dream," I answered.

"Then go have it. And after that try to call a herd. And keep on fasting and praying and sacrificing and calling herds, and perhaps you will at last succeed. And then you may never be able to do it. And remember, it is dangerous work."

"I am not afraid," I told him. "I have twice been to war. I have taken a gun from a living enemy."

"Well, my son, all that I can do for you I shall do," he said; "but of course there are some things about this calling that my medicine forbids me to mention. Best you go to the outer end of one of the wings when I call a herd, and watch me."

I went home. Our little lodge was dark, and my sister and old Suyaki were asleep. I built up a fire from the buried coals and awakened them, because I was so excited about what I had decided to do that I could not wait until morning to tell them about it.

"What is it, brother, are you going to war again?" Pitáki asked.

"No: never again."

"Then what? Why have you awakened us? Are you sick?" old Suyaki cried.

"No, I am well: I am happy. I just woke you up to tell you that I am going to be a caller of the buffalo, a bringer of plenty," I told them.

"Oh, brother! You talk uselessly. You can never do that," said Pitáki.

"He can do it! He shall do it! We will help him! Oh, sun! Let me live to see this son of mine bring a herd tumbling down over the cliffs!" old Suyaki cried.

And then we talked a long time, and it was decided that I was to try to get my dream as soon as Little Otter should toll a herd over the cliffs, and provide plenty of meat for us—for the whole camp.

Some days passed before the watchers gave word that several herds of buffalo were in sight, and might at any time come grazing near the wings of the trap. On the evening of the day that they brought the news, Little Otter began his four days of fast and prayer, and all the medicine men of the

camp unrolled their sacred pipes and smoked to the gods, and begged them to give him what he asked.

No one now dared go near the caller's lodge for fear of breaking his medicine. Of his four wives, three came over and remained with friends in our camp. The fourth, the head wife, remained with him and sang with him his sacred songs. Twice a day, in the morning and the evening, we saw her go to the river and drink, for water was not allowed in the lodge. She went to and fro with slow step and bent head, spoke to no one, and none spoke to her. Her face and hands were painted black.

In the evening, sometimes alone and sometimes with my sister, I would go a little way from camp toward the caller's lodge, and sit and listen to his songs. They were different songs; some that his dream had given him. Most of them were very low, very sad; and one, his "Song of the Ancient Bull," oh, that was a wonderful song. Now low and slow, then loud and deep and quick, truly, as we listened it almost took our breath. And "Oh, it hurts! It makes me feel queer here in my bosom," Pitáki would whisper to me.

"Because it is such great medicine," I would tell her. "True, it hurts, but it is a kind of hurt that makes me see things: the buffalo, our ancestors, in that far back time when men and animals talked to one another. Listen, and listen to it carefully, for some day you will be singing it with me."

Came the evening when Little Otter's fast ended. Lone Walker gave a feast and smoke for him, and word went out to the people to be ready at call to hurry to the stone piles of the wings. When the feast was over I went to Little Otter and asked him to let me go with him whenever he went up to the edge of the plain, and he said that I could do so.

At daylight the next morning we were up there with the four watchers, who had remained on top all night. We were on the edge of the cliffs where the two wings, starting from them about a hundred steps apart, ran one to the northwest and one to the northeast, far out across the plain to a wide coulée in which were always pools of water. These outer ends of the wings were all of ten hundred steps apart, and the wings were piles of stones about thirty or forty steps

apart, except that near the cliffs they were only a few steps apart, in order that a great many people might there be hidden. The cliffs were two. The first, the height of three or four men, dropped down to a narrow shelf. Below that the second, very much higher, dropped straight down to the slope of the valley, and there, in a big half-circle out from the wall of the cliff, was built the trap, a corral of tree-trunks, brush, and rocks, over which a buffalo could not climb or jump, nor the biggest bull push down.

We looked out upon the plain and saw three herds of buffalo; one some distance north of the coulée, and one west and one east of the big mouth of the wings. Little Otter wet one of his fingers in his mouth, and then held it up to learn which side of it would first feel cold. "What wind there is goes east," he said. "I could not call the herd down that way — they would smell me. The herd to the west is too small for us to bother with. That out to the north is too far away, but I think that it will soon be moving in to the coulée for water, and from there I can call them if the gods be with me. You watchers, one of you go tell Lone

Walker to have the people hurry to the rock piles."

Looking down into the valley, we soon saw them coming out from the lodges, men, women, and children old enough to understand things, and do as they were told. As they climbed the far end of the cliff, where there was a steep path, and came toward us, they prayed the gods for success; prayed that a great herd of buffalo might be tolled into the trap. As they began to go past us, now one and then another of the watchers would call out: "Listen. These are the commands of Little Otter: You are to go slowly out to the rock piles. There you are to lie motionless. No matter how much you want to get up and see what he is doing — if the herd is coming, you are to lie perfectly still until the animals have passed you, and then you are to rise up and wave your robes and chase them as fast as you can run."

Little Otter himself sat off at the edge of the cliff, watching the herds, paying no attention to the passing people. Lone Walker and the chiefs of the different bands of the All Friends Society went over and sat down near him.

After a time he turned to them and asked: "You have all your men gathered?"

"They are out there, more than four hundred of them, sitting along the trail," Lone Walker answered.

"That number should be plenty," he said. "Let them hide by the first twenty rock piles of each wing. Beyond those, I think, there will be little danger."

At that the chiefs gave the order, and the men of the Siezers, the Braves, Raven Carriers, Bulls, All Crazy Dogs, and other bands, began to go out to their places, the Crazy Dogs, greatest warriors of the tribe, taking the place of greatest danger, the piles nearest the cliffs. There the buffalo would be most likely to rush off suddenly to the east or west, and trample everything before them.

Little Otter, carrying the light, soft tanned robe of a yearling cow buffalo, now started out to do his work and I followed him. From the cliffs out to the coulée of the water holes the plain was one little ridge after another. From the tops of them we could see the three herds of buffalo; when we were down in the hollows between, they were hidden from us. We kept close to the west wing of

the trap. The stampeders had already taken their places, and none of them were to be seen unless we walked right upon them. The rock piles afforded hiding for only a few; their main purpose was to mark where the people should lie in two straight but ever-diverging lines. All along between the piles the stampeders lay prone on their stomachs, under their grass-colored, cow-leather wraps, with only their heads in sight; and every wrap and every head was covered with sprigs of sage, or handfuls of the dry plains grasses.

Upon reaching the last rock pile of the wing, I lay down and Little Otter sat near me for a time. The herd of buffalo down the coulée had evidently been to water, as it was now feeding and moving slowly off to the northeast from the pools. The herd to the west was slowly grazing toward us, and still a long way off. The herd to the north, the big herd, was well scattered out, some of the animals grazing, some lying down, a few old bulls standing motionless and half asleep in the warm sun. All three herds had been too far away to notice the people stringing out across the plain to their places along the wings. And now that they had come in answer to the

caller's order, they were obliged to remain where they were until the buffalo should be decoyed, or the caller give out word that the hunt was over for that day.

The day grew warmer and warmer, but it was not until the sun was halfway between the edge of the world and the middle of the sky that the herd began to show signs of thirst. One after another, without grazing, a few animals started toward the coulée, coming a few steps, then stopping, then moving on again for a short distance. Then the ones that were lying down got up and stretched themselves, and little by little the whole herd began to close in and follow the leaders, now walking slowly and without pause.

"Now! Now is my time," Little Otter told me and, taking his robe, he went down into the coulée, ran across it, and started up the long slope on the other side. There, also, was little ridge after little ridge. He went on over a number of them, and then almost to the top of one higher than the others and stopped, and slowly raised up and looked over it. Oh, how closely I watched him then! And so did every one along the line of the

wings who was in a position to see. Hundreds and hundreds of eyes were upon him, hundreds of voices were praying for his success.

When Little Otter looked over the ridge, the buffalo were not very far from him. He wrapped his robe closely about his body, hair side out and the head part covering his head, and then, stooping over, he ran a little way along the crest of the ridge, showing to the animals the upper part of his body. At once the leaders, some old cows, stopped, and the others came crowding up to them and also stopped and stared ahead, trying to see what had caused the halt.

Little Otter had gone back out of sight; but very soon he again showed himself to them, this time running along the top of the ridge on his hands and feet, and kicking up behind, and half-rising on his feet, and whirling around on hands and feet; oh, a funny sight he was! The buffalo stared and stared at him. A couple of the leaders backed up; others half-turned, but still stared; all were about to run away, when the caller came back over the top of the ridge out of their sight, and then raised up and looked at them

through the sagebrush and grass growing along the crest. It was then, I thought, that he was calling them. But what kind of a noise was he making? He was too far off for it to reach my ears.

Whatever it was, it was medicine. A lone cow pushed out past the leaders, trotted toward him a few steps, stopped and listened and looked ahead, and then trotted on, others beginning to follow her. And at that the caller turned and ran down toward the coulée as fast as he could go, robe flapping behind him, until he came to a ridge near it. There he looked back; the buffalo were not yet come to the ridge he had left; he came over the one he was on and waited for them.

Soon the old cow came in sight, then others of the lead. They stopped on the high ridge, and the caller again pranced around in their sight, and then came down off the crest and repeated his call, whatever it was. And at that the old cow and the others started toward him, first at a trot and then on the run, and he ran for the coulée, keeping well bent over, and often jumping sideways from his course. And now the whole herd, all of four hundred head, was coming

on his trail, and fast gaining upon him. He came into the coulée, crossed it, and ran on up our slope not far inside the end of the wing where I lay, and the herd soon came in past me, cows and young bulls in the lead, calves and yearlings close with them, and big, old bulls in the rear. Only the leaders of the herd knew why they were running: they wanted to know what that buffalo-like thing was that kept fleeing from them. Perhaps some old cow thought that it was her missing calf—forgetting that the wolves had pulled it down.

As soon as the tail of the herd passed me I jumped up and ran after it, shouting and waving my robe, and one by one those alongside me did the same as came each one his turn. And alongside the outer end of the other wing the stampeders there were doing the same. At first only the rear animals of the herd saw us and, frightened, they pushed on faster, crowding those ahead. Little Otter, meantime, bore more to the west and came into the line of the rock piles. As soon as he did that the people there, and from there out, all sprang up, shouting and waving robes, and the leader of the herd, the big old cow,

turned and swung it off toward the east, only to find that the people along the outer end of the other wing blocked her way. To the south was the only open course, and that she took.

In chasing Little Otter, the buffalo had been running easily. But now, as more and more people kept rising on either side, and closing in behind them, they became mad with fright; *they ran now for their lives.* The rattle and thudding of their hoofs was like thunder. They spurned the dry plains' soil into fine gray dust that rose like a cloud behind them. Through the haze of it we in the rear could see them rushing on and on, the stampeders rising and rising, and waving robes and shouting on either side, and we followed as fast as we could, praying that all would end well. On the way in I overtook Little Otter, walking, and still breathing fast from his long run, and I dropped into a walk beside him. I spoke and he did not answer: his eyes were on the herd and its stampeders, and he was praying. And then a rising wind carried away the dust cloud and we saw the edge of the cliff, and a crowd of people there, and a few old bulls running off to the east

and west. The herd had gone down over it, bull and cow, and yearling and calf, they had gone tumbling and whirling and bumping and sliding down over one wall, and then the other, to their death.

"The gods are good. My medicine remains with me," Little Otter cried. "I have filled the trap with meat."

We broke into a run, and soon came to the edge of the cliff and looked down. The big trap was filled with dead and dying buffalo, and some, unhurt for all their fall from the high cliffs, were rushing here and there against the walls of the trap, and men were shooting them down with their bows and arrows. Old, old men and women were sitting on the fence, singing and talking and laughing and pointing to this one and that one of the big animals. Children were crying for their mothers; dogs were howling, and down the trail at the east end of the cliffs the last of the stampeders were hurrying to have a hand in the butchering.

"Best you go with them and get your share," Little Otter told me. "Myself, I shall sit here. I love to watch the people at work in the trap because they are then so happy."

"And it is you who make the happiness," I told him, "and that is best of all. My mind is made up: I, too, am going to be a bringer of plenty."

When I got down to the trap I found my sister and old Suyaki, with No Runner's woman, butchering a big, fat cow which he had given them for their share, and I helped them carry the meat to our lodge. Then we feasted upon some of it, and they cut the rest into thin sheets for drying. The camp was red with meat that night; it was everywhere hung on scaffolds and on lines, and by the firelight in the lodges women were preparing the hides of the kill for drying. One could hear everywhere the *thud thud* of the fleshers. And this was but the beginning of the take of winter meat; Little Otter had promised to call more herds, to provide every lodge with plenty of food and hides.

Late in the evening I went again to his lodge and was made welcome, but I was a long time finding courage to ask what I was so anxious to know. At last I stammered: "Little Otter, what did you besides what I saw you do this morning? Did you make some kind of a cry to the buffalo?"

He laughed a little, and then answered very kindly, "My son, I did make a cry, but I cannot tell you what it was: that is a part of the medicine my dream gave me, and I dare not even hint what it is. If you would be a caller, go take your first fast, and if that fails you, keep on fasting and praying until some of the ancient ones give you help."

"It must be that he gave the cry of a buffalo calf in distress," I thought as I went home, and I made up my mind to try it on the first herd I should try to call.

I began my fast the very next evening, choosing for my hiding-place some cliffs away up the river from camp. There I found a dry place under an overhanging shelf. Below me a lone, dead pine, its top on a level with my bed, leaned out from the rock wall, and right under it the deep water swirled. It was a good place. At night, after the wind ceased blowing, I could hear strange noises and splashings down in the river, the Under-Water People at play, I hoped, and to them I prayed for help as well as to the other gods. And at sunset of the second day a big, white-headed eagle perched on the top of the dead pine for his night's rest, and I prayed long

to him, but silently lest he should become frightened and fly away. With him so near, I hoped that the shadows of his ancestors might also be there, and I begged them for help. And then I slept, and my shadow wandered far — and got no help of any kind.

But on the fifth night there I had a good dream. Yes, I can tell it now and no harm done, because I afterward got other medicine. In this dream my shadow met Ancient Fisher, and he promised to help me in every way. When I awoke in the morning I was glad. I got up and left the cliff, and went down to the river and drank for the first time in five nights and four days. And then I went home, very slowly, for I was weak from my long fast. I neared camp just in time to see a herd of buffalo — a living river of buffalo, come pouring over the cliffs into the trap. Down they crashed, and rolled, and slid, clouds of dust rising from their thick-haired bodies. And they kept coming until I thought that there would be no end to the stream. It was a wonderful sight, a sight never to be forgotten. And the man who had caused it, what medicine, what power was his! In the cold days of winter when no hunting could

be done, the women would bring out the meat they were drying and storing now, and they would say: "This meat is because of Little Otter, bringer of plenty. It is meat from the buffalo trap." Not a man, woman, or child in all the camp but would think kindly of the caller, and speak kind words of him.

I did not go over to the trap. I went to our lodge and lay down, and some one who saw me passing told my sister that I had returned. She came running from the trap, and the first thing she asked was if I was hungry. And then, without waiting for my answer, she got out a dish of berry pemmican, and sat down by my side and insisted upon feeding me little lumps of it. Then old Suyaki came in.

"They have given us two cows," she cried, "but before going to work on them I just had to come and see you. Are you well? Did you have a good dream?"

"Yes, a good dream. I think that I have strong medicine. And, of course, I am well," I answered.

"Well, I had a dream while you were gone," she said. "I wandered far out across the plains, and up a river valley, and then

climbed to the top of a point and sat down. And far off I saw dust rising. I looked closer and saw that it was caused by a herd of buffalo running toward cliffs. Two ravens were in a tree near me, and said one to the other: 'Come, let 's go. That young Apauk is calling a herd of buffalo to the cliffs. There will be meat aplenty for us.' And as they flew away I saw the stampeders rising up behind the herd; saw it go tumbling over the cliffs. And then my shadow came back into my body and I woke up. My son, that was surely a good sign. I know that you are going to be a great caller of buffalo."

"I feel that way, too," I told her. "As soon as you and sister have dried what meat you have, we will go away off by ourselves, and I will try to call a herd."

They went back to the trap, and I lay on my couch and made plans.

One thing troubled me: I had no balls for my Nez Percé gun, nor could I get any. The balls the Red Coat traders of the North sold were too large for it. I did not like to go away without a good gun and plenty of powder and ball. Suddenly the

thought came to me to ask Rising Wolf, the white boy who lived with Lone Walker, to make some balls for me. He had been with us a year, and could speak our language quite well. I went to him that evening and told him my trouble. He took his ball pouch and came to my lodge with me, and tried one of his balls in my gun. It was just the right size. There were twenty balls in his pouch, and he gave me ten of them! That was the beginning of the great friendship between us. More than sixty winters of true friendship have been ours. In all that time not one cross word from one to the other. I am proud of that.

Well, during the time that the meat was drying I had many talks with No Runner. He was interested in what I wanted to do, and gave me good advice. It was decided that he should help me move camp, and then bring back my horses and herd them with his own band until I should want them. The evening before we were to start I made a last short visit in Little Otter's lodge, and told him that I was starting out in the morning to camp by myself and try to call buffalo. Said he: "My son, you are too young

to begin that work. I fear that you will only be disappointed. Wait a while before you attempt it; there is plenty of time. Just grow, and pray, and think medicine thoughts. Fast much, and dream dreams. Then try the calling, and you will be more likely to succeed."

I told him that I could not wait; that I had to go, and I went back to my lodge with slow steps. I had been thinking that I would have no trouble in learning to call — and the old man had put doubt into my heart.

The place I chose for our lone camp was the mouth of Birch Creek, a short day's ride from the Two Medicine buffalo trap, but so far from the big camp that the game down there would not be disturbed by riders and hunters from it. Thither we went, all the way following the windings of the river, instead of taking the shorter trail across the plains, in order that we might not alarm the herds. It was almost dark when we set up the lodge in the grove of cottonwoods just below where the two rivers meet. Very early the next morning No Runner started back with our horses. As soon as he had gone, I called my sister and Suyaki and we

started up the north slope of the valley, there very steep and at the last, rocky. When we came to the top I slowly raised up and looked out over it. Pitáki was at my shoulder.

"Oh, brother! Just look at them!" she cried. "Surely your medicine guided them there for your purpose."

I thought that she might be right. Out on top of a rise of the plain, close in front of us, was a herd of about a hundred buffalo, and they were grazing out over it, just as I would have them do. I quickly decided that as soon as they moved out of sight over the crest of the ridge I should run toward them and try to call them back.

CHAPTER IV

THE herd was a long time moving over the top of the ridge. On the very crest of it a big old bull stopped, and turned facing us, and looked this way and that way, all the time switching his short tail, as though suspicious of something. We knew that he had not seen us, could not see us, as only the tops of our heads were above the rocks, themselves as black as our hair. I believe that there are shadows, shapes that we cannot see, that often give the hunted warning of the presence of the hunter. Have we not, all of us, now and then, when approaching game that we knew did not see

or smell us, been surprised to see it suddenly start running and go clean out of the country! Of course, it had warning of some kind.

But this old bull, if he had been warned, only half-understood; after a time he made up his mind that all was as it should be, and went on over the rise to rejoin his herd.

"Well, he is gone," said old Suyaki; "now is your time. Oh, my son! I am so anxious for you to do this that I am sick. I tremble all over me. Go! Hurry! Let us see what you can do."

"Yes; go now. Brother, I pray for you," Pitáki told me.

