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PREFACE.

There is in all the checkered history of America no chapter of more general interest than that which tells of the Aborigines and our dealings with them. It narrates a story often shameful, often noble, sometimes pusillanimous, sometimes heroic, now causing us to blush with shame for fallen human nature, now kindling us with enthusiastic admiration for humanity that seems almost divine; but always full of power to thrill the heart, of romance to captivate the fancy, and of rich food to nourish earnest thought. To the man of war and to the man of peace, to the statesman and to the Christian teacher, to the scientist, and to the romanticist, it makes with equal directness its irresistible appeal.

It is the object of the present volume to relate the story of the Sioux, more properly the Dakota Indians, and our relations with them. Of all the aboriginal people, they were the greatest,—the bravest in war, the wisest in peace, the most powerful in body, the most advanced in mind. As possessors of the famed Red Pipe Stone Quarry, the Indian Mecca, where Gitche Manito the Mighty, revealed himself to man, they have cherished and

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developed more than any others the myths and legends of the Indian race. The foremost leaders of aboriginal civilization, they have longest resisted the inflowing tide of alien civilization brought hither by the Puritan and the Cavalier. And to-day, he who would study the red race in its noblest remnant and in its best estate, must do so among the scattered lodges of the Sioux.

The name of Sitting Bull must be as famous as that of Tecumseh, of Red Cloud, as that of Black Hawk or Massasoit. The Sioux massacres of 1862, make Wyoming seem commonplace, and the last rally of Custer at the Little Big Horn fight has no parallel in all the annals of our Indian wars. Nor is the long drama drawn to an unworthy close by the weird Ghost Dances, the death of Sitting Bull and the mad slaughtering at Wounded Knee.

It is the present purpose to record this history before the blood of the last grim chapter shall have grown dry. The tale is told chiefly in the words of those who could truly say, *magna pars quorum fuimus*. The views of both friends and foes of the Indian are given a fair hearing, nothing extenuated, nothing set down in malice. In years to come, when some metempsychosis shall have translated passion into philosophy, a more discerning judgment may record in other terms these same events. For this day and this generation we can only tell the story as it comes to us in the echoes of war, in the prayer for relief, in the cry of despair.