

6. Helen Hunt Jackson's Account of Sand Creek and the Aftermath, 1881

The Governor of Colorado called for military aid, and for authority to make a campaign against the Indians, which was given him. But as there was no doubt that many of the Indians were still peaceable and loyal, and he desired to avoid every possibility of their sharing in the punishment of the guilty, he issued a proclamation in June, requesting all who were friendly to come to places which he designated, where they were to be assured of safety and protection. This proclamation was sent to all the Indians of the plains. In consequence of it, several bands of friendly Arapahoes and Cheyennes came to Fort Lyon, and were there received by the officer in charge, rationed, and assured of safety. Here there occurred, on the 29th of November, one of the foulest massacres which the world has seen. . . .

In October of the next year some of the bands, having first had their safety assured by an old and true friend, I. H. Leavenworth, Indian Agent for the Upper Arkansas, gathered together to hold a council with United States Commissioners on the Little Arkansas. The commissioners were empowered by the President to restore to the survivors of the Sand Creek massacre full value for all the property then destroyed; "to make reparation," so far as possible. To each woman who had lost a husband there they gave one hundred and sixty acres of land; to each child who had lost a parent, the

same. Probably even an Indian woman would consider one hundred and sixty acres of land a poor equivalent for a murdered husband; but the offers were accepted in good part by the tribe, and there is nothing in all the history of this patient race more pathetic than the calm and reasonable language employed by some of these Cheyenne and Arapahoe chiefs at this council. Said Black Kettle, the chief over whose lodge the American flag, with a white flag tied below, was floating at the time of the massacre, "I once thought that I was the only man that persevered to be the friend of the white man; but since they have come and cleaned out our lodges, horses, and everything else, it is hard for me to believe white men any more. All my friends, the Indians that are holding back, they are afraid to come in; are afraid that they will be betrayed as I have been. I am not afraid of white men, but come and take you by the hand." Elsewhere, Black Kettle spoke of Colonel Chivington's troops as "that fool-band of soldiers that cleared out our lodges and killed our women and children. This is hard on us." With a magnanimity and common-sense which white men would have done well to imitate in their judgments of the Indians, he recognized that it would be absurd, as well as unjust, to hold all white men in distrust on account of the acts of that "fool-band of soldiers."