I set my rifle up against a rock, wrapped my robe about me, hair side out, and started. I was so excited, so anxious about what I was to do, that I could hardly breathe. I told myself that I must be calm, but as I neared the top of the ridge over which the buffalo had passed, my legs began to tremble; I was more excited than I had ever been in all my life. I could not understand it. When raiding the camp of the enemy, when taking the gun from the Nez Percé, I had not felt that way. I sat down and scolded my-

self. And then I prayed to my medicine, and felt better. I got up and went on.

When well up the ridge I got on hands and knees and crawled the rest of the way, and through the low sagebrush and greasewood looked down the far slope. The buffalo had left it, and were grazing up the slope of the next rise. I thought that they were just about the right distance off for my purpose. Raising my robe so that it would cover my head, I got up and, well stooped over, began to run along the crest of the ridge, every few steps going out of their sight on the slope away from them. They noticed me as soon as I began to run, and threw up their heads and stared. After running in and out of their sight a few times, I got on my hands and knees, and kicked up and made the noise of a calf. And as I did so I knew that it was not the noise that Little Otter had made. A buffalo calf cannot bawl loudly, like a calf of the white horns that you white men have brought into our country. It can only grunt: "*m–m–m–m! m–m–m–m!*" like that. And so low that it cannot be heard a hundred steps away. So I stopped grunting like one, and made two or three more kicks

as I again went out of sight of the herd. Then I whirled back and looked over the top of the ridge, and my heart went dead: the buffalo were running away from me, running up wind to the west as fast as they could go. And with them went my hope of becoming a caller; a bringer of plenty for the people. I felt so badly about my failure that I suddenly became sick. I made a pillow of my robe and lay down, turning my back to the sky.

After a long time I heard the swish of steps in the grass, but I knew who was coming and did not move. Pitáki it was, of course, and our almost-mother. They sat down on either side of me, and my sister said: "Brother, they ran away. Oh, I am so sorry!"

"So am I. Well, it is ended. I can never be a caller," I told her. "Why, they never even came a step toward me. They just stared a little, and then raised their tails and ran."

"Well, and what if they did?" cheerful-hearted old Suyaki cried. "Come, now. Did you really expect to decoy a herd the very first time? What did Little Otter tell you? That one had to try many, many times,

and pray much, and fast, and dream, before he could become a caller."

"That is true," I cried, and sprang up. "I was so disappointed that I did not think of his words. I will try again. I will try a hundred times. I will try ten hundred times. I will be a caller of buffalo."

"There! That is the way I like to hear you talk. That is the way chiefs talk. Of course you will try again. And again and again until you do it. And we will help you all we can. Look across there to the south. Just see the herds for you to practice upon," said Suyaki.

Yes. There were seven or eight herds of buffalo in sight. Several on the point of a plain between the river and the creek, and the rest out south from the river. But I did not feel like trying another herd that morning. I wanted to think, to make medicine. And so we went back to the lodge, my sister and I. Suyaki remained up on the edge of the plain to watch the country. Camped off by ourselves as we were, we were risking our lives. A war party might come our way at any time; we had to see them first, and then keep out of their way.

But somehow, after we were in the lodge, I could n't think what to do. I was very restless. "Come on, let 's wander around," I told Pitáki, and I took my gun and we crossed the river and went up the valley of Birch Creek. Not far above the mouth of the stream we found in the gray cliffs on the west side of the valley some thick streaks of the black rock with which, to-day, you white people heat iron so hot that you can bend it and hammer it into any shape you want. We did not then know that it was of any value. Pitáki thought that when Old Man made the world he had put the black streaks there as a mark of mourning for some dead friend.

Well, where these streaks show so plainly in the cliff, we climbed to the top of it. But there the top of the cliff is not the edge of the level plain: from it a steep hill slopes up to the west. As there were no buffalo on the slope, we moved back a little way and came upon a circle of stones all of fifteen steps across, and in the center was a small circle of fireplace stones. There, in the long ago, some of our ancestors had camped. Just as we do to-day, they had weighted the edge

of their lodge with stones when setting it up in a place exposed to wind. But what a large lodge theirs must have been! Three times as large as our very biggest, twenty-one skin lodges. How could they have packed it without horses? Their dogs could not have dragged the skin on their little travois, nor pulled one of the big lodge poles. Maybe those first Blackfeet were giants, and their dogs, too. Why not? Here and there we find bones of the ancient animals that prove they must have been as large as a white man's house. Indeed, there has come down to us the story of one of them, a buffalo bull so large that there was nowhere in the Missouri River water deep enough to cover his back.

"Sister," I said, "I am going to pray to the shadows of the ancient ones who camped here. They were wise. Maybe some of them are right here and listening to us; maybe I can get help from them."

"Oh, brother! Maybe some of them are here," she whispered. "I am afraid of them. But go ahead. Pray. Whatever happens, I will be with you."

She was a brave girl, my sister Pitáki.

Well, I prayed a long time to those ancient ones for help, asking them to give me a revealing dream; to tell me how to call the buffalo. I had no sooner finished than one of the herds we had seen up on the plain between the two streams came in sight on the edge of the slope above us. Close to us a deep coulée ran up almost to them, affording good shelter. Here was too good a chance to be lost; I felt that I must try to call them. Leaving my rifle with Pitáki, I crawled from the circle of stones into the coulée, and then started up it.

Stopping now and then, and climbing the bank of the coulée and looking out, I soon saw that I could go right to the buffalo. There were about fifty of them, and all but the young calves were hungrily cropping the short, thickly growing grass of the slope. As I went on, the thought came to me to try the calf call upon them; I could go close enough for them to hear it.

Up and up I went until, cautiously looking out from the coulée, I could see the eyes of the nearest animals. That was close enough. I carefully hoisted my robe about me, and on hands and knees jumped out on

the slope before them, kicking backward and upward at every jump. But I made only four jumps; at my fourth they all bunched up and wheeled and ran up over the edge of the plain and out of sight. I had not time to try the calf call before they were turned and gone. I thought that I should, perhaps, have begun calling before showing myself. Anyhow, I had failed again. I felt pretty badly as I rejoined my sister and we went home.

We found Suyaki in the lodge when we entered. She had watched all day and seen nothing moving except the feeding game. I told her about my second failure and she told me to take courage. "Be happy-hearted," she said. "Be glad that you have me and your sister, and your many friends in the big camp. Be glad that you have been to war and made a name for yourself. And now night comes on. We will eat some of the dry meat that Little Otter decoyed to the cliffs for us, and maybe that will be good luck. And then, after a little, we will all go to sleep and maybe you will have a good dream."

I had no dream of any kind. I awoke at daylight and went up on the edge of the plain. Buffalo were everywhere, even another herd

in the very place of my first attempt at calling. I sat there and watched them, and tried to think of some way to call them, and could find no way. Over and over I pictured everything that I had seen Little Otter do. I had done the same, and the buffalo had fled from me. "I made the wrong kind of a call," I said to myself. And then: "But the second time you made no call, and they ran away just the same."

I went back down to the lodge. Suyaki gave me food, but I was not hungry. I was sick from thinking so hard, and so uselessly.

"Suyaki," I said, "here is another day, and the buffalo are all around us. But what can I do? I had no dream, and I can think of no new way to try to call."

"Then try again the way you did yesterday," she quickly answered.

"Well, I will; what you say shall be done," I told her, "but I know that the buffalo will run from me."

We all went up to the edge of the plain and looked out over the rocks. The buffalo were midway between us and the top of the ridge, and most of them were lying down. It was useless to try to approach them where

they were, so we sat down to wait for them to go back over the ridge. It was a long wait. They never moved until past the middle of the day, and then they got up and began feeding toward us, evidently intending to go down to the river to drink. As soon as I was sure that that was their intention, I said that I would wait until they came so close that I could see their eyes, and then try to call them. And just then Pitáki gave a little cry and grasped my arm, and pointed across the river.

I turned and saw some riders, fifteen of them, driving a band of loose horses along the trail that comes down the steep point between the two streams. They were a war party, of course, and there could be no doubt but they had raided the camp of our people.

"Oh, my son!" old Suyaki wailed, "maybe they have our horses."

"If they have n't, they will take everything in our lodge that they want, for it is right in their path," I answered.

Down the steep, rough trail they came at utmost speed, doing their best to outride the pursuers who were surely trying to overtake them. The herd of buffalo just back of us

saw them, thought that they were some of their own kind fleeing from danger, and made a rush to join them. There was but one thing for us to do, and that was to get out of their way.

"Come! Run with me down to the timber," I cried.

"But the war party. They will see us," Suyaki objected.

For answer I seized her arm and started down the slope, following my sister, who was making such long leaps that she seemed to be more a big, strange bird than a girl. Suyaki could not keep up with me. I grasped her by the waist with my right arm, she was small and light, and carried her. As I neared the bottom of the slope and the timber, I heard the thunder of the buffalo coming down over the edge of the plain, and then the stones and boulders that they disloged began rolling and bounding down ahead of them, and past us. There was no time to turn and watch, and dodge them; I kept going; a few more jumps and we should be safe behind one of the big cottonwoods growing at the foot of the slope. Pitáki was already behind one and looking out from one side of the

trunk at me and crying, "Hurry! Hurry!" And then, just as I reached the level ground a big, flying stone hit my left shoulder and I pitched forward, head first against a tree, and knew no more.

They told me afterward that I was dead for a long time, but I do not believe it was so very long. When I opened my eyes, Pitáki was sitting at my side with my rifle, full cocked, in her hands, and all was quiet. There was great pain in my shoulder; I felt as if fire was eating it. I saw Suyaki coming through the brush. She gave a little cry when she saw that my eyes were open, and ran and gave me a hug that made me yell with more pain: "My shoulder!" I cried. "It must be broken."

And so it was. Suyaki said that we would go to the lodge and she would bandage it and my arm. But first I had to know about the war party.

"They never came here," she said. "When they got down into the bottom they turned and went up Birch Creek as fast as they could go with their stealings. Of course, they saw us, and no doubt thought that we were the watchers for a big camp hidden here in the

grove. The buffalo? They came down just above us and dashed across the river, and got the wind of the war party and ran off down the valley."

We went to the lodge, and after I was bandaged I lay down; the pain was making me dizzy. Suyaki went out to the edge of the timber to watch for our people; some of them were sure to be coming on the trail of the raiders. It was late in the afternoon when they came down the point and saw her waving her robe, and came to us. There were about forty of them. They had ridden fast after finding the trail of the war party, Assiniboines, they thought, and their horses were already tired. When we told them how far behind the party they were, they decided that they could not overtake it: they would turn back home, they said, and outfit for a raid against the Assiniboines. I asked if they would help us move back, and they all offered to walk, and lend us their horses for packing and riding. A couple of them went out and killed a buffalo and brought in the meat, and they camped beside us for the night. I lay out before their evening fire for a long time, listening to the planning of the raid, and

watching them go through the Parted Hair dance. Of course, I had to tell about my attempts to call the buffalo, and how I had got hurt. A few of them laughed and said that I might as well give up all thought of doing that. My broken shoulder, they said, was a sign, a warning to me that I would never become a caller of buffalo.

"Laugh if you will," I answered, "the day is surely coming when you shall all eat meat that I have decoyed to the cliffs."

We packed up and got an early start the next morning, those who had lent us horses riding double with one and another of the party. I rode most of the way in one of Suyaki's travois, and by the time we got into the big camp I was in more pain than ever. Some of Suyaki's friends helped her set up the lodge. Pitáki and some of her playmates brought wood and water. And as soon as we had a fire going and the couches laid, my friends began to come in and visit with me, and say kind words. I had not known before that so many, young and old, were my friends. It was worth being hurt and sick to find it out.

Late in the evening came in my best friend

of all, No Runner. He said he was just from a smoke and council in Lone Walker's lodge, where Little Otter had promised to decoy one more herd of buffalo to the cliffs. I told him all that I had done, after he had left us at the mouth of Birch Creek; how, both times, I had failed to call the buffalo, and we tried to find the reason for it. We finally agreed that my actions had been right, but that the certain kind of cry that would start them toward me was what I lacked. What that call or cry was, we could not imagine.

"Here is what we will do," said my friend as he made ready to go home. "As soon as you feel able to walk around we will go to Little Otter and try to get him to tell us just what he does to make the buffalo rush so madly after him."

"I will go with you if I have to crawl to his lodge," I answered. And after he had gone I lay awake a long time, wondering if Little Otter would tell us his secret.

On the following morning the war party started for the Assiniboine camp to recover, if possible, the horses that they had taken from our people, and make them pay in scalps and plunder for what they had done to us.

Neither No Runner nor I had lost horses by their raid. I may as well say here that our party had a big fight with the Assiniboines at the edge of their camp, and lost three men. But they got away with more than a hundred horses, twice as many as had been taken from us, and brought home with them seven scalps. I have good reason to remember all this : one of the three who never returned to us was my good friend, Ancient Badger, the leader of the party. He died trying to save one of his wounded men from the enemy.

It was in the evening of this day that No Runner sent his woman to ask Little Otter if we could visit him. He answered that he would be glad to have us do so, and we went at once to his lodge. He told his woman to make a little feast for us, and while we were eating had me tell him about my attempts to call the buffalo, and how I had been hurt. He listened closely, often shook his head, as much as to say : "That was wrong. That was not the thing to do." But he made no spoken comment on my actions. I finished, and then No Runner said to him : —

"Little Otter, Bringer of Plenty, Chief, we have come to you to-night for a favor. It

is that you will explain to my young friend here, my almost-son, how you without fail decoy the buffalo to the cliffs.

"Let me say this to you, Bringer of Plenty: Our own caller is dead. He departed for the Sand Hills without giving to any of us the secret of his success. In your own tribe you are the only caller. Our brothers, the North Blackfleet, have at this time no caller. In all the three tribes of us, you are the only one who can bring meat to the traps; on you, more than upon us hunters, the widows and orphans depend for their winter store of food. What if something should happen to you? We should then be without any caller; a great misfortune. Myself, I think that we should always have two or three callers; yes, two or three in each tribe. But, anyhow, I wish that you would tell my almost-son here how to call. Chief, we will give you rich presents if you will only do this for us."

We got no answer from the old man for a long time. He sat looking into the fire and twirling a long pipestem with thumbs and forefingers until I almost cried out to him to speak and give us an answer one way or another. At last he looked up and said:—

"There is truth in what you say. There should be a caller other than myself, yes, even one or two for each tribe of us. In my young days there were always callers a-plenty. Why? Because then the men thought more of sacred things than they did of warring against our enemies. They prayed much, fasted much, and were close to the gods. And the gods rewarded them: they were given the power to call the buffalo, and to do many things far more wonderful than that.

"Now, as to your almost-son here, I would like to tell him just what I do to make the buffalo come to me, but if I should do so I would probably lose my own power. I may not speak of what has passed between my shadow and the medicine ancient ones it has met. I will do this, however: your almost-son has eyes; he has ears; the next time I go out to call a herd he shall go with me so close to it that he can see and hear all that I do. This on condition that he keeps to himself all that he learns."

"Oh, I promise that!" I cried.

"And you shall lose nothing by what you do for him," said No Runner.

The old man knocked the pipe bowl on

his couch rail. "It is burned out!" he told us, and we went out of the lodge and homeward across the flat, I so pleased and excited that my pains were forgotten.

Most anxiously, now, I listened to the daily reports of the watchers up on the edge of the plain. Day after day they told of herds of buffalo away north, and east, and west of the trap wings, and not even a lone old bull came near. Many days passed. Something was wrong. The medicine men got out their pipes and prayed that a herd might come grazing toward the wings. All the people prayed and made sacrifices to the gods, begging them to turn a herd our way. I think that my sister and old Suyaki and I prayed more, and made more sacrifices than any of the others; we stripped ourselves of all our finery.

At last, one morning, the watchers brought word that a herd was grazing toward the wings from the north. At midday they reported it still coming. At sundown the news they brought excited the whole camp: there was a big, white buffalo in the herd. None of the medicine men, few of the people slept that night. All kept praying and praying that we

might have that white robe for a sacrifice to the sun.

In no other lodge, I am sure, was such excitement as in ours. We prayed, we sang medicine songs, and every little while my sister would cry out: "Oh, brother! To-morrow! To-morrow you are to learn to call the buffalo!"

When the night was far gone, they made me lie down, saying that I must sleep in order to have strength for what I was to do. I did sleep for a short time, but long before daylight I had Suyaki cook the morning meal, and then impatiently waited to hear the camp crier's call for the people to go to the wings.

CHAPTER V

THERE was the chance, of course, that the herd would not be in a position whence they could be decoyed within the wings. All night I had worried about that, and now, as the first gray light of morning came, I worried all the more. I had Pitáki tie my robe around my neck, and belt it around my waist, hair side out, for I could not yet use my left arm and hand. When she had done this, I went outside and sat waiting for the light to grow, and for news from the plain. Early as it was, every lodge fire in the camp was going, and the

hum of voices, like the buzzing of a swarm of big bees, told that the people were all up and waiting, and hoping that the camp crier's news of the herd would call for them to hurry to the rock piles.

After a time I saw one of the watchers come down the cliff trail and run to Little Otter's lodge, and enter it. He soon came out, followed by the old man, and they hurried off across the bottom toward the cliffs. I wondered if I had been forgotten, and was about to follow them when I saw the caller's old wife leave the lodge and come running across the flat right toward me. All out of breath she came and gasped: "A message for you, youth. My man says that he dare not take you with him to-day because of the sacred white animal in the herd. That we must have. To take any chance of losing it would be foolish; and if you were to go with him you might do something to turn off the herd from the wings."

She did not wait for my answer, and hurried off toward Lone Walker's lodge, where he and the other chiefs awaited word from the caller. And I had no answer to make. I was so taken aback by her words, so ter-

ribly disappointed, that I could not have said anything had there been anything to say. My sister and Suyaki came hurrying out to me: "Oh, brother," cried the one, "we heard. We are so sorry for you."

"Never mind. Take courage!" Suyaki told me. "You can go with Little Otter another time. And, anyhow, you will go with us to-day and get behind a rock pile and watch the caller and perhaps learn something."

Just as she said that the camp crier began shouting to the people to hurry to their places along the wings, and I arose and with my two joined them. Suyaki had, indeed, spoken wisely; by going out to the far end of a wing and watching the caller, I might learn the secret of his success.

At the foot of the cliff trail my friend Rising Wolf, the white youth, joined us. He was surprised to see me there. "I heard that Little Otter was to take you out with him this morning," he said.

"Because of the sacred white one I am not to be with him," I answered. "He thinks that I might do something to prevent him decoying it to the trap."

And then I noticed that he carried his far-seeing instrument. "Go with me to the far end of a wing and let me use that medicine eye you have," I said; and he answered that he would do so.

Upon topping the cliff, we could see the herd, a very large one, well out on the plain beyond the wings and the coulée of water holes. It was widely scattered and was feeding northward, as though it had been to water some time before daylight. Some distance to the west of the wings, and walking steadily toward the coulée from the north, was another and even larger herd.

"Little Otter says that you are to take your usual places along the wings," the watchers kept telling the people as they arrived at the top of the cliff, and they passed slowly and steadily on. The caller was sitting off by himself at the edge of the cliff, staring at the buffalo and paying no attention to us. I knew that he was praying his medicine to give him success this day; to help him bring the herd with the sacred white one straight to the cliffs and the big trap under it.

Buffalo have a very different nature from that of the antelope, or the bighorn, and

other carriers of horns. They are not always on the watch for enemies, and fear none but man. I think that when a band of wolves surrounds a lone old bull and cuts his hamstrings and pulls him down, he falls, surprised that such small animals have got the best of his huge body. A thousand times they had passed close to him, and sat and watched him graze, and he had thought them incapable of harming him.

