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INTRODUCTION

MY first meeting with the Cheyenne Indians was hostile,[1] and after that, though often in the country of the Cheyennes, I never knew them until their wars were over. My first visit to their camp was in 1890 when, at the invitation of my old schoolmate and friend, Lieut. Edward W. Casey, 22nd Infantry, who had enlisted a troop of Cheyenne scouts, I visited him at Fort Keogh and made their acquaintance. Lieutenant Casey was killed in January, 1891, and his scouts were disbanded a little later. From that time on, no year has passed without my seeing the Cheyennes in the North or in the South, or in both camps. I have been fortunate enough to have had, as interpreters in the North, William Rowland, who married into the tribe in the year 1850, and later his sons, James and Willis. In the South, Ben Clark helped me; and until his death in 1918 George Bent, an educated half-breed born at Bent's Old Fort in 1843, who lived his life with his people, was my friend and assistant. He was the son of Owl Woman and Col. William Bent, a man of excellent intelligence and of extraordinary memory.

After a few years' acquaintance, the Indians began to give me their confidence, and I have been able to some extent to penetrate into the secrets of their life. On the other hand, I am constantly impressed by the number of things about the Indians that I do not know. In describing the life, the ways, and the beliefs of the Cheyennes, I have gone into details which may sometimes appear superfluous; but after all, if one is to understand their viewpoint, this seems necessary. The Cheyennes in certain ways live more in accordance with custom and form than we do, and a comprehension of the motives which govern their acts cannot be had without these details.

I have never been able to regard the Indian as a mere object for study—a museum specimen. A half-century spent in rubbing shoulders with them, during which I have had a share in almost every phase of their old-time life, forbids me to think of them except as acquaintances, comrades, and friends. While their culture differs from ours in some respects, fundamentally they are like ourselves,[2] except in so far as their environment has obliged them to adopt a mode of life and of reasoning that is not quite our own, and which, without experience, we do not readily understand.

It is impossible for me to acknowledge all the kindness that I have received during my long association with the Cheyennes. My Indian friends have always been cordial and helpful. To my interpreters, Ben Clark, George Bent, William Rowland and his sons, as well as to Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Eddy and to Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Stohr, I owe much. The illustrations shown are a few of the many photographs taken by Mrs. Grinnell and by Mrs. J. E. Tuell, who have kindly permitted their use. They picture some of the old-time practices and ceremonies, never to be seen again.[3] Rev. Rodolphe Petter has been most generously helpful to me on the linguistic side; and finally, my friend, Frederick W. Hodge, so well equipped with general knowledge of American Indians, and the first living authority on the Indians and the history of the southwest United States, has performed for me the great service of reading over my manuscript. George E. Hyde has helped me with the index. To all these persons, past and present, my thanks are due.

George Bird Grinnell
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[1] Editor's Note: Grinnell first crossed the Missouri in 1870 as a member of Professor O. C Marsh's geological expedition of the Black Hills. On the day they reached Fort McPherson, they learned that earlier the same day a small party of Indians had attacked two or three hunters who had come from the fort. Grinnell accompanied the detachment of soldiers sent to pursue the Indians. Guided by William F. ("Buffalo Bill") Cody, they found only the body of a young man shot and killed by one of the hunters. Based on his clothes, they identified him as a Cheyenne.

[2] Editor's Note: Elsewhere Grinnell has written of the Indians that "too often they have been studied merely as natural-history specimens, and described wholly from the outside. Their humanity has been forgotten" ("Portraits of Indian Types," *Scribner's Magazine*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, March 1905, p. 270).

[3] Editor's Note: The majority of these photographs appear in the present edition, along with numerous new illustrations.