

The artistic charm of savage figures is in their motion—in the postures and looks that express strength, fleetness, cunning, or fear. They have none of the beauty which the refining emotions of love, generosity, pity, or moral courage lend to the pictures-in-repose of civilized man and woman. Standing erect, walking, moving his arm, with extended forefinger in euphatic gesture, his eye full of fire, and his features full of expressive energy, while he was making his short speech, Hole-in-the-Day was a very model of wild masculine grace—a real forest-prince, bearing upon his whole figure and mien the seal of nobility; but the moment he again scented himself on the ground his muscles relaxed, his eyes closed, his face assumed a look of stupid stolidity, and he was once more a gross, repulsive being, with no higher instinct than hunger, and no higher passion than revenge.

It was a critical and dangerous situation. Both parties now suspected treachery; both were ready for battle. The slightest spark would have fired the magazine. There was no hurry, no confusion, no excitement; a holiday gathering could not have shown more apparent carelessness. Quietly, and with scarce audible commands, the soldiers were instructed and posted in the most advantageous positions for defense; a messenger was dispatched to the fort for reinforcements; the citizens, seeming only to be sauntering about, brought and loaded their guns with studied indifference and deliberation. Two old backwoodsmen, cool and trusty shots, were stationed within a few paces of Hole-in-the-Day, with orders, at the first signs of a conflict, to make him their special mark. Every nerve was tense, every hilt and trigger within instant grasp. Nor were the Indians less alert; not a motion escaped their keen notice. Sitting and lying about in motley groups, their faces striped and spotted with every imaginable hue and device, their blankets slipping down from their naked, bronzed, sinewy arms and busts, they smoked, chatted, and laughed with each other, feeling of the sharp points of their new, bright arrow-heads, and showing one another the fashion, weight, and convenience of their war-clubs with the most provoking *sang froid*.

Fortunately the council brought on no angry discussion; fortunately no Indian or white man was drunk or recklessly foolish; fortunately no gun was discharged by accident; fortunately there were no exhibitions of either wanton bravado or cowardly fear; else Crow Wing would that day have been, as has happened on many another council ground, the scene of a bloody fight—a deadly and desperate *mêlée*. The council resulted in merely an hour's preliminary, pointless talk, a wordy and circumlocutory concealment of objects which would have done credit to the most bestarred and bespangled diplomats, and ended in its postponement till next day. Gradually, as they had come, the Indians arose from their sprawling and reclining positions on the ground, and moved off again, like

a ragged rabble as they were, up the road and across the river to their camp, to kill and eat the customary present of an ox which had been given them by the Commissioner.

But, as is usual in such cases, Hole-in-the-Day's artful management defeated his own schemes. It came out a day or two afterward that, by his stubbornness and covert menaces, he hoped to extort amnesty for the depredations committed by his people, and a present of ten thousand dollars' worth of goods to distribute among them, as a guerdon of peace with the whites. In such distributions he has almost uniformly succeeded in securing a lion's share for himself. But some of the Indians, vexed and irritated at his delays, and at having been through his orders brought into trouble, revolted against his authority. Rivals, jealous of his prosperity, crossed the river and burned his house and furniture. A part of his followers joined Big-Dog and Buffalo, came down and held a council with the new Agent, from which they excluded Hole-in-the-Day, as he had formerly excluded them; and finally the camp was broken up and the Indians dispersed, without either the expected amnesty or bounty.

The strange and rapid commingling and attrition of races in the New World has produced few queerer or more anomalous characters than the subject of this sketch. Alternately a despot and subject, landholder and agrarian, aristocrat and communist, citizen and savage, now invoking and now defying the law, a civilized barbarian who goes scalp-hunting by stage, and an apostate heathen who believes in neither God nor Manitou, he will be a potent instrument for good or evil so long as he remains on the border, subject to the accidental influence of good or bad surroundings and impulses.