Nor have the buffalo very good eyes. They seem never to see the hunter, if he moves slowly, until he is close to them. But they do have good noses; they can scent man much farther than they can see him.

On this morning we were in plain sight of the two herds as we all went slowly out to our places along the wings. We four went along the line of the east wing, and lay down by its last rock pile. Then Rising Wolf took his far-seeing instrument from its case, pulled its joints out to the right length and looked through it at the herd. "I see the white one; it is grazing in about the middle of the herd; it is a big cow," he said, and handed the instrument to me.

I had but the one hand with which to

use it, and so I rested the big end upon the rock pile and held the little end to my eye. I had never before looked through one; and looking now could see nothing, and said so.

"But, of course, you can't; it is pointed toward the sky," said Rising Wolf, and laughed. "Sight along the top of it. Sight it at the buffalo as you would your rifle, and then look through it," he told me.

I did so, and lo! there was the white cow, and others, apparently so close to me that I had but to put out my hand to touch them. "Oh! Oh! What medicine, what sun power the white men have!" I cried. "I can see the eyes of the white cow, and it so far away."

Then Pitáki had to be shown how, and look through the instrument, and as I had done she cried out in wonder at its power. But old Suyaki would not even touch it. "I may be foolish, but I fear this medicine eye of the white men; it might make me blind," she told us.

As I again took the instrument, Little Otter passed us and went down into the coulée and up the farther slope. As I have before explained, this slope was broken by

little ridges of different height. When the caller neared the top of one of them, he slowed up and looked cautiously over it before going on to the next one. I kept the far-seeing instrument on him and watched his every movement. He went out farther from us than he did the time I had first watched him, because now the buffalo were farther out. At last he looked over a ridge from which, to me, the herd seemed still to be too far off to be called, and there he grasped his robe by the edge of one side and swung it up, fully extended, three or four times above the top of the ridge and in full sight of at least half of the buffalo of the herd.

Having waved the robe, I saw him step back quickly from the top of the ridge and make some kind of a noise three or four times. I could not hear him, but knew that he was doing so by his actions; by the straightening and sudden bending forward of his head and chest; and oh, how I tried to catch the sound of it.

Again he went higher and waved the robe; and backed down and called; and stepped up and waved again; and watching him, I had forgotten those he called. I now

turned the instrument upon them: they had all ceased grazing and turned round, most of them standing still and staring straight ahead, a few on the near edge of the herd beginning to advance, a few steps at a time. I looked at the caller: he was again waving the robe. I turned the instrument back at the herd. There was no need to use it: they were on the run and bunching up as they headed straight for the caller, and he was coming for the mouth of the wings at wonderful speed for so old a man, bounding along all bent over, and holding his robe tightly wrapped around him.

Up over the ridges he came, and down through the hollows between, sometimes in and sometimes out of sight of the buffalo. They steadily gained upon him; when he came into the mouth of the wings they were almost to the far side of the coulée. "He must soon turn to one of the wings and hide," I said to myself.

Just then Rising Wolf nudged me — we were lying flat side by side — and pointed to the west: the other herd of buffalo was on the run. Our herd, following the caller, had frightened it, and it was heading toward the

wings, coming to mix in with this one, and with it flee from whatever danger it was that threatened. I do not think that Little Otter, closely pursued and running his best, saw this herd, nor did the stampeders lying along the line of the other wing; they had eyes only for the herd now entering the mouth of the wings. On it came with a rush, on up the slope from the coulée. As its leaders passed in front of us, I saw among them the white buffalo, a cow; just now and then a glimpse of the head and hump of her. At the same time, I saw Little Otter swerve to the west and then drop on the line of that wing. The leaders of the herd lost him when he threw himself flat in the grass, but they ran on, forced ahead by those behind them. And then for the first time they noticed the big herd rushing down from the west, and as buffalo always will do, swerved in their course the sooner to meet it.

What followed happened more quickly than I can tell it. When the leaders of our herd turned, the people along the outer end of that west wing rose up and yelled and waved their robes, trying to turn them back. They did turn slightly, but the whole, closely

packed herd of seven or eight hundred had already swerved westward and could not quickly change its course. The foremost animals had to go on because of the pressure upon them of those behind, and now that they had to face their enemy, man, they did so with courage: they snorted and tossed their sharp-horned heads and charged straight at the line of shouting people. They, the stampeders, were now the stampeded. They turned and scattered out, running for their lives. Some did escape, but those who had been in front of the center of the herd went down.

We out there at the end of the other wing, can you imagine how terribly we felt? The close-packed herd and blinding dust hid them from our view, but we knew that some of our people were being trampled to death right in front of us. Worst of all, we could not help them; we dared not move for fear of more widely scattering the herd. Farther in toward the river the stampeders hidden along both wings sprang up and were hurrying out, but, of course, they could do no good; their shouting and robe-waving could save not one life.

As quickly as the buffalo had come in between the wings, they went out through the upper one and were joined by the other herd and went galloping away toward the river above the cliffs. Even before Rising Wolf and I could run halfway across the space between the wings, others were arriving where the buffalo had broken out, and the cry went up: "Little Otter! he is dead."

Others were named, but I only half-heard their names; I could think of but one thing, that Little Otter, last caller in all three tribes of us, had made his final call and gone to the Sand Hills. I went and stood by his body, stretched out there in the grass as though he but slept. His face was peaceful. The imprint of a huge, dusty hoof on the bosom of his yellow leather shirt told what had killed him. Long I stood there and mourned for his going. Not so much that I had hoped through him to learn to call the buffalo, but because I loved and respected him, man of kind and gentle ways, bringer of plenty for the people. As his woman came, wailing and calling his name, to take his body to camp and then give it burial, I turned away and went home

with my sister and Suyaki. There was mourning in many a lodge that night, and for a long time thereafter. Seven of our people had been killed and five crippled by the breaking-out rush of the buffalo.

That evening I went with No Runner to Lone Walker's lodge and sat for a time with the chiefs and others gathered there. There were long silences as the pipe went around; every one was thinking about the passing of Little Otter and the seven stampeders.

Said Lone Walker: "He should not have tried to call when another herd was so near; he knew the danger of it."

"What is done, is done," said another. "And now we have not in the three tribes of us a single caller."

"And why have n't we?" old Tail Feathers exclaimed. "In my young days we had a number of them in this tribe alone."

"I will tell you why it is: because nowadays every one is crazy about horses," answered an old medicine man. "Our warriors, young and old, think only about going to war and taking horses; they will not take the time to do anything else. Horses

we must have, of course, but why any man should want ten times as many as he can use, that is what I do not understand."

Spoke up a young warrior named Four Horns: "It is different now from what it was in the old days," he said. "Even if we have no caller, we shall not starve; I can chase and kill buffalo on horseback, and bring in the meat on horseback."

"Yes, so you can, but we cannot all do that. And I cannot believe that you are willing to hunt day after day to bring in meat for the widows and orphans," Lone Walker told him.

And then he added: "Let it be known that I will give ten horses to the first one of our tribe who will call a herd of buffalo for us."

Others said that they would also give horses to any one who would learn to call buffalo, who would first decoy a herd to the cliffs. And at that I cried out: "Be prepared to give them to me. I am going to be a caller — "

But there I stopped, all confused at what I had done: youths are not expected to say anything in a gathering of chiefs; it is their

place to keep quiet and listen. I need not have been afraid, however, for to my surprise they all cried out to me to hurry and learn to call. And No Runner said to them: "He will be the one to get your horses. I know that he will become a caller."

The talk turned again to the terrible accident of the morning, and Four Horns remarked: "If one could call buffalo on horseback, he, at least, would never be in danger."

That remark remained with me. I went home and repeated it to old Suyaki, and she said that she did n't believe buffalo could be decoyed that way. I kept thinking that possibly it could be done.

After such an ending of the buffalo calling, no one, of course, wanted to camp any longer there under the cliffs. We were later to go north to exchange beaver and other furs with the Red Coat traders for their powder and balls, and various goods, but now we started as soon as the cripples were well enough to ride comfortably in travois. I had no beaver skins or anything else of value, for what with going on raids, and trying to call buffalo, and getting my shoulder

broken, I had been unable to do any trapping; and now we needed many things, powder and ball, blankets, knives and files, which only furs could buy, and my stiff shoulder and arm would not permit my setting traps.

"Never mind," said my sister, when I complained about it, "I will go with you. Just show me how to do it and I will set the traps."

And that she did. On our way north, camping for days on every stream, she set the traps as I directed, often wading waist-deep in the water to do so, and she and old Suyaki took care of the catch, fleshing the skins and lacing them on willow hoops to dry. Upon arriving at the Red Coats' fort we had forty beaver, two otter, and a few mink skins. Myself, I bought powder and ball, a blanket, and a knife, with ten skins. All the rest I made my sister and Suyaki trade for those different things that women like, and they were happy with their store of blue and red cloth for dresses, needles, awls, thread, beads, and a big, shining brass kettle. I took the balls to Rising Wolf and he melted them, and with his mould cast

the lead into balls to fit my rifle. There were ninety-five of them, and he gave me five to make an even hundred. I felt rich.

We did not remain long at the fort of the Red Coats. Back south we went, and at Marias River winter struck us. We camped a long time there, and then, after a big chinook, went on south across the Missouri to the Judith River, where we remained until green grass began to sprout.

Winter was not the time for what I had to do, so I trapped and hunted, and in the evenings sat much with the chiefs and medicine men, listening to their talk. When not with them, I generally remained at home with my sister and our almost-mother; somehow, I did not care to visit around with my friends, and join in their dancing and games. What I was longing to do was heavy on my mind; I thought and thought about it; I prayed and made sacrifices; I tried to get a revealing dream, and got no help of any kind.

With the coming of green grass, the chiefs began to talk about breaking camp and going north to trade at the fort of the Red Coats. The North Blackfeet and the Kai'na,

the Gros Ventres, too, were to meet our tribe there some time in the next moon, and counsel with us about plans for the summer.

On the evening that the camp crier informed the people that the start for the north would be made the following morning, I made up my mind what to do. "Pitáki, Suyaki, listen!" I said to them as we sat around the fire. "To-morrow we part for a time. You will go north with the camp, and trade what skins we have, and I shall wander by myself for a time and try to learn to call the buffalo."

"No, brother, you shall not go alone," my sister cried; "we will go with you."

"Yes. Your trail is our trail," old Suyaki exclaimed.

"It is not," I answered. "Spring is here, and with it war parties of all our enemies are on the move. Alone, I can avoid them; with you and the lodge and the horses we should just be signaling them to come and kill us."

"My son, listen! This is the way it must be," Suyaki insisted. "The lodge, and all our things and the horses can go on; No

Runner and his woman will take care of them, and we shall go with you. Three can hide from the enemy as well as one can. Why, we can help you in every way. We will watch out for the enemy for you; we will cook your food; build the little shelters that you must have when the rains come, and keep you well supplied with moccasins."

"Oh, what fun it will be to wander over the country just by ourselves. Say yes, brother! Say yes!" Pitáki cried.

"Give me time to think," I answered. "Let me go talk with No Runner about it."

I went, and they followed close after me.

No Runner favored Suyaki's plan. "Yes. Let them go with you," he said. "Our women often go with us to war, then why not on this medicine quest? But my advice is that you do not leave us until after we cross the Missouri; then go you up the Teton, or Sun River, to the foot of the mountains: there war parties are not so many as they are in this country."

Came the question where and when we should find our people later on. No Runner

said that he would try to get the chiefs to decide when, and by what route, they would come back south from the fort of the Red Coats. He went to them about it that evening, and they said that they would think it over, and hold council to decide, when we reached the Missouri.

A few days later we struck the Missouri at The-Ledge-across-the-River, crossed on the good ford above it and made camp. Some summers before this time our people had found a strange, new trail running from the foot of the falls and rapids up to the still water at the mouth of the Sun River. Along it were here and there pieces of round logs that had been cut by axes, so we knew that white men had made it, but for what purpose we could not understand until Rising Wolf now told us what he had learned from his Red Coat company. They had been told by other Red Coats living on the shore of the Great Salt Water to the West, that a band of Long Knives out on discovery had come up the Missouri in boats, and across the mountains on horses, clear to their fort, and had gone back to the Long Knife country by the trail that they had made. They

had made a trail and dragged their boats along it around the Missouri falls.[1]

Rising Wolf also said that his Red Coat people were angry because the Long Knives had discovered this rich country: they feared that, now that they knew how rich it was in beaver and other fur, they would come back into it and build forts and trade with us prairie people.

Our chiefs said that they hoped the Long Knives would come, and come soon; that it would be a good thing for us to be able to buy guns and other trade goods in this south part of our country.

What fools we were. Why could n't we have seen, why did not our medicine warn us, that the coming of these first white men, Red Coats and Long Knives both, meant the beginning of the end for our game and fur, and for us!

Well, just as we were going into camp there at the mouth of Sun River, six men on foot were seen approaching us. We thought that they were a war party of North Blackfeet, or Kai'na, but they proved to be messengers to us from the Flat Head chiefs, ask-

[1] The Lewis and Clark Expedition.

ing that their people be allowed to come out on the plains and camp, and trade dried camas and bitter root for our buffalo leather, and kill a few of our buffalo.

The chiefs held council that night, and then gave them the answer that they wanted. It was that the Flat Heads were to bring plenty of the roots, and meet the Pikuni right there at the mouth of Sun River fifty nights from that time.

So also was set the time and the place for us to rejoin our people. It was not now necessary for No Runner and his woman to take our lodge and property away north and back. We turned over to them our furs to trade for us, and our horses, and cached everything that we did not need, lodge and all, right there in the thick brush by the river. The things that we did take were: each of us a good warm robe; some buffalo leather for moccasins; awls, needles, and sinew thread; flint and steel; my powder and balls, my rifle and bows and arrows, and the yellow metal kettle. Suyaki said that she would take no chances on our cache being raised and losing that. As our people moved out across the flat on the trail to the north,

we struck off up the valley. Some said to us as we parted: "You are making a big mistake; you are going to your death up there."

But No Runner's last words were: "Take courage! I know that you will do that which you are setting out to do."

The day was warm. We traveled slowly, often resting in the shade of the big cottonwood groves bordering the river. Toward evening we built a small fire in thick brush, and cooked and ate some meat, then went on a little way farther and lay down for the night. Nothing happened, and the next morning we were on our way at sunrise.

From where it leaves the mountains, clear to its end in the Missouri, Sun River has the finest valley of all in our country. Its bottoms are wide and long, and covered with the grasses that the buffalo and antelope like best; and nowhere else except on the Missouri are there such fine, big groves of cottonwood. On our way up the valley our course was just within the edge of these groves; we could always look out upon the bottoms, and the slopes of the plains on our side, north of the river. Game was very plentiful; herd after herd of antelope and

buffalo in the open bottoms, and in the timber so many deer and elk that some of them were always springing up ahead of us. We did not like that, because a band of them would often run out of the timber and circle back into it in our rear, a sure sign to any roving war party that what they sought was traveling there.

So it was that we often went out to the very edge of the timber and looked up and down the bottom, and out at the hills, to see if any of the frightened game had drawn the attention of some enemy to our course; but always the game farther out was grazing and resting quietly, and we would go on with the feeling that all was well.

We were out of meat, and I had to kill some during the day. I waited until the sun was getting low, and then killed a deer with bow and arrow. We took of the carcass only what we could easily carry: the tongue, the tripe, and the ribs, and going on to the upper end of the grove, built a fire and had our evening meal. When it was over, I went out to the edge of the timber for a last daylight look at the country, while the others sat by the fire, mending their moccasins. I

stood a long time on watch, and was thinking of going back when I saw a band of elk break out of the timber near where I had killed the deer. They ran down the bottom and back into the timber, and then, where they had come out of it, I saw something moving in the high grass. It was quite dusk now and I could not see it well, but I thought that the object had the shape of a person.

CHAPTER VI

BACK to the fire I went as fast as I could run: "Sister! Suyaki! Come away from here at once," I said. "Something moving at the edge of the grove looked to me very much like a man!"

They asked no questions, said not a word as they sprang up and began stuffing their sewing things into the little sacks in which they carried them. They grabbed up their packs, I took my weapons, and my packs of ammunition and meat, and we went up to the very point of the grove. Beyond was a long strip of open grassland running to the next grove; I did not like to cross it. On the opposite side of the river was another grove. "Be the water deep, or shallow, we

must go over there," I said, and led the way into the stream. It was not deep, only a little above our knees, and we were soon over in the shelter of the wood. There I had to wait until the others put on the moccasins which they had been repairing.

"Tell us about it; what you saw over there?" Suyaki asked.

"Some elk ran out from the grove about where I killed the deer, and then where they came out something moved in the shadow of the trees; it looked like a person; it went back into the timber," I told them.

"But it may have been a bear," said Suyaki.

"Yes, perhaps it was."

"Well, be it bear or person, we are not going far from here," she said. "I have to go back to that fireplace: I left my kettle there."

Sure enough, in our haste to get away we had overlooked the brass kettle. It was something that we could not well do without. I thought for a little time, and said: "If that was an enemy, I saw over there, he was on his way up the valley, and no doubt there were others with him. Perhaps they

were on our trail. Anyhow, we will take no chances; we will go a ways down the valley on this side of the river, and remain there until to-morrow night. By that time the danger will have passed and we will recover the kettle and go on."

That we did, hiding in thick brush close at the river's edge. When the evening of the next day came, we recrossed the river and sneaked up through the big grove to our fireplace, and as we came to it, Suyaki whispered: "My beautiful kettle is gone."

But I was not looking for the kettle; I knew that it was gone before even Suyaki spoke, for a little puff of wind had blown across the fireplace and carried off the top ashes and exposed a few red coals; fire had been burning there but a short time back. And there, beside the fireplace, lay broken deer-leg bones that had been roasted for the marrow; they were all in a little pile, and with them was the little brush-ended stick with which the marrow had been extracted.

"Only one man has been here," I said.

"How do you know that?" Pitáki asked.

I pointed to the bones and explained: "One person roasted those and ate the mar-

row; had there been two or more persons, each of them would have had his share of the bones, and we should have found them scattered all around the fireplace."

"I don't care how many there are of them, they have my shining kettle," said old Suyaki, almost crying.

"Brother, I am so hungry. Can't we roast some meat and eat it?" Pitáki asked.

I thought about it. We were very hungry; we had eaten nothing since leaving this place the night before. Perhaps this person who had used our fireplace was still near by; anyhow, we must eat. "Build a fire and cook plenty of meat," I said, "and while you are cooking it I will stand back from the light and keep watch."

I went away back in the timber and stood with rifle cocked and ready. Night had come and the blaze of the fire lighted up the trees and the ground around for some little distance, and in between the trees were black shadows, black spaces into which I could not see; I felt uneasy; I watched for something to come out from those black places; for the soft steps of moccasined feet; for the snapping of a dry twig: as soon as I sighted

anything I should shoot at it, and rush in and use my rifle as a club.

I stood there a long time, watching and listening. Came to me the odor of roasting meat and I became more and more hungry. I saw my sister turn some ribs fresh side to the fire and knew that they were half-cooked; I would soon have some of them. And then I gave a start: from out of the blackness beyond the fire I saw a rabbit come leaping across the lighted space and then dodge off into the shadows. What had frightened it — was the enemy sneaking upon us?

