VARIOUS

A STRING OF PEARLS

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A String of Pearls

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A String of Pearls / Second Book of the Faith-Promoting Series:

Содержание

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The first book of this, the "FAITH-PROMOTING SERIES"—*My First Mission*– which was published some months since, has been so well received by the public that we are encouraged to continue the publication of works of a similar character.

We herewith give "A STRING OF PEARLS" to our readers, feeling assured that they will find the contents of this little work of inestimable value.

Probably no people in the world possess so rich and varied an experience as do the Latter-day Saints, and especially the Elders who have labored in the ministry in various lands. Contributions from them, giving a relation of their personal experience, are most profitable to young people to peruse.

The present age is one of doubt and unbelief. Faith in God, in His willingness to hear and answer prayer, and in the gifts of the gospel, has almost vanished from the earth. As a people we have

this to contend with. Our children, not having had experience themselves, have to be carefully watched, lest they, too, should partake of the leaven of unbelief. We feel that it is a duty that we owe to them to place within their reach the evidences that their fathers and their mothers have received of the existence of God, of His willingness to hear and answer prayer, and to bestow His gifts upon those who seek for them in the right way.

God has wrought as marvelously in behalf of the Latter-day Saints as He did in former days in behalf of His people.

We hope that this little volume will prove of great value to those who read it, by inspiring them with faith, and furnishing them a foundation upon which to build and obtain knowledge from the Lord.

We also indulge in the hope that its publication may stir up others – of whom there are so many hundreds, and perhaps thousands, in our Church who have had valuable experience – to take the time and trouble necessary to commit incidents of this character to paper, that they may not die with themselves, but that they may live to speak hope and consolation unto, and to inspire confidence in, those who shall come after them.

With an earnest hope, therefore, that the contents of this little volume may prove a help to those who may read it, by inspiring them with faith in the Almighty and His promises, we modestly publish it, and give it the expressive title which it bears. G. Q. C.

October, 1880.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In publishing this, the second edition of the STRING OF PEARLS, it is only necessary to add that the first edition of 5,000 copies is exhausted, and we are induced by the continued demand for the book to re-issue it. It is very gratifying to notice the taste which has been developed during the past few years, among the youth of our community, for such reading matter as the FAITH-PROMOTING SERIES contains. We hope to see a continued growth in this direction, and that our brethren and sisters of experience will be prompted by it to write for publication such sketches from their lives as will point a moral and convey a lesson to the minds of future generations who may peruse the same.

We see no reason why the six volumes of the FAITH-PROMOTING SERIES already published, as well as those which may follow, should not be regarded in the future as standard works of the Church, and used for home reading or Sunday school class books when their authors and those of whose history they treat shall have passed to another sphere of action.

June, 1882. THE PUBLISHER.

AMONG THE PONCAS

By W. C. S

CHAPTER I

START FOR THE MOUNTAINS – EXPERIENCE AS A COBBLER – INDIAN MISSION ABANDONED – CACHING PROPERTY – PONCA INDIANS – A PROPHECY AND ITS FULFILLMENT.

A few days after the organization of the "Mormon" Battalion, and when it had left Council Bluffs for Fort Leavenworth, it was decided in the council of the authorities of the Church that Brother George Miller (Bishop) should raise a company and endeavor to cross the Rocky Mountains that fall.

At this time I was traveling and living with the family of Bishop Miller. I had been suffering with fever and ague for two months previous, but a few days before we arrived at Council Bluffs the fever left me, when my legs commenced to swell and finally broke out into sores, some of which were over an inch deep. I had five on my right and four on my left leg. These caused me much pain; but the Lord blessed me with His Spirit, and I did not feel in the least discouraged.

I had brought some shoemaker's tools along, so that I could mend my shoes when they needed it. I had them in use every time we stopped, mending shoes for the camp. I soon learned to be a pretty good cobbler, especially in patching up the sisters' shoes.

