



LD Nis-sú kai-yo, the celebrated orator of the Blackfeet nation, told me this story several years ago. He was already an old man—a veritable Nestor among these children of the plain. During his boyhood his people had held sway over a vast domain extending from the Yellowstone to the Saskatchewan, and from the Rocky Mountains far to the Eastward; but before he had passed his prime their fortunes had begun to recede before the pitiless advance of another race, and he lived to see them driven gradually Northward and then Westward further and further towards the great rocky barrier, until, as he expressed it, they were forced “to lean against the mountains.” Nis-sú kai-yo fully realized the extent of the disasters that had come upon his people, but he seldom spoke of them in the presence of white men. The great battles and the famous buffalo hunts, in which, as a young warrior and hunter, he had taken an honorable part, were the themes he loved to dwell upon. He was familiar also with the folk lore of his people and often, while sitting at my camp-fire of an autumn evening, he told me these quaint tales of the ancient time. It is impossible to reproduce them, for they were related in Nis-sú kai-yo’s matchless manner, in the silence of the night, and in a part of the world where all these things happened.