I watched that far side more closely; listened, open-mouthed, more intently. What had frightened the rabbit? Maybe a coyote; a fox? No, I should have heard the patter of their feet as they trotted by. "A man, an enemy, is across there in the blackness," I said to myself.

And just then Suyaki called out to me: "My son, come and eat."

I did not answer. I was angry that she had called so loudly.

Again she cried, and much louder than before: "Come and eat, my son!"

And as she said it I heard, across in the

darkness, a strange voice wail: "Oh, my own people! Do not shoot. I come! I come!"

And with that, into the light came a little old woman wearing a quill-embroidered leather wrap, and carrying a kettle, our brass kettle. I reached the fire as soon as she did, knew that I had never seen her before, and wondered if she were a real person; if this were not some sort of a trap for us. But no. None but members of our tribe could speak our language as she spoke it. She had dropped the kettle and was kneeling beside Suyaki and embracing her, and crying: "Oh, it is good to be with you, with my own people after all these winters. Oh, speak. Say something. Let me hear my own kind of talk again."

Suyaki had tried to draw away from her; was still trying to get free from her, when suddenly she returned the embrace and cried: "I know you even if you have grown old. I know you by that scar at the corner of your mouth: you are Ahsanaki (Painted Woman). In the long ago, when we were one summer at peace with the Crows, you married one of them."

"Yes! Yes! I did! And you, you are—oh, so many winters have passed, and we are old. I cannot tell who you are," she said.

"Suyaki."

"You are Suyaki! Why, we were friends. We used to play together. Oh, Suyaki. Pity me. I am very poor," the strange old woman cried.

"All is well," our almost-mother told her. "Do not worry; we will eat, and then you shall tell us how it is that after all these winters we meet here."

Sister gave me my share of the roast ribs and we began to eat, but the two old women were so excited over their strange meeting that they sat with meat in hand and forgot that they had it.

"Tell us; tell us now how it is that you are here, and alone," Suyaki demanded.

"Because I felt that I must rejoin my people and die among them," the other answered. "My man was good to me; I loved him; he died a moon ago. I had one son, oh, a good, brave young man. He went first, last summer it was; he was swimming in the Elk River with some friends, and right in the midst of them he gave a cry and went down,

and they never saw him again. The Under-Water People had taken him for their own. Then, when my man died, I could stand it no longer. What were the other Crows to me? I hated them; they were always speaking ill of the Pikuni, calling them cowards; nothing people. Once I was passing a lodge where the chiefs were feasting and smoking, and I heard one say: 'Ha! The Pikuni? They are nothing! Just coward dogs!'

"Well, that made me so mad that I thrust aside the door curtain and looked in and said: 'If the Pikuni are that, why don't you take back the Missouri River country from which they have driven you? It is yours, is it not? Your fathers owned it; well, why not take it away from the cowardly Pikuni?'

"And with that I dropped the curtain and went on, and so long as I was within hearing of that lodge I heard not one word spoken. I had shamed them.

"My man had many relatives. When he died they took all his horses, all his property, everything except one old horse that they said I could use. One night I took that horse and started north to find my own peo-

ple. Soon after crossing the Elk River I lost him; he was hobbled for the night, and when I awoke in the morning he was gone; he must have broken his hobbles and started straight back to his band. Well, I kept on, using up my dried meat, and then catching ground squirrels and roasting them."

"Oh, were you not afraid, traveling all alone?" my sister asked.

"Not afraid, but oh, so anxious: I wanted to live to see my people. And had it not been for you here, I should never have seen them. In crossing the Missouri, back at the mouth of this river, my raft came apart in the middle of the stream and my little pack in which I carried fire drill and bow, and my knife, and the cord with which I snared ground squirrels, was swept away. I hung onto one log and reached shore just as I thought that I must surely be carried down over the falls."

"How long ago was that?" I asked.

"Five days."

"And we crossed there four days ago. Had you been a day later you would have found us all at the mouth of this river," Suyaki told her.

"And the others, where are they? And you, why off here by yourselves?"

"The tribe has gone north to trade, and will be back at the mouth of this river in forty-six days," I said, and then asked her to go on with her story.

"Well, without fire instruments, with no snaring cord, I began to starve. I just wandered from bottom to bottom, digging for roots and finding few. Then, one day when I was resting, I heard voices near by. I crawled through the brush and saw you all skinning a deer. I could not know who you were; I could not hear your voices; I thought you were enemies, other-side-of-the-mountains people. After you had gone on I took sharp stones and cut off a leg of the deer, and ate a little of the meat raw, and then I followed your trail: I had to know who you were. I carried the leg of deer with me. The eyes of the old are poor. I soon lost your trail. Back and forth in the timber I went, and out on the bottom, and could not find it—"

"When you came into the open I saw you, and thought that you were some enemy. We fled from you," I interrupted.

"Ah! That was it; that was why I found your camp-fire deserted," she exclaimed. "When I came to it, after first looking carefully around and waiting until it was nearly out, the first thing I saw was your yellow metal kettle. Oh, what a find was that. A fire; hot boiled meat and soup! I snatched up that kettle and ran and got water in it, and built up the fire and started the meat boiling, and while waiting for that I roasted the leg bones and ate the marrow in them: 'Let the enemy come if they must,' I kept saying to myself; 'I shall, anyhow, have one good, hot meal before I die.'

"But after eating of the boiled meat and the soup, I did not feel so brave; I said to myself: 'Here is food enough to last a long time; why take chances by sitting here? With food to keep up your strength, you can find your people.'

"So I covered the fire with ashes and earth, to keep the coal alive, and went away from it and lay down; and early this morning I went to the deer carcass and hacked all the meat off it with sharp stones, and brought it close out there and hung it on tree limbs to dry. Not long ago I came out here and

uncovered the coals and built up a fire and had more hot meat and soup, and then went back to turn over the drying meat. After that I fell asleep, and upon awakening was coming here to cover the coals for the night when I saw the blaze of the fire, and you around it. I crept closer; I heard you, Suyaki, cry out to some one to come and eat, and oh, how glad I was. Oh, my old friend; oh, children, how glad I am to be with you this night."

Now, that was a brave old woman. Clear from the Elk River she had come alone, on foot, along the edge of the mountains, and had been unafraid of war parties, bears, deep, swift waters and all the other dangers of the long trail. I doubt not that she would have found our people, even if she had not found us that night, for the meat of the deer I had killed would have carried her on north to them. Surely, her medicine was strong; the gods were with her; I thought that she could, perhaps, help me:

"Ahsanaki," I said, "you asked why we are here by ourselves. I will tell you: it is that I want to learn to call the buffalo. Can you help me?"

She thought some time before she answered: "I don't know that I can. My man was a caller, a good one; many and many a herd he brought to the traps on the Bighorn and Tongue Rivers. I used to get out at the wings and see him wave his robe, and turn and run, the buffalo following him."

"But what else did he do?" I asked. "Did he not call out to them — make some kind of a cry that started them after him?"

"I never heard him. He never said that he did," she replied. And I knew that, like all the callers, he had kept the secret of his power to himself.

"What most hurt the Crows in being driven from this country," said Ahsanaki, "was the loss of the buffalo trap just above here. I have often heard the old men mourn about it. They said that it was the best trap in the whole country because of the many little ridges back from the cliff."

"Why, I have never even heard of it. Suyaki, tell me why we have never called the buffalo there?" I asked.

"It is not strange that you never heard of it; we quit going there long before you were

born," she answered. "It is a place of bad medicine; something happened there, I remember it well. The second summer after I got my man we came here to trap buffalo. White Bear was the best caller we had. There was another one, a younger man, named Sees Black.

"Well, after we had been in camp a few days, the watchers reported five big herds of buffalo away out beyond the wings, and White Bear began his four nights' and four days' fast. When it was over, he sent his woman to call the chief to his lodge: 'I have had a dream warning; I shall not call buffalo for you here,' he told him.

"'How is that?' the chief asked.

"'I have had two dreams, both bad,' White Bear answered. 'In the first one my secret helper told me that something was wrong up there back of the cliff. In the second one I saw people gathered back of the cliff, the women crying for some one dead. Beyond them a big herd of buffalo was running, and near the crowd stood a strange man, laughing. I looked at him more closely and discovered that he was a Crow; and while I was staring at him he laughed harder than

ever, and as quick as I spat my hands together he disappeared. So, chief, there is the warning; the Crows' ghosts are here at this trap; they made to do us harm; I shall not try to call the buffalo to it.'

"The chief said nothing to White Bear, but went to his lodge and told that the caller had had a bad dream and would not run. The news spread, and when Sees Black heard it he went to the chief and told him to send the stampeders to the wings: 'if White Bear is afraid, I am not. I shall call the buffalo for you,' he said, and went straight up on the cliff. The watchers had reported a herd near the mouth of the wings.

"The people went to the wings, and when all were cached Sees Black walked out and called the herd. He went very far out, and before he could return even to the mouth of the wings, a big cow running far in the lead knocked him down, and those behind finished him with their sharp hoofs as they ran. Then we knew that White Bear's dream had been a true warning; that the place was bad medicine. We moved away from there and never since have the Pikuni used the trap."

"To-morrow I shall see that place," I

said, and both of the old women stared at me as though they thought me crazy, and begged me to keep away from it. I made no promise, and told them that it was time for us to move back from the fire and sleep. My sister was the only one who slept much that night; the two women talked on and on about old times, and I kept thinking about the buffalo trap above us. If I could only learn the caller's secret, what a fine thing it would be to trap a herd there for the Pikuni and the Flatheads when they should meet and camp together later on. Before I slept, it came to me that I had forgotten to mark out the day just passed; I sat up and cut another crease in the ramrod of my rifle.

We ate our morning meal before sun-up, and when it was finished I said: "Now, two almost-mothers mine, let us counsel together. What had we best do? What shall I do? What can I do in order to get the knowledge that I seek?"

"Fast, and pray, and dream," Suyaki quickly answered.

"Go watch the buffalo; keep close to them; be a buffalo yourself in mind. Thus

you may find the way to decoy them," Ahsanaki told me.

Said my sister: "Brother, do both things, and we will keep watch on the country. But first kill plenty of meat for us."

"We should not camp in this valley; it is a regular trail for war parties of the plains' tribes on their way to raid the across-the-mountains tribes," said Suyaki.

That was true. I decided that we should move out of it. But first I had to see that trap of the ghosts; the one that the Crows said was the best trap in all the land. "We will go on up to the cliffs and stop one night, and then move somewhere out of the valley," I said, and we started, the old women none too willingly.

We reached the place long before the middle of the day. It is where the valley suddenly narrows, and on either side the slopes give way to cliffs, not so high as those of the Two Medicine cliffs, but more abrupt. Above this narrow place, the valley widens out again.[1]

The trap itself was at the foot of the cliffs

[1] The location is a few miles above Fort Shaw, from which it may be plainly seen.

on the north side of the river, and was the largest I had ever seen. Many winters had passed since it had been used, but some of the big logs that formed the fence were still unrotted, especially those that were above the ground. I thought that the place would hold as many as ten hundred live buffalo, to say nothing of the hundreds that would pile up dead from their fall from the cliff. I climbed over the fence and walked along the foot of the rock wall, stepping not upon earth and rock, but upon a solid layer of bones and horns and hoofs I know not how thick. The bones were mostly well rotted and broke under my feet, but the horn tips and hoof tips were hard, though turned to a light brown color. These last after all other parts of an animal have disappeared.

The women stood at the fence watching me. I went back to them and told them that I was going up on top, and that they should go into the grove up river a little ways from the cliff, and wait there for me. The trail of the long-ago hunters still was plain enough from the bottom to the rim of the plain where the down-river end of the cliff gave out. I followed it, thinking what

a multitude of people had passed up and down it, and soon came out on top, and walked over to where the first wing started out from the cliff. The distance to the beginning of the other wing was much greater than that separating the wings of the Two Medicine trap. Looking out plainsward, I could see only here and there the rock piles of the wings, for the plain was very rough; just ridge after ridge, not high, but small and close together. I started out to see just where was the mouth of the wings and walked and walked, twice the length of the Two Medicine trap wings, to where the rock piles ended, far, far apart, at the slope of a wide, shallow coulée of water holes and strips of willow brush. Truly, this was an immense trap; a whole tribe of people would be none too many to scatter along its wings; there would be none left to idle in the lodges when a herd was to be decoyed here.

Out beyond the coulée, and up and down it, were several herds of buffalo; by the signs in the grass a herd had that morning passed where I stood. What a chance there had been to decoy them to the cliff. Oh, how I wanted to be able to do it. Right

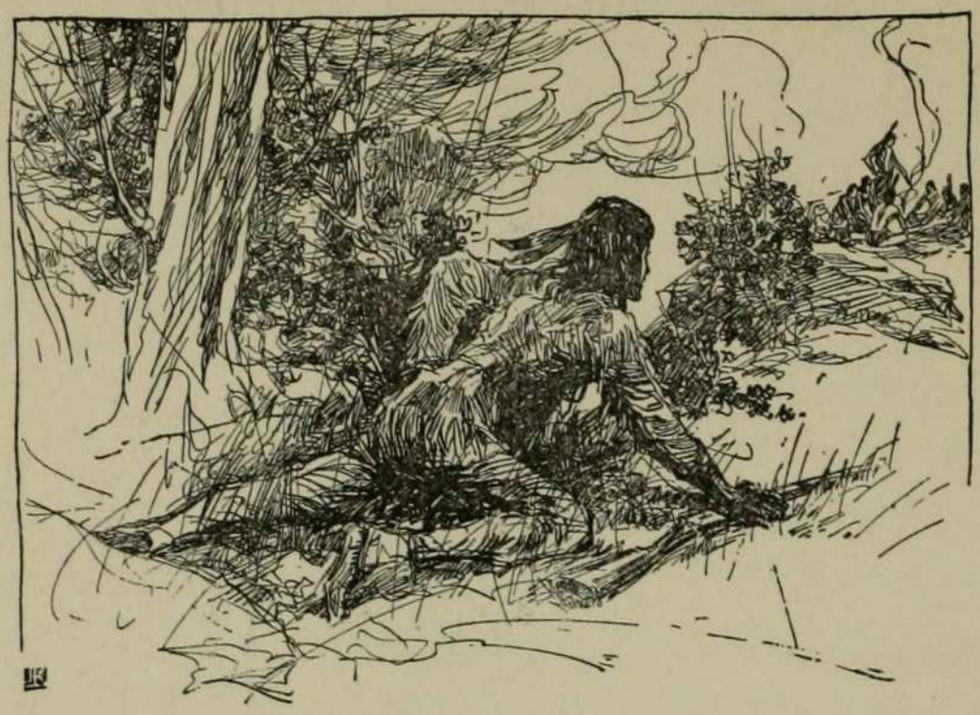
there I sat down and prayed for the power; prayed I know not how long to my medicine; to the sun; to Old Man, and all the ancient ones to give me help; to in some way give me the caller's secret, that I might decoy a herd for my people into this very trap.

It was long past midday when I arose and started back toward the cliff. I crossed the mouth of the wings, and then followed in the upper one, noticing that its rock piles were small and quite far apart. One of my moccasin strings became loose and I sat down on one of the piles and fastened it, and then noticed upon the ground, just in front of my feet, one of those rare, medicine buffalo rocks (eniskim) that our people prize so highly. Who had owned it? I wondered. And why had it been left there? Such things were never thrown away. I picked it up and put it in my ball pouch along with the flint arrow points, and started on, much pleased with my find. It was great medicine; in the long ago, when our fathers had been about to die from starvation, a girl had found one of its kind, and through its power the buffalo had been made to return from

wherever was the far country into which they had drifted, and the people had been saved. How happened it that my moccasin string loosened just there? I felt that the gods had caused it; that they had taken that way to guide me to the medicine rock; to give me a sign that they were with me. I was very happy as I went on toward the cliff.

I passed through the line of the rock piles of the wing, heading for the upper end of the cliff, and was almost to it when I heard the thud and rush of many feet upon the slope in which the rock wall terminated. I threw myself flat down in the grass and had no more than done so when a big band of antelope came up over the rim of the slope and straight toward me. I had to sit up and wave my hands at them, else they would surely have run right over me and trampled me severely with their sharp hoofs; as it was they passed so close on either side of me that I could have poked out my rifle against their sides. They came and were gone. I did not believe that my women had frightened them. On hands and knees I crept to the edge of the cliff and looked down into the valley, and what I saw there made me catch

my breath : a war party of eight riders was driving a band of ten horses into the very grove where I had told the women to go and wait for me.



CHAPTER VII

THERE is a chance that the women saw them — heard them coming and got out of their way," I said to myself. I relied upon Suyaki's ever-open ears and her sharp eyes and her caution; she was ever on the lookout for danger. But, oh, how anxious I was; how I wished that my eyes had the medicine to look down through the branches and green leaves of that grove and see what was happening there. I was too far away to hear if the women screamed to me for help. What if the war party had seized them? At the thought of my sister being carried away into the enemy's camp, I turned sick. I had to go down there and see what

had happened, and in some way try to rescue my loved ones if they were captives. I could not think of any way successfully to fight eight men; I prayed to the gods to show me what to do in this time of trouble; and as I prayed I drew back from the edge of the cliff and got up and ran east to the trail I had ascended. I ran down it, for its whole length was around the point below the grove; and when I arrived at the bottom I crept across the flat through the sagebrush and tall clumps of giant grass. Just as I reached the river's edge, I saw one of the war party ascending the trail I had followed down, and knew that he was going to watch the country from the top of the cliff. That meant the party intended to take a long rest in the grove. But what if the watcher should see my footsteps in the trail? I remembered places where the rains had washed sand and soft earth upon it. Perhaps I had unintentionally stepped over them; I could not tell. How I did keep my eyes on that watcher, expecting him suddenly to turn and run for the grove with news of fresh moccasin tracks in that trail. But no! he went up to the end of it without stopping, and on along the cliff, and sat down upon

its edge. And then I slowly drew down in the shelter of the cutbank, and stole along through the shallow water to the edge of the grove and entered the thick willows.

As silently as a snake, I wriggled along through those clumps of brush, keeping a good watch ahead, and presently I saw in the space between the two growths of the willows the slight movement of something brown. I stared and stared at it, but it was now motionless; I moved forward half the length of my body and raised up and looked again, and saw a big embroidered sun of red and yellow, white and black porcupine quills, and knew that the brown thing was Ahsanaki's leather wrap. She sat with her back to me, the wrap close around her and concealing her head. What if she should turn, and cry out at sudden sight of me? I went a little farther into an open space and stood up and snapped a twig; she hastily looked back over her shoulder and saw me plainly and was not alarmed; she made me the sign for caution and then half-turned her head and said something, so low that I could not hear her, but there was movement on her left and my sister and Suyaki sat up and looked at me through

the brush. Was I glad to see them? A weight as heavy as a buffalo seemed to suddenly roll off from me.

I crept up to them, close to Suyaki's side, and whispered: "Where are they?"

"Not far above here and close to the river," she answered. "We were up there and heard them coming, and ran down as far as we dared, and then hid in the willows. We saw them get off their horses and hobble some of them, and then when they began to gather wood for a fire we crawled back and back to this place. Some of them had meat; I saw it; they are going to cook and eat."

"Who are they?" I next asked.

"I cannot tell you. I was so frightened that I did not look closely at them."

"Brother, maybe they are our own people. Don't you remember that a war party headed by Yellow Fish left us two nights before we reached the Missouri?" my sister asked.

"We have to know if they are enemies or friends," I told them. "If enemies, we are in great danger, for at any time they may wander around and discover us. Now, you all remain quiet here while I sneak on and have a look at them."