Some four of Bishop Miller's teamsters left to join the Battalion. Brother Henry G. Boyle was the one who drove the

team I traveled in, but now I had to be teamster. We left with sufficient breadstuff to last a year, consisting of flour, corn meal, etc., but no meat, as we hoped to find plenty of game on our journey. In this we were disappointed, as we were without meat for several weeks, with the exception of fish when we could catch them.

When about twenty miles east of the Pawnee village and mission we met several white men, who had been in charge of the mission, under the superintendence of an Indian agent appointed by the government. These men had been employed at building houses, fencing in land, sowing grain, etc., and endeavoring to teach the Indians to do likewise; but the Indians for some cause had become exasperated and had killed two of the white men, one of whom was a blacksmith.

As soon as this party learned of our numbers and intentions they wished to return to the mission and cache some government property, such, as iron, steel, blacksmith tools, farming implements, etc., which they left in a hurry when fleeing from the Indians. On arriving at the mission and village, we found that all the Indians had left, fearing, I presume, that they would be punished if they were caught by the government troops.

The brethren helped these men to cache all the property, which they did by digging a large hole in the ground, in a dry place, putting the goods into it, covering them with the soil taken out of the hole, and building a large fire over the place, that the ashes might cover up all traces of the digging.

One of the men of this party joined the Church, and emigrated to the valley with us.

We found several fields of grain ready for harvesting, with potatoes, turnips and sweet corn, as well as a large quantity of wheat, barley and oats already threshed and housed. This was all handed over to our camp.

We remained here a couple of days, when we received a letter from President B. Young's camp, advising us to winter on Grand Island, which was well timbered, and where there was good feed also This island was a few miles west of us, on the Platte River.

The letter also stated that a company had left President Young's camp, who would winter with us and give us sufficient strength to guard against an attack from Indians.

The day following eight Ponca chiefs came to our camp, stating that they had come from their nation to make peace with the Pawnees, and appeared much disappointed when they learned they had left, in consequence of their trouble with the men who had charge of the mission.

These Ponca Indians who came to our camp were large, fine-looking men.

Bishop Miller asked them to stay with us a few days, which they did, and appeared much pleased. They soon learned where we expected to winter, and were very anxious to have us all go to their village and stay. They represented that they had a good country, well timbered, and plenty of good pasture and shelter for our cattle.

The next day the company sent to join us, consisting of thirty men with their families, arrived. As soon as they had rested, a meeting was called, to know what should be done – winter on Grand Island, without the consent of the Pawnee Indians, who owned the land and timber there, or go with the Ponca chiefs, where we would be welcomed by the whole nation.

The council decided to go with the Poncas, and the next day we fitted up our wagons for the journey.

The next thing was to load up with as much grain and potatoes as we could get into our wagons, for these were the first we had been able to obtain since leaving Nauvoo in the spring.

After we got every corner in our wagons filled with eatables we left a great many bushels of grain and vegetables upon the land to waste, literally fulfilling a prophecy uttered by Bishop Miller, a few days before we started. When speaking to the camp, he said he hoped all who were going in that company were "true Latter-day Saints, full of faith and good works," and added:

"All of you who have been with us have seen the power of God manifested in behalf of the traveling camps of Israel, in protecting our leaders from our enemies, and providing food for the Saints, who number thousands. Some may say, 'We were then traveling through a country where we found an occasional farm, from the owner of which we could purchase what we required; but to-day we have left all these, and have nothing but a wilderness before us, without farms, houses or grain.'

"Let me say, as I have before said, you shall be blessed in the

future as you have been in the past.

"What, with food? Yes; I tell you yes! I promise you all, this day, in the name of the Lord, that you shall see the time while upon this journey, that you shall have more grain than you can load in your wagons, and leave many bushels behind you to waste upon the ground."

This, my readers, was fulfilling prophecy to the very letter. How often I have seen the sayings of our leaders fulfilled in like manner since I started upon this journey!

CHAPTER II

GOING WITH THE PONCAS – BUFFALO MEAT – CAMPED FOR THE WINTER – COUNCIL WITH THE INDIANS – A WAR DANCE – SELECTED TO GO WITH THE PONCAS ON A WINTER'S HUNT.

