

**MYTHS AND
LEGENDS OF
THE SIOUX**

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Myths and legends of the Sioux by Mrs. Marie L. McLaughlin

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MRS. MARIE L. MCLAUGHLIN

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THE AUTHOR

MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF THE SIOUX

... BY ...

MRS. MARIE L. McLAUGHLIN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
ORIGINAL DRAWINGS



BISMARCK TRIBUNE COMPANY

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1916

*In loving memory of my mother,
MARY GRAHAM BUISSON,
at whose knee most of the stories
contained in this little volume
were told to me, this book is affec-
tionately dedicated : : : :*

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FOREWORD

In publishing these "Myths of the Sioux," I deem it proper to state that I am of one-fourth Sioux blood. My maternal grandfather, Captain Duncan Graham, a Scotchman by birth, who had seen service in the British Army, was one of a party of Scotch Highlanders who in 1811 arrived in the British Northwest by way of York Factory, Hudson Bay, to found what was known as the Selkirk Colony, near Lake Winnipeg, now within the province of Manitoba, Canada. Soon after his arrival at Lake Winnipeg he proceeded up the Red River of the North and the western fork thereof to its source, and thence down the Minnesota River to Mendota, the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, where he located. My grandmother, Ha-za-ho-ta-win, was a full-blood of the Medawakanton Band of the Sioux Tribe of Indians. My father, Joseph Buisson, born near Montreal, Canada, was connected with the American Fur Company, with headquarters at Mendota, Minnesota, which point was for many years the chief distributing depot of the American Fur Company, from which the Indian trade conducted by that company on the upper Mississippi was directed.

I was born December 8, 1842, at Wabasha, Minnesota, then Indian country, and resided thereat until fourteen years of age, when I was sent to school at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

I was married to Major James McLaughlin at Mendota, Minnesota, January 28, 1864, and resided in Minnesota until July 1, 1871, when I accompanied my husband to Devils Lake Agency, North Dakota, then Dakota Territory, where I remained ten years in most friendly relations with the Indians of that agency. My husband was Indian agent at Devils Lake Agency, and in 1881 was transferred to Standing Rock, on the Missouri River, then a very important agency, to take charge of the Sioux who had then but recently surrendered to the military authorities, and been brought by steamboat from various points on the upper Missouri, to be permanently located on the Standing Rock reservation.

Having been born and reared in an Indian community, I at an early age acquired a thorough knowledge of the Sioux language, and having lived on Indian reservations for the past forty years in a position which brought me very near to the Indians, whose confidence I possessed, I have,

therefore, had exceptional opportunities of learning the legends and folk-lore of the Sioux.

The stories contained in this little volume were told me by the older men and women of the Sioux, of which I made careful notes as related, knowing that, if not recorded, these fairy tales would be lost to posterity by the passing of the primitive Indian.

The notes of a song or a strain of music coming to us through the night not only give us pleasure by the melody they bring, but also give us knowledge of the character of the singer or of the instrument from which they proceed. There is something in the music which unerringly tells us of its source. I believe musicians call it the "timbre" of the sound. It is independent of, and different from, both pitch and rhythm; it is the texture of the music itself.

The "timbre" of a people's stories tells of the qualities of that people's heart. It is the texture of the thought, independent of its form or fashioning, which tells the quality of the mind from which it springs.

In the "timbre" of these stories of the Sioux, told in the lodges and at the camp fires of the past, and by the fire-sides of the Dakotas of today, we recognize the very texture of the thought of a simple, grave, and sincere people, living in intimate contact and friendship with the big out-of-doors that we call Nature; a race not yet understanding all things, not proud and boastful, but honest and childlike and fair; a simple, sincere, and gravely thoughtful people, willing to believe that there may be in even the everyday things of life something not yet fully understood; a race that can, without any loss of native dignity, gravely consider the simplest things, seeking to fathom their meaning and to learn their lesson—equally without vain-glorious boasting and trifling cynicism; an earnest, thoughtful, dignified, but simple and primitive people.

To the children of any race these stories can not fail to give pleasure by their vivid imaging of the simple things and creatures of the great out-of-doors and the epics of their doings. They will also give an intimate insight into the mentality of an interesting race at a most interesting stage of development, which is now fast receding into the mists of the past.

MARIE L. McLAUGHLIN (Mrs. James McLaughlin).

McLaughlin, S. D., May 1, 1913.