They made no objection to that; they were very brave, my sister and those two old women. I crawled on more slowly than ever, disturbing not a single weed or leafed branch. The strip of willows was very narrow, just a slender belt between the sandy shore of the river and the big cottonwood trees of the grove. I had not gone far when I saw that I was nearing the end of the strip; a little more crawling and I could go no farther. I raised up a little and looked ahead, and saw the party sitting around a fire and eating. One with his back to me wore a single eagle tail feather straight up at the back of his head: they were enemies; Crow or Assiniboines, it mattered not which, they were enemies.

I began to consider what I had best do, and concluded to stay right where I was, so that if any of them wandered that way I could jump up and shoot, and make a run for the river and the grove on the other side and above, and so draw them away from where the women lay cached.

The men had built their fire in a grassy opening in the grove, and I could see them all; I counted them, seven. The one up on

the cliff made eight, the number I had seen ride into the grove. Off to my right, grazing hungrily and moving slowly down through the timber, were the horses that they had taken from some other-side-of-the-mountains tribe. I counted them, eighteen. The four in the rear were hobbled. They were all, excepting one small brown horse, of good size and all very fat. Three or four of them, I noticed, trailed ropes. I did not like the way they were grazing, down along the thicket in which we lay, for when the enemy came to round them up they would more than likely discover us. I made up my mind to shoot the first man to start toward me, and then run.

The party soon finished eating, and then gathered closer together for a smoke. One pipe only went the rounds, and then all lay down; and by that I knew they were very tired, and would not move, or even change the watcher on the cliff, until near sunset. I watched them a long time; close wrapped in their robes they lay like so many dead men, fast asleep. It came to me that the women would be getting anxious about my long absence from them; that

they might come to learn what had become of me, and make trouble. I went back, as quietly as I could, and worrying terribly for their safety. The horses were grazing very near us, and should I start the women off to hide elsewhere, the watcher on the cliff would discover them as soon as they stepped out from the shelter of the grove.

Then another thought came to me, and at the same time my sister crept over and whispered: "Why not drive off their horses? That will keep them from finding us here."

That was a part of my thought: "Listen carefully, all of you," I said. "There is but one way for me to keep you from being discovered by the enemy when they come to round up those horses: I am going to round them up myself and drive them far away. When I start I shall arouse the enemy; they will follow me, and you will be safe enough. As soon as they are gone, you must cross the river and go almost to the top of the Square Butte, just as far up on this side as you can climb, and wait there for me. Be sure to wait: I may be gone two or three days. You have enough deer meat to last you much longer than that."

"But if you don't come — no, I shall not ask that; I know that you will come to us," said Suyaki.

"Of course I shall; do not doubt it," I answered. "And now I go. See how easy it will be for me: some of the horses drag ropes."

I arose, stuck my rifle in my belt, drew my knife and sneaked out to one of the hobbled horses and severed the rawhide thongs. As I straightened up, I was surprised, and angry, too, to see my sister cutting the hobbles of another horse on my right. I motioned her to go back, saw her turn to do so, and went on and freed the two other hobbled animals. Then I grasped the end of the nearest of the ropes and coiled it as I approached the horse that trailed it. He made no effort to shy away from me, and I had no trouble in bridling him with two half-hitches of the rope around his jaw, and mounting him.

All the time I had been watching in the direction where the enemy lay sleeping. I kept looking that way as I began to round up the horses and drive them out of the grove; and then, turning to head the horses

on my right into the bunch, you can imagine my surprise when I saw that my sister had caught one of the rope-draggers, and mounted him, and was turning in the farthest of the animals!

I rode down beside her: "Get off that horse! Hurry! Go back to Suyaki!" I called to her, and she just gave me the sign, "No."

"You must! Get down and run back," I commanded, and again she made the sign, "No."

"Then I must put you off the horse," I said, and was reaching out to do so when she answered: "If you do I shall scream. Let me alone. You need my help."

I do not know what I should have done with her if one of the sleepers had not just then roused up and shouted something at his companions. We were discovered; I could see the shouter running toward us, and tugging at his bow case.

"There! You see! Round up your part of the band; I 'll take care of these," Pitáki cried; and I wheeled my horse away from her. There was nothing else to do. She was right: I did need her help.

The horses were hard to start because of

their hungry greed for the young pea-vines growing so thickly there in the shade of the grove. We dashed at this one and that one, flailing them with the ends of the bridle ropes and shouting at them, and nearer and nearer to us came the war party. One of the horses, a big, fat gray, just would not move on more than a few steps at a time. I could not chance even one falling into the hands of those men, now coming so close, so I drew my rifle from my belt and shot it. Down it went. The loud boom of the weapon startled the others; we shouted and lashed and poked at them with rope and rifle and they broke into a run just as arrows began to whiz about us. An arrow struck and stuck in a ham of one of the horses; he gave a squeal of pain and charged on past the others with powerful leaps, and they took fright from him and ran even faster. Straight out through the grove we drove them, out on the open bottom and turned them down it: "Sister, we are safe, our two old women back there, and you and I. But for you I could never have rounded up these horses and got away with them," I cried.

"Ha! I told you that you needed me, but

you would not listen, not until you had to," she laughed; and, ah, how proud of her I felt. Bravery? Girl though she was, she had it as much as any warrior of our tribe.

We looked back. The war party had come out of the timber and was still running after us, as men will run even though they know that the chase is hopeless. Their watcher was coming, leaping down the trail to join them. "There is no more need for haste, but we must not go too slow, we must not let them learn that we are trying to draw them on," I told Pitáki.

I hoped that the party would not go back into the grove. They did not. When the watcher joined them, they all stood and talked for a short time, and then took up our trail at a steady walk. Without doubt, it was their intention to follow us, even to the perhaps far-off camp for which they believed we were heading. "Sister, they are starting on a trail of which they will never see the end," I said. I had already made up my mind as to just what we were to do, and that was to leave them a trail so dry that they could not follow it. I explained just where we should go; that we, and the horses

too, would suffer from thirst, and the answer I got was that if I could stand it, she could.

We went on down the open bottom of the valley, in plain sight of the following enemy, for some distance, and then drove the horses into the river: "Now, drink and drink plenty," I told Pitáki, "for this is the last water you will see until to-morrow night."

We drank and drank until we could not hold another swallow. Then I made Pitáki take my leather wrap for a saddle blanket, and we started the herd straight out east, across the bottom and up the slope of the valley. As I had hoped they would do, the war party turned out toward the plain when they saw us heading for it, in order to shorten trail. They had not drank; so much more quickly, then, would they begin to suffer from want of water.

The sun was setting as we rode out on the plain; then came the night and we saw no more of the enemy. But there was a big, bright moon, giving light enough for them to follow our trail, and we were glad of that; they would be encouraged to keep on.

All that night we traveled down the high, dry plain between the Missouri and the Teton, keeping the band of horses 'loping and trotting, never allowing them to slow up and walk. The wounded horse became so lame early in the night that I had to shoot him. When daylight came, we stopped and rested and allowed the horses to graze, a long way from either stream. Pitáki slept, I kept watch. There were no buffalo, no antelope in sight; they were all closer in to water, and there they would stay until the winter snows would permit them to come out to this, a winter range; when they could get snow they did not care much for water.

The sun was not high when I wakened Pitáki and told her that we must go on. I knew that she was tired and sleepy, and already in need of water, but she made no complaint, and ran and caught her horse and bridled him, and was mounted as soon as I.

"Pitáki," I said, "right here, in the late afternoon, will come that war party, almost choking from want of water and plenty tired, and they will come here only to find the trail turning off into still more dry coun-

try. They will have to leave it and strike out for the nearest water, and that is the Teton, more than a half-day's walk. Will they come back and pick up the trail? I think not. But if they do, they must suffer again. Come! Let's go."

For a long time we rode straight toward the Missouri, and then turned and headed for the lower part of Sun River, avoiding always the high places on the plain and keeping a good watch all around. As the sun rose higher and higher, the thirsty horses became more and more thirsty and more difficult to drive. And we, in the afternoon our tongues began to swell; we could barely speak; we suffered terribly; Pitáki surely more than I, but still she made no complaint and I wondered at her strength and courage. I was very proud of her.

It was evening when we neared the river, and the horses, smelling the water, made a rush and splashed into it and drank and drank until they could hold no more; and flat down on the edge of the sandy shore we drank plenty, and got up and washed our faces and wet our hair, and laughed. Said Pitáki: "The tired feeling has gone; noth-

ing troubles me now except that I am very hungry."

"You must remain hungry until to-morrow; it is now too dark for me to take sure aim at anything," I told her. Also, I did not care to fire a gun, there might be some enemy near us.

The horses came back out of the water and we let them graze until the moon came up; then we mounted and drove the band across the river, and away out on the bottom. There we picketed four of them, and then lay down for a good night's rest. All day long I had been trying to decide what to do with the horses. To keep them, to herd and water, and picket and hobble some of them every day would interfere with my search for that for which I wandered, the callers' secret; and to have the herd ever near us would be dangerous: one might as well build a signal smoke to attract the war parties wandering through the country, and be prepared to die.

Myself, I did not care much for the horses, although the sixteen head, with those that I had in No Runner's band, would make me as rich as most of the warriors of

our tribe. But I did want my sister to have them; she had earned them; without her brave help I could never have rounded them all up and escaped from the war party. I concluded to take them all to the Square Butte, and there let Suyaki decide what should be done with the band. And then I fell asleep.

I am one who can set a certain time to awake, and do it. When I opened my eyes the position of Seven Persons (the Big Dipper) was halfway between midnight and sunrise, the very time I had told myself to wake up. I aroused Pitáki, sleeping under a near-by clump of giant sage, and we were soon mounted and riding out through broken country toward the Square Butte. I wanted to get far away from the river valley and up into the hills before daylight came; I was afraid of that valley; the trail running through it and over across the Backbone-of-the-World was no doubt a favorite one for war parties of all tribes.

Full up with water and good green grass, the horses were now easy to herd along; the moonlight was so bright that we could see far ahead and choose our way. We were

happy and hungry; the sight now and then of a band of buffalo or antelope, or a few elk or deer running from our approach, made us more and more hungry. Pitáki once asked me to shoot into a big band of buffalo and put an end to our hunger, but when I answered that I did not care to build a beacon fire in that open country, she said no more.

When the first light of the rising sun turned the high peaks ahead of us all fiery red, we saw that we were more than halfway from the river to the butte, and in very rough country: steep hills, deep coulées, and long, rocky ridges. I now took the lead and Pitáki drove the horses after me, and I soon found the very meat I wanted, a buffalo bull of two winters, that was feeding with some cows and calves in the bottom of a coulée. I got down from my horse and approached and killed it, and while I was butchering it Pitáki staked out several of the horses, and then with her flint and steel and piece of punk, built a fire in a small grove of quaking aspens. Then what a feast we had, each of us a half of the tongue, well broiled.

"I wish that our almost-mother and Ahsanaki had some of it," said Pitáki.

"They shall soon feast upon boss ribs, and liver and tripe. We will take to them all of that carcass that a horse can carry," I told her.

So low that I could barely hear her, she said: "Perhaps they are not there at the butte. It may be that we shall never, never find them."

That was my own thought, but I would not say so. "Take courage, you shall soon see them," I told her, and we caught up a horse and began packing him. First, we spread the buffalo hide, hair down, over his back from neck to tail. Then, with strings of green hide, we tied sides of ribs, and boss ribs, and chunks of meat, two pieces at a time, and slung them on the hide, the pieces well down against the horse's side, the tie strings across his back. When all the meat was on, we turned the robe over it from front and back, and then lashed it in place with the two extra drag ropes; and there it was, a big load of fat meat, wrapped in clean, fresh hide. We got on our horses and again I took the lead and Pitáki herded the loose stock close after me.

The traveling became more and more

rough, the hills more and more steep as we approached the foot of the butte in the late afternoon. Perhaps, though, it was not so bad as we, in our anxiety about our almost-mother, then thought it was; we could hardly endure the slow ascent of the hills, and the winding into and out of the deep coulées. At last we approached the steep, boulder-strewn slope that ended at the foot of the cliff-like wall of the great butte, and stopped to let our horses get their wind, and I took off my leather wrap and waved it, making the sign, "Come to us."

I waved it but once; before I could wave a second time we saw the two women come out from behind a pile of boulders and run down the slope toward us. We urged our horses up the slope and met them; they were crying; Pitáki was crying; myself, I almost cried because I was so glad to see them, to know that they were safe. They just pulled us from our horses and kissed us, and gave thanks to the sun for bringing us back to them.

Said Suyaki: "Come, sit you right down here, my children, and tell us all about it."

"No, not now," I answered. "Down

there is a pack-load of fat buffalo meat. We will cook and eat some of it, and then hold a big council."

"Real food! He has brought us some real food," Ahsanaki cried. "Come! let us go and eat some of it." [1]

We went down the hill to the loose horses, drove them around to a little creek north of the butte, and made camp, and while the women cooked meat I told how we had made the trail of thirst for the enemy. Suyaki then began what she had to tell by scolding my sister for running out among the horses of the enemy, but I stopped that. "Be glad that she did. Had she not helped me, we should most likely all have been killed," I told her.

"Well, you should have seen us run, after you and the war party chasing you left the bottom," Suyaki began. "We waded the river, and fear gave strength to our old legs. We kept going until night fell, and then lay down in a coulée, but we were still so frightened, and so worried about you two that we

[1] A common term for buffalo meat was *nitapiwaksin*: real, or actual food. It was considered far better than the flesh of any other game.

could n't sleep. It was not until we got away up here the next evening that we felt at all safe, and then we got another scare that lasted all night: just at sunset an old grizzly with her two young came along just below where we sat, and began turning over rocks in search of ants. We could not go higher, the rock wall was at our backs; we dared not run to right or left for fear she would chase us. When night came she was still there, close under us. How we suffered, thinking that she might come higher and discover us. We never slept; all night we sat there praying, and trembling with fright. Day came, and we saw that she was gone. We went down to a spring and drank, and hurried back to the foot of the wall, and slept all day by turns. And then, oh, how glad we were when we saw you coming. Children, I really believe that we have strong medicine; that the gods favor us: great dangers beset our trail and always we escape them."

That reminded me of the buffalo rock. I took it from my pouch and told how I had found it; how the retying of my moccasin strings had led me to it, and kept me from

going out on the cliff in sight of the war party; how the band of antelope rushing out from the valley had warned me of danger. Both of the old women declared that the rock was strong medicine. Suyaki then and there attached it firmly to my bear-claw necklace. "Wear it there in plain sight on your breast; it is surely a good-luck bringer," she said.

Evening had now come. I picketed four of the horses for the night, and then we all worked hard building a lodge of poles and brush to screen our fire. When it was finished, we sat down in comfort and held a long council, first as to the horses. I gave them all to my sister, and she gave the old women each two. Suyaki refused to accept any for her very own, saying that whenever she wanted to ride we would see that she did n't go afoot. We agreed that it was dangerous for us to keep them, and that they were too valuable to let loose, now that we had them. It was decided that they should be kept hobbled and picketed right there in the narrow little valley. The women were to take care of them. During the daytime they were to sit up at the foot of the rock

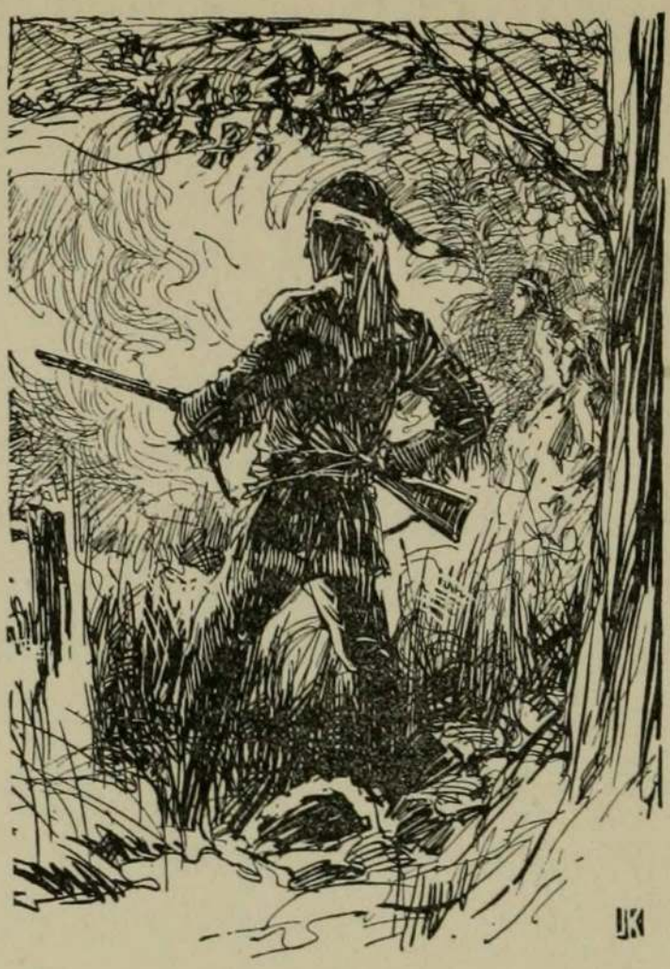
wall of the butte and watch the country, and at night sleep in the brush lodge. Really, away up there in rough country, far from any trail, there was little danger of their being discovered by a war party.

Then, as to myself; we talked and talked far into the night and could not decide what I had best do in order to find a way to call the buffalo. Long after the others slept, I kept thinking about it. Somehow, I had always in mind the ancient Crow trap down by the river. At last I slept, and my shadow went forth from my body upon discovery. When it came back, when I awoke in the morning, I could not remember much of my dream. The plainest part of it was that wherever I wandered the Square Butte, the big, rock-walled butte towering above us, seemed to be calling me, seemed to be moaning in a voice like deep and heavy far-off wind: "Puk-si-put! Puk-si-put! Man-i-kap-i, puk-si-put!" (Come! Come! Youth, come!)

I told my dream when the others awoke. Said Suyaki then: "Heed that call. Go up there on top and fast and dream, and we will pray for you."

"Yes, do so," my sister cried. "And leave your rifle with me. I never have shot it, but I know that I can. If I cock it, and sight it, and press that finger iron, let me tell you that whatever is in front of it is going to drop."

We all laughed: "Keep the weapon, then," I told her; and right after our morning meal I made ready for my climb.



CHAPTER VIII

IN order to reach the top of the Square Butte, one has to go around behind it, and ascend a steep, rocky ridge rising from the slope of the mountains up to its summit. It is a long, hard climb; I did not arrive at the rough but somewhat level top until the middle of the day. I walked out to the very edge of the east wall and looked down; so far below me that the horses seemed no larger than dogs. I tried to find the women and my sister, down at the foot

of the cliff, but could not see them; cached as they were in among the fallen rocks, I would not be able to see them unless they got up and moved.

Then I looked out at the country, and what a sight it was: I could see to the northeast the three buttes of the Sweetgrass Hills; to the east the Bearpaw Mountains; and off to the southeast the long, black timbered front of the Highwood Hills. And all in between, like long, dark, giant snakes, were the valleys and breaks of the Missouri, the Teton, and the Marias Rivers; and down under me, as it seemed, was the valley of Sun River, broad and green and timbered, running off to its junction with the Missouri. All along it and its near plains were dark patches that I knew were buffalo herds; and away off along the other rivers were, I also knew, herds just as large and plentiful that I could not see. How proud I was; how happy I was, looking out upon those broad, buffalo-covered plains and the encircling mountains, and the great river valleys with their deer and elk, to know that they were ours, all of them and a hundred times more that I could not see, our very own.