Brother James Emmett, one of our party, understood a little of the Sioux language, and one of the Ponca chiefs could converse in this language. Brother Emmett was asked to find out how far the Poncas lived from the camp. The chief told him three sleeps, or, as he understood it, three days' travel for our cattle: but we afterwards learned that the chief meant three days' and nights' travel with horses (one hundred and fifty miles).

The country over which we traveled the first three days was very rough for our wagons.

The name of the chief of the Poncas was *Ta-nugar-number*, which means, two buffalo bulls. He was thus named because he once killed two bulls, while they were running through the village.

On the fourth day this chief came to us, saying he and the party had killed three buffaloes. Brother Miller ordered the camp to stop near a small stream close by, and send for the dead animals, that we might have buffalo meat for dinner. This was the first time we had had meat for ten weeks.

A team was sent, and the meat soon arrived, and was

distributed through the camp.

It was a novel scene, I assure you, to see us each with a stick and a piece of meat stuck on the end of it, toasting, or broiling it, before the fire. This was the first buffalo meat we had ever eaten, and we all thought it the sweetest and best meat we ever tasted.

We remained here until two o'clock, p. m., the next day, when but little remained of the buffaloes, except the bones. Several more were killed before we reached the village. The meat of some was dried, but all the prime pieces were eaten.

On the eleventh day we camped within two miles of their village, and three miles from where we located for the winter. No sooner had we unyoked our cattle than we were visited by nearly all the nation, old and young. All wanted to see us. Many of them had never seen an ox before, and but few had seen many white men.

A council of the chiefs and braves, or warriors, was called, to meet with our brethren. The chief told his people that he had invited us to stay on their land during the winter. That we wanted timber for building houses and for fuel, and pasture for our cattle. He said they had plenty of both – more than they or we needed – and he wanted his braves to say that we could have it. In return, he told them we would build them houses, plow and plant some land for their squaws, and give them some flour. He then asked for an expression of their feelings.

Several of the old men spoke, and all said we were welcome to come and get what we wanted.

The Poncas numbered about two thousand souls.

After the meeting dismissed some thirty of the braves, or soldiers, favored us with a war dance.

The musical instrument used for this was used at all the dances I ever saw while with them. It was like a tambourine, and about the same size. This is beaten as you would beat a drum. The braves formed in a circle, and at every beat of the instrument (and there were perhaps seventy strokes to the minute) they would jump up, at the same time bending forward in a half-stooping position, and passing around as they jumped, yelling and hallooing in a most frightful manner.

All they lacked at this dance to make it a perfect war dance, were the scalps of some whom they had killed in battle.

This drumming, yelling and jumping continued for about fifteen minutes, when all the Indians left the camp for their own village.

We were about one mile from the Missouri River, and near the mouth of Swift or Running-Water River, and where the Indians raise a little corn.

The next day the whole village turned out to visit us. They wanted us to trade with them by giving them flour, sugar, coffee, etc., for moccasins, buckskins, etc. A great many exchanges were made, to the satisfaction of both parties. The Indians, however, had by far the best of the bargains, as we found out the next morning, for many of us were minus an ax, a kettle, pan, cup, knife or something that was used daily about our camp; and all

these things we learned had been taken by our Indian visitors.

As soon as this was known to the chiefs, they ordered all who had these articles to return them to our camp. A few tin cups, saucepans, milk pans and such things were brought back, but not a tithe of what were taken.

After this but few were allowed to visit us. The chief appointed two Indians to be at our camp every day, to keep the others away, or keep them from stealing.

In about three weeks a number of houses were ready for the Saints to occupy, and about two-thirds of our people were housed for the winter.

While this was being done I had been kept busy, shoe-mending; and very often I would be called upon to mend an Indian's bridle or his bullet pouch, which I did cheerfully, and to their satisfaction.

