

with breech-loaders, they made such havoc with their foes that, finally, the Sioux chief exhorting his men, they threw away their own guns, rushed into the wood, and slew the Blackfeet to a man with their knives alone.

I am tempted to narrate here something told me by my wife. I give it in her words: "Boskesikegun (or 'the Gun'), my father's brother, was a man of wonderful skill and success in stealing horses; he was never caught and never wounded. The most horses he ever stole at one time was one hundred and twenty, the least five. There was no one in the nation like him. He knew when others slept or were off their guard, and has often gone into the camp of his enemies when they were asleep, and cut the lines of the horses tied near the lodge and carried them off. The time he took the most, the horses were all penned in an enclosure in the midst of the camp; he went in and drove them out. Whenever it was known he was going out, the young men were glad to go under him. He stole from all nations—the Blackfeet, Crows, Big-bellies, Flatheads, and Sioux. Sometimes his young men would want to kill horses that gave out in the quick travel. This he would not permit; he thought it would bring ill fortune to them—that it was a sin.

"This spring he led a party to steal from the Blackfeet. There were fifteen and a boy—one was his wife's brother. This man had married a widow with one child, a boy. The step-father had been very fond of him, and was in great grief, for the boy had died but a little ago. On their way out they found three horses and sent them back by a young man. My uncle knew that there would be many of them killed, and tried to persuade his brother-in-law to return with the horses, but he would not.

"When they got into the enemy's country he told them one morning it would be a dark day, and before long they saw many of their enemies about them. They sought the best place they could find—a small place shaped like a bowl—it was the best at hand. Soon the Blackfeet were about them. The man who had lost his child said: 'This is what I came here for. I am tired of my life; here I will die,' and he sat with his gun between his knees until a ball in his throat ended him. Our people fought bravely, but the enemy were very many and very close.

Boskesikegun said to his men, 'I shall be killed and many others, but not all of you; tell my wives not to cry for me, we have killed plenty of the enemy. You that get away take care of my brother's son.' When he received a fatal wound in the head, the boy gave a cry, but was told by a man who had married his sister, 'Don't cry; pick up his gun and fight.' The boy did—laughing at every shot he made. He got a ball through the arm, and was knocked senseless with a blow on the head with a stone, but escaped with his life. Some of the enemy understood Cree, and while the fight was going on Boskesikegun said to them, 'I am the man who always took your horses; now that I am about to die you will be able to keep them better.' The fight lasted half a day. At night five Crees—three of them and the boy being badly wounded—escaped, leaving ten dead on the ground.

"Some half-breeds fell in with the Blackfeet a few days after, and they said they had lost thirty men in the battle. The gun belonging to the man who was 'tired of his life,' fell into the hands of a man who escaped. It was a Henry rifle, and slew twenty of these thirty.

"When the men reached the Cree camp, they told the wives of Boskesikegun what he had said. His right wife, or council wife, seemed not much moved, going about singing to herself, but inquired particularly about the place where her husband was killed, and disappeared in the night time. After a search, her friends set out for the place where they had fought, and two days out overtook the faithful creature, on her way to the body of her husband and certain death."

This is what my wife said—adding: "The boy who is in here so often is the same one;" and, indeed, a fine young chap he was in every way, neither he nor his family thinking at all about the little matter I have been relating.

It is a custom among the Indians at certain times to recount their deeds of valour and endurance in battle and the chase. This has been much sneered at by white men as alien to true courage, their own noble reticence being quite inflexible—saving perhaps in books, magazines, newspapers, and general conversation. This, doubtless, is a source of gratulation to the men of destiny, being in its character akin to the gentle heroism that never, never,