I sat there a long time, looking off at the country, and then I built a little wall of rocks at the edge of the cliffs, and back of that another wall. There were patches of grass on the summit; I gathered some and made a good bed of it between the walls and lay down. The outer wall would keep me from rolling off the cliff; the inner would break a hard west wind, should one come up. I began my fast. I prayed and prayed to my medicine, to all the gods, to the great butte upon which I lay to give me a dream; to in some way tell me how to call the buffalo.

So I lay there praying and worrying. The sun went on and on toward his island home in the far-off salt-water lake. Back of me there was the sound of steps; I turned over and looked out through a crevice in my little wall, my heart beating fast. Could it be that some enemy had followed me away up to the top of this butte? No. It was a lone bighorn; an old, old male with immense horns. He wandered from one grass patch to another, snipping off the seed heads of the plants, and ever turning and turning to watch all parts of the rocky summit. Off to the west rocks rattled, and then four ewes and

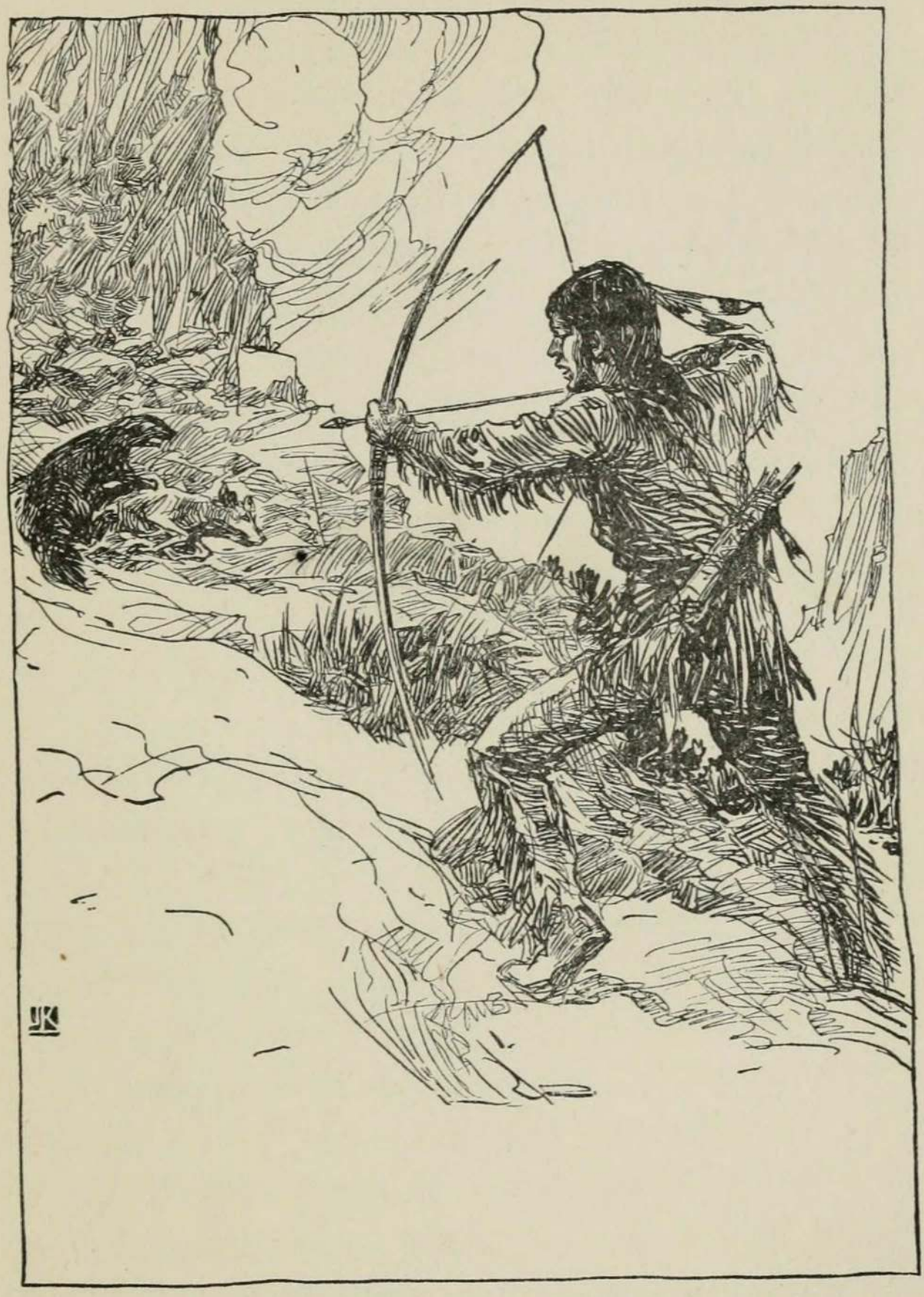
their young came up along the way that I had followed.

I kept watching the young ones play until, happening to look off to the south side of the summit, I got just a glimpse of something dark-colored going behind a rock. I watched that place, and soon saw a dark, broad, ugly head and whitish-yellow striped neck rise up over the top of the rock: it was a wolverine, in quest of his evening meal. I had no more than made out what it was than the young bighorns, in their play, ran right under the rock and the wolverine just dropped down upon one of them. As it blatted, I could hear its neck-bones crack. The others ran away and met their mothers running toward the rock. They ran nearer the little one that was kicking in the grasp of the wolverine, and he growled at them; a terrible growl for so small an animal; it almost frightened me; it surely did the mothers, for they turned and ran with their young westward off the summit, all but the mother of the captured little one: she stood near by, stamping with her forefeet and helplessly watching the wolverine bite and maul his prey.

The way the wolverine growled, and bit and clawed the little one, even after it was dead, made me mad. I took my bow and arrow and went toward him, and he even growled at me and made ready to fight; and oh, how his mean eyes blazed!

"There! Take that!" I said, and shot an arrow deep into his breast. He clawed at it, bit at it, and died growling. I looked around. The mother bighorn was gone. I picked up the little one, torn and limp, and tossed it far out from the cliff. Long afterward came up the deep *whoom!* of it as it struck the slope of the butte, far below.

The Wolverine is a medicine animal. Therefore I sharpened my knife and took the hide of this one, and threw the carcass from the cliff. Then I went back to my bed of grass and lay down. I said to myself that this was no way to get near the gods; what with worrying about the women below, and being disturbed by bighorns and wolverine, I could not keep my mind on sacred things. I got up and sat on the edge of the cliff as the sun went down behind the mountains, and saw the women lead and drive the horses to water, and take them back to good grass.



HE EVEN GROWLED AT ME AND MADE READY TO FIGHT

Then night came and I went back to my bed. I was very thirsty, and very much disturbed in mind. It was late before I slept, and then for only a short time; when I awoke the Seven Persons had moved but little from the position in which I had last seen them.

But I had had a dream: I had spoken with Square Butte, his spirit, his shadow. What he looked like, where was his voice, I cannot say.

As I remembered it, I could hear plainly, but could see nothing; it was as though I was surrounded with thick fog. I said: "You called me and I am here. Have pity on me now and tell me that which I so much want to know."

"'You have made a mistake, I did not call you, I never called you,' he answered; 'but now that you are here I shall help you if I can. What is it that you seek?'

"The way to call buffalo; to decoy them to the cliffs," I told him.

"'Ha! I know nothing about that,' he said. 'In the long ago, people chased buffalo over the cliff down there in the valley, but I paid no attention to them. Why should I? I am not interested in walking, crawling, flying

things, creatures of but a few winters. I am younger brother of the big mountains over there. We live forever. We have enough to think about and talk about without keeping watch on the doings of men.'

"Oh, and I thought that you called me; that you would help me," I cried.

"'I can advise you. I will say this,' he told me: 'If you want to learn to call buffalo, go down there where it has been done. Go there, I say, and watch the buffalo; and fast and pray and maybe you will succeed.'"

It was just after he said that, that I awoke. Strangely enough, as he advised me, so had I been thinking before I fell asleep. I got out of my bed and picked up my bow and arrow case and the wolverine skin, and left the summit, having no trouble in finding my way in the moonlit night. I was not long in descending to the little creek, where I drank plenty. I passed the horses, most of them asleep, and then entered the little grove and noiselessly approached the little lodge. Standing beside it, I could hear the soft breathing of the women as they slept. I lay down right where I was and also slept.

A loud scream that ended in a laugh awakened me. Pitáki had come out of the lodge and, seeing me lying beside it, had been frightened until she saw, and very quickly, who I was. She called the old women and they came hurrying out, alarmed and asking me to tell them why I was back so soon? If I had discovered a war party? They felt badly when they learned that I had not found that which I sought.

"But I did get good advice, I am going down among the buffalo, down there to that old Crow trap, and stay there until I learn the secret," I told them.

"Not until you eat plenty, and have a day and a night of rest," said Suyaki.

So I rested there. In the evening we had a talk as to what we would do. Suyaki said that I could not go alone down into the river country; that she and my sister, and old Ahsanaki just could not be left again to worry about me, and also that they were afraid to have me go far from them. There was everywhere danger; the chance of their being found by a war party; of being attacked by a grizzly.

"If you go with me, the horses must be

left here and we may never see them again," I said.

"Oh, brother! Never mind the horses," Pitáki answered. "Of course, I would like to have them, but to be with you, near you, is more than all the horses that live. We will turn them loose here, and if they are gone when we come back, why, then they will be gone and I shall not cry about it."

"We will try to keep the horses, and you shall all go with me," I decided, and told them to make three broad, smooth-edged hobbles.

Early the next morning I drove the band to the very head of the little valley and put the hobbles on the three that had proved to be the leaders, so adjusting them that they would not chafe the skin and cut into the flesh. There was fine feed and plenty of water in the valley, and I thought that they might be content to remain there. Should they attempt to leave, they would go west toward their home across the mountains, and the rock ledges at the head of the valley could not be climbed; unless discovered by a war party, I was sure that we should find them when we returned.

The women had cut the buffalo meat into sheets and partly dried it; there was enough to last us many nights. They divided it into three packs, and I took all my powder and ball and my weapons, and the four ropes that the horses had been dragging, and we set out for the river. In the afternoon we went very slowly and kept a good watch all around as we approached the rim of the valley, and at last looked down into the timbered bottoms. Just above us, and on the far side of the valley, was the old Crow trap. Right under us we saw a big grove of cottonwoods, in which Suyaki proposed we should build a little pole-and-brush lodge.

"We will remain hidden there while you fast, and then wander around on discovery," she said.

"Almost-mother, where is your good sense?" I asked. "Why do you want to cache right in the path of war parties going up and down this valley trail? True, the trail is not right there through the grove, it is out on the bottom, and you know as well as I do that war parties go into the timber to rest, and cook their meat."

"Well, then, where shall we go?" she asked.

"Out in that brush-and-water coulée at the mouth of the trap wings," I told her. "True, it is not far from the trail, but those traveling through here never go out there, never see it; they watch only the valley ahead of and behind them, and send their scouts from point to point to look out upon the plain: but that coulée, near as it is, cannot be seen from any point; not even from the cliff there above the trap."

"What you say is all true," Suyaki agreed, "but you have forgotten one thing: think of the Crow ghosts that wander about over there. They are just as much to be feared as living enemies; more so, for they come in the night, and cannot be seen or heard. When they touch a person and put into him the disease that is to kill, that touch cannot even be felt."

"Yes. But think how rarely that happens; more people are killed by lightning than by enemy ghosts. And, anyhow, I think we are safe there from them. Remember that I found the buffalo rock over there: what better sign of good luck do you want than that?" I said.

"Suyaki, he is right; the coulée is the

place for us," Ahsanaki said; "and if there be Crow ghosts there, — well, what of it? I can speak Crow as well as any Crow. I will pray to the Crow gods, and the ghosts will think that we are Crows, and so not try to harm us."

"You are both against me. I will do as you say, but, oh, I am afraid," said Suyaki.

And then after a time, she asked: "And you, my son, where shall you fast while we remain cached in that place of ghosts?"

I pointed to the cliff on our side of the valley, and opposite the cliff of the buffalo trap: "See that cottonwood tree growing at the upper edge of the rock wall?" I asked her. "Well, help me build a scaffold in it, and make a good bed, and there I shall fast."

"But any passing war party will see you there," my sister cried.

"Yes. And believe that what they see is a burial scaffold, and keep as far away from it as they can," I answered.

"But why not somewhere else?" Suyaki wanted to know.

"For good reason. That is a medicine place; there I shall be right in sight of the trap; and ever since I was there the other

day something has seemed to keep urging me back to it," I explained.

The day was coming to a close. I soon sent the women down into the grove to prepare our evening meal, and myself kept watch upon the country until night fell. Then I joined them, and ate a small piece of roasted meat. As soon as the moon came up, we all took what dead poles we could carry and went up on the plain, and then along the rim of the valley to the cliff. The upper part of it was a very steep, rough slant down to the wall face, and at the foot of that was the river, just there very deep. The lone tree was short-bodied and thick-limbed, and stood on the slant just above the wall and leaning well out over it, its roots fast in cracks in the rock from which water was oozing. The slant down to it was so very steep that I let my sister down first at the end of a rope, and followed her, and when we were safe at the foot of the tree the others let down to us, with ropes, two or three poles at a time. I then got into the tree and Pitáki passed me the poles as fast as I could lay and lash them to two strong limbs. It was dangerous work for her, for if she should slip

off she would go into the water far below. As soon as the scaffold was laid, the old women let down bundles of grass, and I spread that on the poles for my bed. When all was finished, I had the women keep a tight rope on my sister while she scrambled up to them, and then I went up and we returned to the grove.

"Now, then," said I, "cook meat, you women. Cook enough to last you four or five days, and then I shall take you to your hiding place."

They built up a fire and roasted a lot of the nearly-dried meat, while I stood watch. I knew we were taking a risk by keeping a fire going there, but we had to do it. We were in luck; nothing disturbed us, and near daybreak we went up on the plain by the trail at the east end of the buffalo-trap cliff.

As we passed along between the wings in the gray light of the breaking day, the women kept bunched up close to my heels. Said Ahsanaki: "Oh, I am afraid. Here in the long ago came rushing the Crow stampeders. Right through here they drove the herds to the cliff and over it; of course the

ghosts of some of them are ever here about to do what harm they can to us, their enemies."

"Ai! They can never get over the loss of this country, this trap. Of course, their shadows gather here to seek revenge upon us," Suyaki muttered.

"But see! The day has come, and with its light their power fails," my sister told them.

But I knew that she feared the place as much as they did. She just would not own it, and did her best to cheer them.

Out in the coulée beyond the wings was a large herd of buffalo. We were close upon them before they took fright and ran. The place smelled rankly of them. The willow thickets along the water holes were trampled and broken, and some of the holes in which the bulls had wallowed were more mud than water. We went up some distance before we found a pool of good water and a clump of willows big enough to hide in.

"Now, listen!" I told the women. "Keep close in this brush during the daytime. Buffalo will come, of course, but do not frighten them away unless you are obliged to do so,

unless you fear that they may stampede through the brush and trample you. I feel that you are safe here, so I shall not worry about you, and do you not worry about me, even if I do not return in five days: I shall lie on that scaffold until I get a medicine dream, or until I can fast no longer. So, now I leave you."

"Not until you have given me your rifle," said my sister. "A bear may come wandering along here, and he shall not kill us if I can shoot straight enough to stop him."

I handed her the rifle and my pack of ammunition, and started back to the river. I crossed it, and in the grove where we had cooked the supply of meat I came upon a human skull that had dropped from an old and rotted tree-burial scaffold. "Maybe you are the head of Sees Black," I said to it. "Maybe your now empty brain cup once held the caller's secret."

As I stood looking at it, a strange thought came to me; I felt as though something was telling me to take the skull to the scaffold and dream beside it. I looked all around; listened for a voice; but all was quiet; not even a tree leaf trembled; not a

living creature was in sight, not even a bird. I picked up the skull and went on.

The sun was up when I climbed to the rim of the plain and went on to the edge of the cliff. I sat there a long time watching for any signs of the enemy, and saw none. I had left there our longest rope, and now fastening one end of it to a big rock half-buried in the ground, I let myself down to the tree, and climbed up on to the scaffold; there I laid my bow and arrow case on one side of the narrow grass bed, and the skull on the other side, and lay down and drew my leather wrap over me. I reached out then and placed my hand on the skull: "Ancient one, help me," I prayed. "Tell me! Oh, tell me if you know it, the caller's secret."

And all the time I prayed I knew that I was taking an awful chance: were this the skull of a Crow, then death in some form was coming swift upon me.

I prayed steadily all that day and far into the night, calling upon all the gods, and my medicine, and the shadow head beside me, to grant that which I asked; to give me a revealing dream; and then I slept.

When I awoke in the morning, my first thought was that I had not dreamed. But I felt well; thirsty and hungry but well and strong. In a measure, my fear of the skull went from me: "Ancient one, you are my friend; oh, tell me that which I want to know," I prayed.

I raised up and from the edge of the scaffold looked off into the valley, still in the shadow of early morning. A small herd of buffalo was grazing under the cliff from which so many of their kind had jumped to death in days gone by. Two big wolves were prowling close to them, sometimes walking slowly round and round the band, and sometimes sitting on their haunches and watching and waiting for any calf that might stray out from the protection of the old ones. I was glad to see them all there, a good sign that no war party was near.

Night came. I was now suffering from thirst, but the desire for food had left me. I slept and my shadow went forth on discovery. When it came back, when I awoke, I remembered everything: in my shadow, my dream wandering, I had met the duck hawk and asked him to help me, and he

had answered: "Go across there to that ancient trap, and thereabout, and watch the buffalo, and what you want shall come to you. Yes! You shall learn to decoy the buffalo to the trap as surely as I dart down through the air and seize my prey."

Oh, how happy I was! I looked up at the Seven Persons and saw that they had swung around to midnight time. "I cannot wait until morning; I shall go now and tell my sister and my almost-mothers that I have had my dream," I said. But before I could make a move, I again went fast to sleep. I must have become very tired during my shadow wanderings.

When I awoke again day had come. I felt very cold, and found that in my sleep I had kicked off my leather wrap; it was hanging down from the scaffold and except that my left leg still held fast a corner, it would have dropped down into the river. I reached out and pulled it up, and heard some one shout below. What do you think I saw when I cautiously looked down from the edge of my resting-place?

CHAPTER IX

A MAN was pointing straight up at my dreaming-place and saying something to five others who stood close behind him. He had seen my wrap, seen it drawn up on the scaffold, and was no doubt telling his companions that dead persons do not draw up their coverings.

"They have me trapped," I said to myself. "If they come up to see what is in this tree, I cannot escape from them."

As I said it they separated, three running down the shore and three up. I saw them cross the river above and below the cliff, where the water was not deep, and then they

went out of sight. That they would soon appear on the cliff above me and begin shooting, and throwing rocks, was certain. My one chance to escape from them was to drop from my tree into the river, and that was a very risky chance, I thought; the fall from such a height would probably kill me.

Then hope suddenly came to me: there were the lashings of my scaffold, a rope at each end of it. I slung my bow and arrow case on my back and cast the skull away. "Go," I said. "I am sorry to have to throw you, ghost head, for you have been good medicine to me." And I heard it splash into the water far below.