About the first of October the Ponca chief came to Brother Miller, and informed him that they were about to start for their winter hunting ground, to hunt buffalo, elk and deer, to get robes and meat, and wished to have a few of our young men accompany them. He mentioned me, stating that I was good and kind to his people, mending bullet pouches, etc., for them. That same evening, after several of our young men had proposed to go with the Indians on their hunt, Bishop Miller said, calling me by name, "I would like you to go with them if you had not those fearful sores on your legs. The chiefs and some braves have taken quite a liking to you, and I feel, Brother S – , as though you would do

much good by going among them on this journey, but I dare not ask you to go with such legs."

A peculiar feeling came over me while he was speaking, and I was led to say, "Brother Miller, if you say I can accomplish good by going with those Indians, I will go. I have no fears about my legs or myself; if anything should occur, that I should never return, I have no relatives in camp to mourn my loss. This weak, deformed body of mine can be better spared than those who are able bodied, all of whom are needed for the protection of the camp."

He there and then appointed me to go, and blessed me in the name of the Lord. He said that I should do much good, and have exceeding faith in the God of Israel, who would guide and direct me in a marvellous manner.

The next day we started. Our company consisted of Brother John Kay, who was going to do a little trading with and gunsmithing for the Indians, Frederick Bainbridge, his teamster, four young brethren and myself, with the Ponca nation which numbered two thousand souls, with all their lodges, camp kettles, etc.

CHAPTER III

GRAND "PEACE" SMOKE – TABLE ETIQUETTE – NO DISH-WASHING – WHITE FRIENDS DISCOURAGED.

Two hours before the Indians left for their winter hunting ground a few of the chiefs came to Bishop Miller to smoke the pipe of peace with him and our camp. This pipe of peace had been smoked with us many times before; and, as it may be a question how this is done, I will explain it to my young readers. When there is a sufficient number to form a circle, they always do so. The chief who invites the party fills his large pipe with tobacco (more than one pipe is used when the company is large). As soon as it is filled, the chief holds the bowl of the pipe upwards, and says a few words appropriate to the occasion, calling always upon the Great Spirit, whom they call "Wurconda."

These speeches were always made at feasts of importance, or councils, and at every "big smoke," or when they send off a war party, and when a party goes to make peace with another nation.

I was at a meeting once where a number of chiefs were in council, and were about to send off a peace party, consisting of four young braves and a chief, all of whom were present during the ceremony. The pipe was filled, and the head chief held the bowl upwards, made a short speech and passed it to the next

chief, who said a few words and handed it to the next. After all had received it and spoken, the chief, who presided lit the pipe, and all smoked. A small, dried bladder was produced after this by the chief. This was passed around with the same ceremony as the pipe was. Some very fine grass was next handed around in the same manner. After this the marrow from a large bone of the buffalo and a piece of plug tobacco were each served in the same manner as the other articles. The pipe, tobacco, grass and marrow were then placed in the bladder and tied up. When this was done the young chief who had charge of the party was asked to step into the circle of chiefs. The bladder and its contents were then held up by the presiding chief, who made a few remarks and handed it to the young man, and he handed it to each chief in turn. After some remarks by the head chief the party started upon their important mission.

During this ceremony no one spoke but those in council. It was as quiet as any religious meeting I ever attended. Each speech was like a prayer, and was delivered in a very solemn manner.

After this peaceable smoke the Indians shook hands with their white friends and jumped into their saddles and left.

It was a novel scene to us, and I am sure it would be to my young readers, to see this Indian nation on the move. In advance could be seen the chiefs and some of their braves on horseback. Next came the squaws, leading horses packed with their lodges and camp-equipage. Next came the old men and old women, with their lodges packed and drawn by dogs with poles strapped on

their backs. With these were young men and maidens, all on foot. Those who had babies strapped them upon a board, and carried them as the Utah Indians do.

All the young men and boys had bows and arrows; and when traveling they had a good time, testing their skill by shooting rabbits and small birds. When in camp a great deal of their time was spent in shooting at a mark.

The first day we traveled about eight miles.

