



Two Volunteer Missionaries Among the Dakotas: Or the Story of the Labors of Samuel W. And Gideon H. Pond (Classic Reprint)

S. W. Pond

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Excerpt from Two Volunteer Missionaries Among the Dakotas: Or the Story of the Labors of Samuel W. And Gideon H. Pond

The Dakotas received their earliest impressions of civilization from three distinct classes of persons, widely differing from one another in character, occupation, and motives. These three classes were the military, including government officials, the mercantile, and the aggressively religious.

The influence exerted by the Fort Snelling garrison on the great body of the Indians was necessarily limited, and worked no essential change in their character or mode of life. No serious conflict occurred between the Sioux and the military forces prior to the year 1862, and the influence of the post was probably, for the most part, beneficial. Liquor sellers were not allowed to enter the Indian country, and an honest and determined effort was made to exclude all persons of doubtful character and antecedents, and this effort was fairly successful. In April, 1848, Scott Campbell, the veteran interpreter, was banished from the country in pursuance of this policy. His fault was selling liquor to the Indians.

Mercantile interests in the northwest were represented exclusively by the fur traders, many of whom were French Canadians by birth, and nearly all of whom had Indian families, so that in the last generation of traders many mixed bloods were found. These traders were necessarily men of ability, energy, and sagacity, but sadly lacked cultivation, and in fact many of them could neither read nor write. Their influence with the Indians was, generally speaking, neither elevating nor improving. There were a few exceptions to this rule, among which Mr. Renville, of Lac Qui Parle, may be classed.

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