Never did any one work faster than I as I freed those ropes from poles and tree limbs. I then tied an end of one to the tree and, making one rope of both, grasped it with my wrap to keep my hands from burning and slid slowly down the cliff wall. Upon reaching the very end of the rope, I was still a long way above the water, all of the height of a big pine tree, but there was just one thing to do and I did it: I swung out from the cliff and let go the rope and dropped, and struck the water with a big splash. Down, down

I went into it, pawing with both hands, but still going down until I thought that I must drown. Then I began to rise, up from black darkness toward the light of day, and what relief I felt as my head cleared the water and I drew in a long breath! I made no attempt to swim; I just drifted with the current and used my arms only enough to keep my face, my eyes and nose and mouth, above the surface. And as I drifted, I kept watching the cliff above me, and the lone tree that I had left. I could plainly see the scaffold, but I knew that it could not be seen from above because of its thick screen of leaved boughs.

I wondered what the enemy would do when they arrived at the slant above it and found the rope dangling from the half-buried boulder. I had not long to wait to know, for a shower of big rocks suddenly crashed into the tree and came splashing into the river, and I heard the throwers raise their war cry. I had heard it before: it was the war cry of the Assiniboines.

I could not see the enemy nor could they see me; they were on the upper edge of the slant from the cliff up to the plain, and I was drifting so close to the wall that I could reach

out and touch it. They continued shouting and throwing and rolling down the big rocks, and I drifted faster and faster as I neared the rapids at the lower end of the cliff. I had made up my mind just what to do. I kept close in to shore, and after clearing the cliff watched for the place where the lower three of the enemy had come out from the river. I soon saw it ahead of me, the sand and white stones of the shore still wet where the water had dripped upon them. I went out in the enemy's tracks, and into the near brush, and from that down into the big grove where, three nights back, the women had roasted their supply of meat. I could still hear the stones crashing down, and the cries of the enemy; they had not seen me; they would never see me. More than ever before, I felt that my medicine was strong, that the gods were with me, that I was to learn that which I so much wanted to know, the caller's secret.

I do not know how long the war party kept hurling rocks into my dream tree before they discovered that their work was all for nothing. I went away down through the grove and crawled under a thick growth of rose brush in the open bottom. I had lost my

leather wrap. My bowstring was soaked with water and useless. I laid both bow and arrows on top of the brush to dry.

That was a long day to me. When I plunged into the river and drifted down it, I drank, of course, all the water I could hold at the time; but that was not enough to quench my several-days-old thirst. I was faint and weak from want of food, too, and I worried not a little about my women back in the coulée. If they remained cached in the brush, as I had told them to do, all would be well with them; but if they should go out from it and wander about, there was a chance of their being discovered by the enemy.

As soon as my bow was dry I strung it, and was ready to fight, if fight I must. My plan, however, was to get up and run the instant that I was sure the enemy discovered me in my hiding-place. Luck was with me; in the middle of the day I saw them sneaking down along the edge of the grove and they came clear down to the point of it, never once showing themselves in the open bottom. They had not found my trail, nor had I intended that they should; on my way out from the river I had not once stepped in

the well-worn and dusty game trails that ran everywhere through the timber.

How glad I was when night came and I could leave my hiding-place. I had no idea where the war party was, whether still in the grove or gone on their way up or down the river in quest of the camp of some enemy. I suspected, however, that they were lurking somewhere near in hope of finding the lone enemy that they had driven from his dream tree. So it was that, in the black darkness before the moon came up, I stole through the open bottom to the river and, holding my bow case high above my head, swam and waded it. I went on through the bottom beyond and up on the plain, and around to the place where I had left the women. All the way good luck was with me: I did not see or frighten a single band of game, and soon after the moon rose I approached the clump of willows by the little pool of good water, where I hoped the women were safely sleeping.

"Pitáki! Almost-mothers! Are you there?" I called, and at once came Suyaki's answering voice: "We are here, my son."

I joined them; they sprang up and kissed

me, and all three asked: "Your leather wrap! — where is it?"

I sat right down with them and told all that had happened to me since I had left them, talked as fast as I could between bites of the roasted meat that my sister handed me from time to time; and as I talked I began to shiver, for the night was cold, and my clothing wet. Suyaki made me take her wrap. "Keep it, Ahsanaki and I can get along with one wrap," she said.

When I had finished all that I had to tell, Suyaki made a little talk. "It is plain enough that the gods are with us," she began. "Look back at our trail since we parted from our people, and see the dangers that have beset us; we have always escaped them. My son, there is no doubt that your medicine is strong; you have a shadow talk with Square Butte, yonder, and it sends you down here, where duck hawk tells you what to do. My son, we do not love this place; we fear it; but though a hundred Crow ghosts guard this ancient trap of theirs, we shall stay with you here until you learn the great secret."

"We must think hard and plan just what

is best for us to do," I told her; and then we all lay down and slept well until morning.

When I awoke my first thought was of the enemy: had they gone, or were they still hiding somewhere down by the river with the hope of getting the scalp of the lone faster that they had driven from the cliff? I hoped that they had gone their way, for we had only enough meat for the morning meal and I dared not kill any while they were anywhere near us. The others soon awoke. Suyaki divided the meat, giving me much the largest portion, and we ate slowly and had our talk.

I learned that during the time I was away from them two different herds of buffalo had come in to near-by pools to drink, and had got the wind of them and gone rushing back on the plains. That was bad. Some enemy might have come out to learn what had frightened them. Also, it was somewhere here that duck hawk had told me I was to learn the secret; I could not expect to learn it if the herds were to be continually frightened when they came to drink: we just had to find some other place to camp.

We decided to take no chances on being

discovered by the war party, and remain right where we were until night. Not long after sunrise a big herd of buffalo came into the coulée to the west of us, and in the shelter of cutbanks and brush I crept so near the lower edge of it that I could see the eyes of some of the animals. The herd was made up of cows and calves, and bulls up to two winters of age; the old bulls were still off by themselves, alone, and in bands of various sizes. The little red calves were some of them just born, and some perhaps a moon old. Those able to run about could not keep still; they chased one another all through the herd, and butted heads together, and kept their mothers running after them for fear that they would stray outside the edge of the herd and become lost, or be seized by the wolves that were ever watching for a chance to seize them.

I lay there all the morning watching that herd, and trying to reason what I could do to make them all start chasing me instead of running away, should I attempt to call them. Over and over I asked myself what Little Otter had done to decoy the herd. I had seen all his actions, but I had not heard

his call, and that was, no doubt, the secret of his success.

In the afternoon we saw a very large herd of buffalo slowly grazing to the very spot in which we lay. The women were asleep. I aroused them. "Come," I said, "we have to get out of here; we must not alarm that herd. I want them to keep coming here so that I can try to call them."

It did not take us long to gather up our things and crawl through the brush to a safe position between the wings of the ancient trap. The two old women did not like to remain there; they talked about all the ghosts they had ever heard of, and Ahsanaki prayed in the Crow language that the Crow ghosts wandering there might not harm us. My sister told me that she was not afraid of them. "You have strong medicine. I feel safe enough when I am with you," she said.

When the sun came close down to the peaks of the big mountains, I told the women to remain where they were until I returned, and leaving my bow and arrows, and taking my rifle and powder and balls, I left them, to have a look at the valley. As I crept between the wings toward the cliff,

whom should I see but duck hawk flying lazily above me and toward the river. "Ha! There you are, sure seizer of food," I said, "and here am I. Do not forget that you are to help me."

And when I said that he dived straight down toward me, and as suddenly darted upward and sailed on, all the time loudly chattering his duck-hawk talk. I could not understand, but somehow I sensed it that he was telling me to take courage; that all was well. I went on all filled up with happiness.

Upon nearing the edge of the cliff, I got down on hands and knees and crawled, and showed only the top of my head as I looked down from it into the valley. All was quiet there; no game in sight, no smoke, no sign of enemies. I looked across at the cliff where I had had my dream, and could scarcely recognize my dream tree standing there at the edge of the rock wall: it was almost as bare of leaves as any dead one, and some of its branches were gone, and some were broken and the ends drooped straight down. The enemy had hurled showers of rocks into it until they could see my scaffold, its poles all loosened, and the faster gone. I laughed to

think of their surprise when they found that they had been outwitted.

It was well for me that I had come to the edge of the cliff so cautiously, like a snake crawling upon its prey. Also, when Old Man made the world it was well that he should have made the cliff higher than the one across from me, for there where I had fastened the rope to the half-buried boulder, a watcher was concealed. After the sun went down and the valley began to darken with night shadows, I was surprised to see a man rise up from behind that rock and wave his robe. Four times he waved it, and then spread it on the rock and sat upon it. I looked up the valley and down it, and then saw his comrades leave the grove where we had roasted meat, and strike out across the bottom toward the slope up to the plain. They were five; the watcher made six; they were the very party that I had escaped from.

Upon climbing to the rim of the plain they walked swiftly along it to the cliff and stopped and talked with the watcher. Then they all went on westward and into and up the valley, and I soon lost sight of them in the gathering night. But I knew that they

were now leaving that part of the country; that they had given up all hope of finding me, and were again on their way to raid the herds of the across-the-mountains people.

I went back to the women. "Come, all is well. The war party of six has just left here," I told them.

"What? You saw them again?" Suyaki asked; and when I explained that their watcher had called them from the grove, and that they had all gone up the valley, she said that it was just another sign that the gods were with us. And that was the way I felt about it.

On our way up the valley so many days back, I had noticed a small island in the river not very far below this trap cliff, and I proposed that we go there and make it our stopping-place while I tried to call the buffalo. The old women thought that a good plan, and we went down to it, taking care to wash out our footsteps where we crossed the shore sands to the water. The island was thickly wooded, in its center a grove of big cottonwoods, and along its edge smaller trees and a dense growth of willows. It was about the safest place we could be in; war parties

seldom went to islands to hide and rest during the day, unless they were close to a cliff or butte from which the watchers could see all over the country, and on each side of this island the bottoms were wide, and the rims of the plain very low.

We were so very hungry that we did not sleep much that night. At the first sign of daylight, I took both my bow and arrows and my rifle and went to the upper end of the island to look for game, and as soon as day really came I discovered three bull elk in the bottom opposite me on the south side of the river. They had ceased feeding and were coming to water, and, I hoped, to the island to rest. I was right. They all drank, and then began wading across that part of the river, heading toward a point a little below me. There would be no need for me to use my rifle and I was glad of that. I did not want its telltale *boom* sounding all up and down the valley. I laid it aside, and with my bow and a handful of arrows ran down through the brush close to the place where the bulls would come in. I had not long to wait; one after another they entered on a narrow game trail, moving their

heads this way and that way to protect their tender, new-growing horns from trees and branches. I was very close to the trail, and as the lead bull was passing me, where I stood close beside a tree, I let go an arrow into his ribs, and put another on the string and fired it at the second bull. I fitted a third arrow and turned to shoot it at the third bull, but he had turned and was already half out of sight in the brush below the trail. But I knew that I had the other two; I could hear them making their last kicks in the near-by brush, and by the time I got to them they were dead. I called the women, and we soon had the big, fat animals butchered and cut up, meat enough when dried to last us a long time. My sister started at once to tan one of the hides, hair on, for a wrap for me.

We built a fire of cottonwood bark, which is almost smokeless, and had a good feast of broiled ribs. The old women were all the morning cutting the meat into thin sheets to dry, and in the afternoon I helped them build a good, big lodge of dry poles, and bark and grass and small branches, a thick covering that would thoroughly conceal our

evening fires. We all worked very hard all day, getting everything in shape for a long stay on the island.

On the next day I was to begin watching the buffalo up in the vicinity of the trap, as duck hawk had told me to do. But that evening Pitáki asked me to do something that changed my plan.

"Brother, we have many days ahead of us for learning the great secret," she said. "Now, I have been thinking about those horses you gave me. No doubt they are there, but I fear that those you hobbled are getting sore legs. Before you begin watching the buffalo, why not go up and put the hobbles on other horses?"

"That is a wise thing to do," I answered. "Give me some fresh hobble thongs and I will start up there some time before daylight."

It was a long time before sunrise when I took my rifle, and some meat, and left the island and headed for the Square Butte, which looked dim and far-away in the moonlight. I walked swiftly and without pause, and at midday approached the head of the little valley behind it. The horses were well up on

a slope south of the creek, and when they saw me they snorted and ran, the hobbled ones going nearly as fast as those that were free. I counted the bunch; there were but fifteen; one animal was missing, one of the four that I had hobbled. Only a few days back the herd had been very gentle, and was now very wild. I chased them around a long time before I could get near enough to catch one, and then the others as I wanted them. None of the hobbled was injured, but I freed them and put the hobbles on other animals, and then went hunting for the missing one. I soon found him near the creek, half eaten and partly covered over with dead grass and brush, and some enormous bear tracks in the mud near by showed plainly enough what had killed him.

I either had to kill that bear or take the horses out of the valley; if I should leave them there all that were hobbled would one by one become bear food. I decided to kill the bear. Now, with the kind of guns you have to-day, guns that shoot many cartridges faster than one can count, it is nothing, not at all a brave act to hunt big grizzlies. But to take aim at one with a flintlock gun,

knowing that if the shot does not kill there will not be time to reload before the bear charges — why, in that case, to attack and kill one is just the same as attacking and killing an Assiniboine or any other enemy. I considered a long time what I should do before deciding to attack. And then I freshly primed my rifle and hid in some willows about forty steps from the dead horse, and waited for the bear to come.

He did not appear until sunset, and then, big as he was, he made no noise as he came out of the brush above the horse. He was of body as large as a buffalo cow, but shorter-legged, of course. He walked with brave steps, never stopping to look for danger as would one of his black-furred relatives. Why should he? Never in his life had he seen anything to fear. And so he came to the dead horse and began to paw away the brush and grass with which he had covered it. Presently he tore a great chunk of meat from one of the hams. As he stood motionless, chewing it, I took careful sight at the base of his right ear, and fired. He fell right where he stood, but it was a long time before his life went out. The ball had pierced

his brain; he could not move. But, oh, how his big muscles, his whole body quivered with his strong will to arise and rend whatever it was that had so painfully stung him!

When he was quite dead I gave his body to the sun, all but his claws and a narrow strip of fur I took from his back, with which to wrap the medicine pipe I intended to own some day. And then I cooked the meat I had brought from the island and ate it and went down out of the valley and slept all night. I did not get home until the next evening. The women were glad when I told them that I had killed the horse-killer, and my sister said that she wished that she were a man, so she could wear its claws.

"You have the right to wear them," I told her. "You took those horses from the enemy just as much as I did. You can count coup upon them, so take the claws and make a necklace of them."

She did so, and proudly wore them.

Now began for us what proved to be a time of peace, but one of great desire for me. War parties no longer prowled up and down the valley; if they did we never saw them. Just before daylight of each day,

sometimes alone and sometimes my sister with me, I would go up on the buffalo trap cliff, or out to the wide mouth of the trap wings, and watch the buffalo, and remain there until night, and go home in the darkness to our little shelter, and food and rest.

The buffalo were very plentiful and very quiet; the season of their unrest, when the bulls charge from herd to herd, and fight, and moan, had not yet come. Day after day I watched the six or eight or ten herds in sight, hoping to see one animal do something that would cause all the others in the band to run after it, but nothing of the kind happened. The nearest approach to it was when a calf would stray far enough from the mothers for the wolves to chase, and sometimes seize it. More than once I had seen a herd suddenly start off running when I knew that they had not been frightened by hunters. "What caused them to run? What can I do to make a herd chase me?" I kept asking myself, and could find no answer.

So the days passed, uselessly and all too swiftly. We had kept sure count of them, either my sister or I each night cutting a new crease in my ramrod. And every few

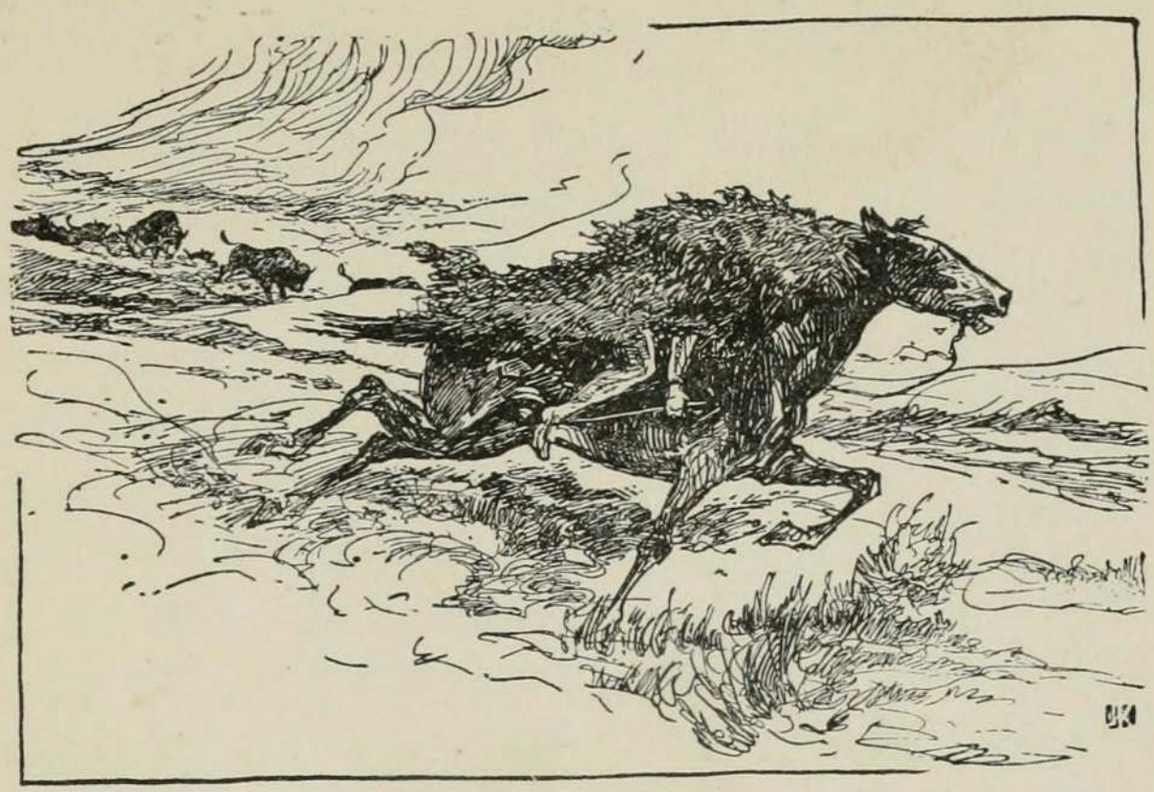
nights, to make sure that we had not forgotten, we counted the creases; so many days had gone, so many were to come, before we should meet our people and the Flat Heads at the mouth of the river. As the remaining days became fewer and fewer, I prayed harder and harder to the gods, to my medicines, duck hawk especially, in some way to show me how to decoy a herd. We all prayed for that. We had long since sacrificed everything that we had worth giving; we could now only pray the gods to favor us, to grant my request.

On the evening that I cut the forty-fifth notch in the ramrod, we all had heavy hearts. There remained but four or five days before the coming of our people, and the way to call the buffalo was still a secret unrevealed. I felt that I could not meet them until I knew it. We all prayed harder than ever for help that night, and after I lay down I once more begged duck hawk to remember his promise.

The next morning, as usual, we had some fresh roasted meat long before daylight, and then Pitáki and I went up on the buffalo trap cliff for another day of herd watching.