We had been invited to stay in one of the chief's lodges, he having three of them and three wives. At sunset the chief invited us to supper, which consisted of dried buffalo meat, boiled, and put into one large, wooden bowl with the liquor it was boiled in. One large horn spoon was provided with which to eat, and the meat was cut up into small pieces.

The chief took a spoonful of meat and liquor, then handed the spoon to the one next to him, who did likewise, and so the spoon was passed around until all had used it, and partaken of as much food as they wanted. The meat was as tough as leather and about as palatable, and was truly the hardest and toughest meat I ever ate.

We slept in the tent that night, and rested well. My legs pained me some, but I felt that the Lord was with us.

Brother John Kay had a little flour with him, and on the following morning, he invited us to breakfast on cakes fried in fat, which we ate with a relish.

About nine o'clock, a. m., one of the chiefs went through the

village, telling the people that they were going to a certain place that day, and that they could prepare for the journey as soon as they pleased.

The women commenced immediately to pack up their things, and take down their lodges, while the men started for their horses.

The women among the Indians have most of the work to do. They put up and pull down the lodges, get the wood, cook, make and mend their clothes, and dress all the robes and skins, for their own use and for the market.

The men hunt, look after their horses, fight, if necessary, smoke, eat and sleep.

We traveled on in this way, eating the same kind of meat, only broiled at times for a change (which was far preferable) instead of being boiled. You may ask if the meat and the dish or bowl we ate from were clean.

I thought not, for the meat, the bowl and kettle were carried in dirty, greasy sacks. In fact, all the eatables and cooking utensils were in these sacks, packed upon the backs of horses, when traveling, and when in camp, thrown around a dirty and dusty lodge.

I scarcely ever saw a piece of meat, a kettle or a bowl washed by them while I was with them.

At first we partook of our meals with but little relish, but after a week's travel, we found our appetites improved.

Up to this time we traveled near the Running Water River, without seeing any buffalo, or game of any kind. Here our young

brethren became perfectly discouraged, not finding game nor immediate prospects for any, and they concluded to leave.

We were then about fifty miles from our camp. I was asked to accompany them, but declined, feeling that I had not accomplished my mission.

This far we had crossed a number of small, clear streams, from three to seven feet wide, and often three feet deep. In crossing these I found the water gave relief to my sore and painful legs, and, as often as I could, I bathed the sores and found relief. Three of the sores had entirely healed, and for this I thanked the Lord.

We parted here with our young brethren, wishing them a pleasant journey, while we marched on and camped again near the same stream.

Soon after we had partaken of our evening meal, two Indians came riding into camp, bringing good news, that buffaloes were a few miles west of us.

This filled the Indians with joy, so much so that bonfires were built outside the lodges to give light, so that the young folks could dance, and the old men might smoke and talk over things of the past.

It was a very interesting sight to me, to see some eight or ten circles of young men and women, dancing in the same way, and to the same music, that I have described before, as a "war dance." And let me here say that women join the men in a real, genuine war dance, (when they have a scalp of some unfortunate Indian who has crossed their path,) and seem to enjoy it quite as well

as the men; for they jump as high, and as often, and do a great deal of horrible yelling.

With this dancing by the young folks, and the smoking by the old men, (women never smoke) and the multitude looking at the dancers, it was a happy time for all.

After enjoying these pleasures about three hours the whole company, except the guard, retired to their lodges, many, no doubt, to dream of the good time coming – of killing buffaloes and eating fresh meat.

At day-break a chief notified the camp to prepare to move. No sooner was the word given, than the people commenced to pack up, and take down lodges, and in one hour we were again on the move.

At the time the chief gave the word for the Indians to prepare to move, another chief was giving orders to those who had hunting horses to prepare and leave for the slaughter. By the time we reached a small stream about five miles ahead, we found these hunters with ten fine buffaloes ready for the two thousand hungry souls. Lodges were soon up, fires lighted, and the whole camp busy cooking and eating fresh meat. I had an invitation, with my brethren, to cat roast or broiled buffallo, which I accepted and enjoyed it very much. I believe I ate two pounds of solid meat before I slept that night, without feeling the least inconvenience. We had no bread nor potatoes with it, which, of course, makes a great difference.

