

PONKA STORIES, TOLD BY TIM POTTER, OR BIG
GRIZZLY BEAR, IN 1872, AT PONKA AGENCY,
DAKOTA TERRITORY.

Prophecies. — At a time when the Ponkas had no food, Horse-with-yellow-hair prayed to Wakanda (the Great Mysterious Power) on the hill beyond Stony Butte,¹ and said, "There are many buffalo. Go and see. This is what Wakanda says." They departed, and only one man returned. He said, "All the Ponkas have been killed." Then Smoke-maker prayed and sang, prophesying, "To-morrow they will return. Wakanda says so." And his prophecy was fulfilled.

A man prophesied that the Dakotas would steal White Eagle's horse. Bare Legs had a presentiment of his death. He saw his spirit covered with blood upon a hill; and four days after, May 3, 1872, he was slain. Bird Head lost a brother, to whom Knows-the-land prophesied thus: "O friend, the Dakotas will kill you!" Smoke-maker had a drum. One summer day, when it was out-of-doors, it began to beat when no one was near it. So Smoke-maker meditated and prophesied, saying, "Twenty-two Pawnees shall be killed." In the fight that ensued, Big Head was wounded in the neck. The Pawnees were defeated, and the infant son of Smoke-maker was brought to the battle-field, where his feet were placed on the necks of two Pawnees: hence his name, Naⁿ-ba'wa-taⁿ, *Trod on two*. This occurred in 1857.

Sleight of Hand. — One day Whip, a head chief, said, "I am going to make the sun blue." And he did so. Then he said, "I am going to pull out some of the hair of the man in the moon." He held up his hands to show that he had no hair in them. Then he began to sing. Suddenly he had some bloody hair in each hand. Ga-*pi*'-de maⁿ'-giⁿ and a great many others were witnesses.

Once, when the Ponkas were destitute of food, Buffalo Bull, the father of Grizzly Bear's Ear, said, "I will use magic." His wife replied, "Please do so." So he made a pile of earth about two feet high, and shot four arrows into it. A large deer was then slain, furnishing them with plenty to eat.

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¹ A prominent landmark, about seven miles back from the Missouri and the Agency.