When daylight came, we saw that two more herds had come close in during the night, making ten herds that we could see from where we lay on the rise of ground between the cliff and the coulée at the mouth of the wings. We got up and went to the edge of the cliff for a look at the valley; if any war party was there we wanted to know it. But no. All was quiet, and another herd of buffalo, a very large one, was in the bottom just above the cliff, and moving slowly across to the river for water. The day was beginning just as the other days of watching had begun. The herds would graze, and rest, and graze again, and go to water once or twice, and nothing would happen. I was so sure that I was not to learn the secret that I felt sick. "You watch for a time," I told my sister, and I lay down and covered myself with the elkskin wrap that the women had tanned for me.

I slept. In my dream duck hawk appeared, sailing around and around above me, and as I called to him Pitáki roughly shook me. "Awake! See the buffalo! Something is happening!" she cried.



CHAPTER X

I SPRANG to my feet and looked down where she pointed: the herd of buffalo was scattered all along the river edge, and some were standing in the water, and one, a cow, had left them and was running back across the bottom. Four or five of the herd, standing at the top of the river-bank, were staring after her, and first one and then another suddenly broke into a lope and started to follow. The sound of their going startled the whole herd, and out it came from the river with a rush on the trail of the lone cow and the four or five behind her. Faster and faster they all went across

the bottom, and more slowly up the slope beyond the cliff, and faster again out across the plain and over the rise of ground, where we lost sight of them.

"There! What think you of that?" Pitáki asked.

"The cow suddenly remembered that she had left her calf somewhere out there," I told her. "Perhaps she cached it, and forgot to arouse it when they all started for the river. And then she thought of its enemies, the wolves and coyotes, and went as fast as she could go to rescue it from them."

"Yes, that must be why she went so suddenly, so swiftly," Pitáki agreed.

I lay down again beside her and fell to thinking about what we had seen. "Sister," I said, "if I could only have the power that our first fathers had, I could call the buffalo anywhere at any time; I would change myself into a cow, and pretend that I had lost my calf, and suddenly leave the herd in search of it, and they would all follow me."

And then, as quick as a lightning flash, it came to me that my prayers, my sacrifices, were answered. This was the way duck hawk had taken to show me the secret. All I had

to do was to approach the buffalo on horseback, and then lie close on its back and cover myself with a buffalo robe and start running away from them, and they would follow me.

"Sister!" I cried, "I see it all: I can be almost-a-buffalo, enough like a buffalo to decoy a herd. Come! Let us go home."

As we went I told her what I proposed to do. And when we came to the old women, sitting in the shade of a big cotton-wood near the little lodge, I told them what we had seen and all that I would do. And when I finished they both sprang up and hugged and kissed me, and cried, and Suyaki said that we were at last to be paid for our wandering, and praying, and sacrificing. And then she lifted her hands and cried out to the sun: "I am old; I am near the time when I must go to the Sand Hills, but, oh, protect me! Keep life in me that I may at least see my son decoy one herd of buffalo for the people."

"Of course you will live to see him do it. Not only one, but many herds," Ahsanaki told her, and she began to sing softly as the two of them made a fresh fire and set some meat to roast.

As the time was so short to the day of the coming of the two tribes, I decided to start right out after the horses, and upon my return try to decoy a herd of buffalo with one of them. I left the island after we finished eating, taking with me some of the roast meat, and my rifle and the one rope that we had. I told the women to make some bridle ropes of the remaining elk hide, so that we could all ride down to the place of meeting of the tribes.

I did not reach the little valley behind Square Butte until late that night, too late to find the horses. I slept until daylight and then going out in the open saw them high up on a grassy slope of the butte, and climbed to them. Three of the four I had hobbled were free, having worn out their rawhide leg thongs. I easily caught the fourth one, and bridled him with my rope, and cut loose his hobbles. Then I ate some meat and, mounting, headed the herd down for the river. All of the animals were very fat and full of life, and I had no trouble with them ; they were more than willing to keep ahead of me.

In the afternoon, when not far from the

river, I topped a high ridge from which I got a good view of the valley for a long distance above our island. I held my horse there for some time, looking down into it, and at the plains on either side, and was about to go on when a long, dark line of moving objects began to cross the uppermost of the bottoms that I could see. Like a huge snake it came steadily on, and the head disappeared in a grove before the tail end came out from the grove at the farther end of the bottom. There was no mistaking what it was: a traveling tribe of people. The Flat Heads were coming to the appointed meeting-place days before the set time for them to be there.

My first thought was that I was glad they had come, for we should no longer be in danger of attack by war parties. But on second thought I saw that their coming would likely spoil my plan to try to decoy a herd of buffalo down at the ancient Crow trap. When I sensed that, I rode the rest of the way to the island as fast as I could drive the loose stock ahead of me. "Head off the band," I called out to the women. "Bring me your ropes, one of you, and hold the band in

right here." They did as I told them, and with my long rope I soon caught a horse for each one, and a fresh horse, a small, lively dark-brown animal, for myself. Then I told them of the coming of the Flat Heads, and that they must be stopped, or told to make a big circle out on the plain south of the buffalo trap cliff, for I wanted the buffalo herds about it left undisturbed.

"And now," I said, "pack up and hurry to meet them and give them my message. I will go with you a part of the way."

Suyaki laughed: "He tells us to pack up," she said, "when the only thing we have to take with us is my brass kettle. We ate the last of the dried elk meat this morning, my son."

"Never mind," I told her, "the Flat Heads will feed you. I shall kill meat for you soon. Come! we must go!"

I rode with them through four or five of the long bottoms above the trap cliff, and then they went on with the horses to turn off the Flat Heads, and I rode back down the valley. But I had forgotten something; I turned and called to my sister, and asked her to give me her buffalo robe wrap in

place of my elk leather one. She handed it over, and said that she was going back with me; that she just had to see me call the buffalo.

"Come on, then, and see me fail," I answered.

"But you are not to fail!" she cried, "and oh, how proud I am going to be: Sister of Apauk, Caller of Buffalo, Bringer of Plenty."

"Let us begin praying right now that it may all be as you say," I told her, and we prayed all the way back to the foot of the cliff.

The sun was near setting when I tied Pitáki's horse to a log of the old trap, and then leading mine, we went up on the plain by the lower trail, and out between the wings toward the coulée of water holes. "Sister," I said, "a thought that has been long with me is again in my mind. I once heard Four Horns say that if one could only call buffalo on horseback, instead of afoot, he would be in no danger from them. No, I have never forgotten that. I see now that I have right along been hoping to do it. And now, right now, if a herd is in the right place out there, we are going to know if it can be done."

My sister said nothing to that. I looked at her and saw that she was praying again.

We soon came to the rise of ground between the cliff and the coulée and, looking out from it, saw a small herd of buffalo on the far side of the coulée, and right opposite the mouth of the wings. They were far enough away to suit my purpose; I could ride down into the coulée without their noticing it. I told my sister to hold my rifle and remain right where she was, and got onto my horse and went on.

As I have said before, there is one little ridge after another from the coulée out on the plain, each one a little higher than the other until the level of the country is attained. These one by one gave me shelter until I at last sighted the buffalo ahead, at just the right distance from me, I thought. I then covered myself with my sister's robe, hair side out and, lying as flat on my horse's back as I could, I went slowly nearer and nearer until some of the buffalo raised their heads and stared at me. The instant they did that, I turned my horse and hung to his mane with my bridle hand and, reaching down, tickled him between the hind legs

with a switch I carried in the other hand. He began at once to run and kick up his heels, and soon, looking back, I saw that the herd of buffalo was coming after me.

Was I glad? That was the happiest feeling, just then, that I had ever had. I wanted to shout thanks to the gods; to sing; but I dared not do it. I rode straight down across the little ridges and into the coulée, and across it into the mouth of the wings, the buffalo ever gaining upon me, because in my flat position on the horse's back I could not make him go very fast. But as soon as the buffalo came far enough into the mouth of the wings to have stampeded them on to the cliff, had people been hidden along the rock piles, I straightened up and rode, yelling and waving my robe, out through the lower wing. The herd swerved on and passed through the other wing and on westward across the plain. I then turned again and rode to my sister, who was running and dancing toward me, and shouting: "You did it! You did it! Oh, brother! They followed you." And she made me dismount so she could kiss me. We were both so excited and happy that we hardly knew what we were doing or saying.

We went on down the trail to the old trap, and Pitáki got on her horse, and we rode up the valley in search of the Flat Heads. They had not passed on south around us, so we knew that they were somewhere up there.

It was long after dark when we sighted the dull-red glow of their lodges, pitched along the edge of a big grove. We rode into the camp and asked several persons where our two old women were before finding one that understood us. A number of our Pikuni-Blackfeet women were married to Flat Heads, and their children, and most of the husbands, spoke our language well.

It was a woman of our tribe that led us to those we sought; the Flat Head chief had taken them into his lodge. They heard us before it and came running out, Suyaki crying: "How is it? Did you call them?"

"Oh, he did! He did! A whole herd followed him into the wings!" my sister answered, and then all three grabbed me and hugged me, and cried and shouted praise to the gods for their goodness to me.

A great crowd surrounded us. The old chief came out and greeted me in my own language, and asked: "Do I hear right? Is

it so that you have on horseback decoyed a herd of buffalo?"

"It is true. I did it this day," I answered.

He took me by the arm and led me to the doorway of his lodge. "Enter! Enter! Medicine youth, my lodge is your lodge," he told me.

And I went in and he made me take the seat of honor at his side, on his own couch at the back of the lodge. Other chiefs and warriors crowded in until the lodge would hold no more. Women placed meat and dried camas before me, but I was too excited to eat; the Flat Heads were too impatient to hear all about it to let me eat. I pushed the dish aside and told them how I had actually on horseback decoyed a herd of buffalo into the mouth of the wings of the old Crow trap below. They clapped hands to mouths and cried out in surprise that I had done such a thing, and said that my medicine must be strong. And then they talked of other things; gave me the news of their country; asked if I thought my people would be on time at the mouth of the river; but always the talk came back to my calling of the buffalo.

Said the chief: "Maybe you will call a herd of buffalo for us. Few of my people have seen that wonderful sight, a river of meat pouring over the cliff into the trap. I once saw it, and oh, I do want to see it again."

"If my chiefs will allow me, I will try to call a herd for you," I answered.

It was late when the guests all went home and we lay down and slept.

I had a talk with the chief early the next morning, and asked him to have his people leave the river and circle away out south around the trap cliff. He said that he would be glad to have them do so, and after an early meal the lodges came down, the women packed up, and the long line of the moving camp began to wind out on the plain. I rode with the chief and three or four others down the valley, and showed them the old Crow trap. When I took them along the foot of the cliff inside the rotting fence, and they saw the thick layers there of horn tips and bones, they cried out in astonishment at the number of animals that had been driven down over the cliff in other days. Said the chief to me: "How rich you are, you Black-

feet tribes. Your hunting-ground is so large that one must travel days to cross it. You have game of all kinds, and so plentiful that from summer to summer you can never use one out of ten of those that are born."

I *was* glad that I belonged on the plains, and not in the forests of the Flat Heads. But they were not poor, although they had not buffalo and antelope; they had all other kinds of game, and they were rich in horses.

Well, we went on down the valley and soon joined the long column of riders, they having come into it some distance below the trap. As I rode with the chief to take the lead, I noticed that his people had heeded the request of our chiefs: their horses were well loaded with sacks of dried camas and bitterroot, and many a roll of finely tanned deer and elkskin.

We arrived at the mouth of Sun River some time before sunset, and I rode into the place of our cache, and was glad to find that it had not been disturbed. My sister and the old women soon joined me, and got out the things, and as night came we once more were comfortable in our own lodge, with its soft robe couches and pleasant little fire. But we

were not allowed to eat in it that night ; the chief called me to a feast, and the women's friends entertained them, and again it was very late before we all got home and went to sleep.

At noon the next day some of the Flat Head watchers came in from the rim of the plain and reported that the Pikuni were in sight. The news spread through camp and men and women and children hurried to get into their best clothes. Then the men got on their horses, I with them, and we went out to meet the Pikuni chiefs and warriors.

It was not until evening that I had a chance to talk with No Runner. We had met earlier and he had pointed to my horses, all of them with his loose stock, and said that none were lost. Now, when I came into his lodge he cried out: "Welcome, Apauk, Bringer of Plenty. Your sister and Suyaki have told me all about it. I am proud of you."

I answered what I had been thinking all day: "I did it once, but maybe I can never call the buffalo again. I am scared when I think of trying it."

"Now, don't be an afraid heart," he said.

"Of course you can do it again. Tell me all about it, everything that has happened to you since we parted here two moons ago."

I had no sooner finished my story than there came a call for us to go to Lone Walker's lodge, where we found the Flat Head chief and a few of the lesser chiefs of both tribes. There I had to repeat how I had on horseback called the buffalo, and while I talked every one listened intently, and the pipe that was going the rounds when I started was smoked out, and Lone Walker forgot to refill it.

When I stopped talking, having told how the buffalo had followed me into the wings of the old Crow trap, I could see that some of the listeners could hardly believe that what they had heard could be true. That made me somewhat angry, and I cried out: "Give me the chance to do it, and I will prove to you all that I can call the buffalo."

"My son, you shall have that chance," Lone Walker answered. "We will all rest here for two nights, and then move up near the old trap and repair it, and you shall fill it with buffalo for us."

Soon after that I went home, but I could

not sleep; I was afraid; I wished that I had not made that offer. What if I should fail to decoy the buffalo into the wings? If I did fail, I felt I could never again look any of my people in the face.

All of the next day there was great trading of roots and buckskins, buffalo robes, and buffalo cow leather in the two camps, and many of the Flat Head hunters went across the river and ran buffalo, and brought in all the meat and hides their horses could stagger under. In the evening there was more feasting and visiting about, and I was called with No Runner to go here and there, and tell over and over about what I had done. But in each lodge I told it as shortly as I could; I was very unhappy, very anxious. I wanted to be by myself and think and pray.

The next morning down came the lodges of both camps and we all moved up to the bottom on the south side of the river, just below the buffalo trap. The chiefs of both tribes gave orders that no one except the watchers could go up on the plain on the north side of the valley, and that all horses must be kept on the south side. As Little Otter and all the other callers had done, so

did I: my lodge was set up by itself out in the bottom from the double camp of people. I crossed the river and went up on the cliff with some of the watchers, and saw the usual herds of buffalo up and down the coulée of water holes, and out from it. "Keep a good watch," I told them, "for now I go to make medicine." I felt very strange giving that order. It did not seem right that one so young as I should tell people what to do.

Ahsanaki was still with us. She had found one or two distant relatives, but she preferred to remain with us, and we were glad to have her in our lodge. But now I had to send both her and my sister to No Runner's lodge for a time. That evening I began my fast, and Suyaki painted herself black and remained with me, and sang with me the song of the ancient bull, and all the other medicine songs. Over and over we sang them, and I prayed and she prayed, and I fasted and dreamed, and my dreams were good.

On the third evening of my fasting and praying, Suyaki returned from her lone walk to the river and told me that the people had repaired the old trap at the bottom of the cliff; that in passing, my sister had made

signs to her that it was completed, and high-built and strong. I told Suyaki that they had probably had their work for nothing, as I would most likely fail to decoy the buffalo to the cliffs.

"Be ashamed of yourself for saying that," she cried. "Look back over the past two moons and see how good the gods have been to us; how everything that has happened has been leading up to what we are doing here in this lone lodge. Can't you see that you are to succeed? Of course you are. Now, let us sing again the song of the ancient bull."

Her words cheered me. We sang the song; and the wolf song; and all the other songs, and when the night was late we made a last prayer, and slept.

Came the fourth and last morning of my fast, and with the daylight a watcher ran to my lodge and told me that a big herd of buffalo was out opposite the mouth of the trap wings. I asked him to give word to No Runner to catch for me the little brown horse that I had recently taken from the enemy, and when the chief brought it in I took a robe, and a switch, and mounted it, and crossed the river and went up on the

cliff. Sure enough, a big herd, a very big herd, was grazing away out on the ridges on the far side of the coulée, right where I would have placed it for my purpose could I have done so. I said to the four watchers: —

"One of you go down and tell the people to come to the wings. Three of you stand here and warn them as they pass to go slowly, and when in their places be careful not to move and show themselves."

I then led my horse to one side of the trail and sat down, and kept my eyes on the herd and prayed.

I soon heard the soft steps of the people as they passed out to hide along the line of the wings, but I would not look at them. No Runner came and sat beside me. When he spoke his voice trembled, and I could see his hands trembling as though with cold. I myself was shivering. "Oh, my son!" he said, "I am so anxious for you to succeed in this that I am sick. Do your best! You must not fail to decoy the herd within the wings!"

"Pray for me," I answered. "Pray hard! Oh, I am afraid to go out there; but go I must, and I go now." And with that I got

on my horse and rode between the wings and past them into the coulée.

On the first of the little ridges on the far side of the coulée I paused and looked back: a few people were still coming out along the wings, and I waited until the very last one of them took his place before going on. And as I went I was feeling very sick. I was making a last prayer to the gods, and to duck hawk in particular, when I again sighted the buffalo. I went on until they discovered me, and as they did so my courage came back; I felt strong again. I guess the gods put courage into me right then, for my great trial before the people.

As the first cow raised her head and stared at me, I lay low on my horse, and made my body take the shape of a hump of a buffalo. I had on a very large buffalo robe that covered me and the sides and length of my horse as well: to the eyes of those staring at me my horse and I were a buffalo; perhaps a somewhat strangely shaped one, but still a buffalo. I did not give them time to look close and become suspicious: I wheeled around, and made the horse kick up and run for the wings, and almost at once

the herd began to follow me. Down over the ridges I went, the thunder of their coming in my ears. Faster and faster I crossed the coulée and rode up into the mouth of the wings, and far in between them, and suddenly turned east and passed through the line of the lower wing. Oh, what a happy feeling went all through me as I again turned and saw the big herd rushing straight toward the cliff, the people along each wing continually rising behind them and urging them on. The hoofs of the buffalo thundered and rattled, and raised a cloud of dust. The people shouted as they followed them. On and on they all went, and when the buffalo began to pour over the cliff the roar of their falling was like that of a mountain landslide. Over they all went, even to the last old cow, and the people rushed to the right and left and ran down the trail at each end of the cliff, and I was left alone there by the wings of the ancient trap. I rode to the edge of the cliff and dismounted and sat down, and looked down into the trap. The fence swarmed with men shooting and lancing the crippled and uninjured animals, and the dead heap of them was five or six bodies thick.

Soon the last cripple was killed, and the fence was pulled down in places, and in bands of ten or fifteen, men and women began to pull out the top animals and the butchering of the big herd was commenced and carried on all that day. I watched them a long time and then went down to the trap. How the people shouted out my name when they saw me coming: "Apauk! Apauk! Here is Apauk, Bringer of Plenty," they kept crying. You can imagine how happy they made me.

And so began my life as a caller of buffalo for the people; for my people, and the Blackfeet and Kai'na and Gros Ventres as well. The four tribes of them kept me busy, and they made me rich with gifts. In time other young men learned to call herds, but I always did the calling for my own tribe. Then came the building of Fort Benton and the demand of the traders for robes, robes, and still more robes. That kept our hunters busy. They began killing buffalo in great numbers; hunting them daily in the season of prime hides. The camp was always red with meat, and out on the plains thousands and thousands of carcasses rotted or were eaten by the wolves.

When that happened, there was no longer need for my services. Three years after the Fort was built, I called a herd for the last time. After that I was obliged to go out and hunt, or to send some one to hunt for me, when I wanted meat.

I wish that the white people had never come into my country.

THE END

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