The camp was up early the next morning and moved on

about four miles, without breakfast, when we stopped, hoping our hunters, who were ahead of us, would find more game. At sunset, four Indians brought in two fat deer, and soon others came, bringing two buffaloes. Shortly after the deer arrived, we were invited to dine on deer meat, which we found very good. At first I found it rather strange to eat so much meat and no bread with it; but I soon got used to it. I had been ten weeks living on bread without meat, and if any one had asked me at the time which I would prefer of the two, if I could have but one, I should have chosen bread; but after I had lived on meat a few weeks, I would have said, give me meat, rather than bread alone.

CHAPTER IV

LAST TWO BRETHREN LEAVE ME – HOMESICK – TONSORIAL EXPERIENCE – "WHADEE-SHIPPER," A NEW NAME FOR ME – KINDNESS OF THE INDIANS.

The part of the country we were traveling in was so rough and hilly that it was impossible to travel with a wagon, so Brothers Kay and Bainbridge concluded to leave, which they did that morning.

I have not forgotten the time when we parted, and I saw them for the last time passing over the top of a high hill, each swinging his hat as a token of good by and good wishes.

How different our positions! They were going to their families and friends, while I was to remain with a few Indians, or wild men of the desert.

I must confess that for awhile I felt a little homesick. I started for a deep ravine near by, out of sight of the village, where I knelt down and prayed to the Lord for strength and an increase of faith, that I might accomplish the work before me with cheerfulness of heart.

After this I felt better, and went to the chief's lodge and got out my journal to write. No one else was in the lodge at the time, but just as I was about to commence writing, a couple of young squaws entered the lodge and sat down beside me. The

eldest asked me, as I understood, for my comb, and I took it from my pocket and offered it to her, thinking they wished to comb their hair; but, to my surprise, she leaned her head towards me, asking and making signs for me to comb and braid her hair, as our white women did theirs. At first I concluded something evil was intended, and they were sent to prove me; but I soon changed my mind, and believed them innocent of any wrong. I was somewhat confused, I assure you, in making the attempt to dress a lady's hair, and blushed considerably when I commenced, which they observed, and both laughed.

As soon as I had finished one side I handed my comb over to her companion, for her to do the other side, which she did, and much better than I had done. When this was done, lady No. 1 combed and braided the hair of lady No. 2, very nicely. She then returned the comb to me. This was the first and last hair-dressing I was called upon to perform while with them. The next day many of the young women had their hair arranged in the same style.

I remained in the same lodge and with the same chief as when I started with them. This same evening several Indians came to his lodge, and, after talking awhile, sent for an old Frenchman who had been with them a number of years, and could speak some English. They told him they were pleased that I was going to remain with them. It was good, and I was a *sargey morie tongar*,[1] which is "hardy American," and they would give me the

[1] *Morie-tongar*, is the name they give to all Americans. *Morie* is knife, and *Tongar* is large knife. The first Americans they ever saw all had swords, which they called large

name of their fire steel (one they use with a flint, to strike fire with, which they call *whadee shipper*). This was my Indian name from that time. This was soon known by the Indians in the village, for the next day all who met me called me by my new name.

I continued to pass through every stream we came to, and after awhile I found myself almost free from sores. For this I felt truly thankful and much encouraged.

One day two Indians came to the village who had been visiting their sister, who was married in the Sioux nation. These men informed the chief that a band of the Yankton Sioux were short of meat and robes and had but little game on their land, and had been driving off buffalo from the Poncas' lands, which was the cause of not finding buffalo sooner than we did.

We took early starts in the morning, traveling sometimes until two or three o'clock in the afternoon without food. All Indians that I saw on this trip preferred traveling before breaking their fast, and after awhile I concluded it was better than starting off after eating a hearty meal.

