

Blackfeet women





CONCERNING FIDELITY, HUMAN frailty must be taken into consideration, but the Indian woman was a true wife and the Indian man a true husband. The vows on both sides were taken seriously and both man and woman looked upon their marriage contract as something extremely vital to their position in the tribe. The integrity of the home was revered, and a man known as a good husband and a woman known as a good wife were honored members of society. Polygamy was never extensively practiced among the Lakotas, comparatively few men—chiefs or men of special note—taking more than one wife. But this arrangement was not assigned to divine instruction nor given a religious hue; it was wholly and solely an adjustment with the social plans of the tribe. A chief would have considered it much more dishonorable to have one overworked wife than to have two or three to share the duties of his household, and the women were of the same opinion. But fidelity was another Indian virtue to become weakened by the disruption of his society, for the white man was wont to take the things that pleased him.

Luther Standing Bear
Oglala Lakota