This was the beginning of November; the nights were frosty but the days were very pleasant. We were now in a bleak and cold country, with but little grass or timber. By this time my legs were quite healed, for which I gave thanks to the Lord.

Five weeks had passed since I left our camp to accompany the Indians, and thus far I had enjoyed myself.

The Indians were very kind to me, and all were anxious that

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knives; hence their name.

I should learn their language. While traveling, the young men would walk with me, show me the "cut off," or nearest way to a certain point we would have to pass, and every day I would learn a new word or two.

I started with one pair of old shoes, which lasted me but two weeks, when one of the chiefs presented me with a new pair of buckskin moccasins. For this kind act I blessed him in the name of the Lord. I found them very easy to my feet, and could walk much better with them than with shoes. After a time, though, they began to show signs of wear, and one day when walking with the son of a chief, he looked at my feet and saw my toe sticking through my moccasin. He immediately said, *pashee* (which means "no good,") pulled off his own moccasins and handed them to me, telling me to put them on, which I did, and he put on mine. His were new, but he appeared quite pleased that he had them to give to me.

CHAPTER V

A BUFFALO HUNT – A THRILLING SIGHT – CONVERSATIONS WITH THE INDIANS – SCURVY – ANSWER TO PRAYER.

At this time we had an abundance of buffalo, deer and elk meat, killing from five to forty buffaloes in one day, and as I have witnessed several of these buffalo hunts, I will tell my young readers how the Indians proceed in hunting and killing them.

In the first place, there is a chief or president over every company starting out to hunt, so that good order may be kept; otherwise the buffaloes would be frightened away, and perhaps only one or two of a large herd be killed.

The chief in charge, when first in sight, calculating the number there are, and the distance from them, gives his orders, telling who must follow next to him, and who next, and so on until about twenty of those who have good horses are chosen to follow him. After these, all who have horses follow if they choose to do so.

Sometimes it is better to keep at a distance from the buffaloes, until the chief and his chosen men scatter the band, when those behind follow the buffaloes and soon kill them.

The chief and party start off, walking their horses, and on the lee side of the buffaloes, until they are seen by the game, which sometimes does not occur until they ride within a few rods of them. As soon as the buffaloes see these horsemen they run from

them.

The chief, riding in among them, first picks out the best and fattest animal he can find, and kills it. Then follow the others, each doing likewise. By this time the herd is scattered. These men load their guns again and follow them, killing as many as they can. In a short time as many as fifty Indians are after them on horses, and the buffaloes scatter all over the country. They can be seen in twos, threes, or in larger numbers, with Indians trying to catch up with them. Those having the best horses kill the most buffaloes.

If the hunt is near a village, which is often the case, the old men and women go out and skin the animals killed, and help themselves to as much meat as they can pack. The robe belongs to the party who killed the animal.

At one hunt there were about 400 buffaloes, the largest number I ever saw together while with the Indians.

This was the best and most exciting hunt I ever saw, and I know of no scene that I ever witnessed, either before or since, that was so exciting and interesting to me. I saw a sham fight in 1838, when 20,000 British troops were engaged for three hours, and were viewed by Queen Victoria, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Hill, Marshal Soult, and other notables. The troops were well drilled, equipped in splendid style, rode fine horses, and when moving in masses from one place to another with their glittering accoutrements, breastplates, helmets, etc., they presented a grand appearance; yet it was not to be compared

for real interest to the spectacle presented by this buffalo hunt.

Each Indian had nothing but a blanket or robe around his loins, and carried only a bow and a quiver of arrows (but few having guns) for his weapons.

To see those Indians galloping at full speed, with their hair flying in the wind, after the black, wild animals, in a wild and desert country, with only nature for their instructor, was to me the most thrilling and soul-stirring sight I ever beheld in my life, and one I shall never forget. Old as I am (62 years), I would go farther to see another such a hunt, than I would to see a sham fight, such as the one mentioned.

Fifty buffaloes were killed in this hunt, and after it was over we remained in camp for three weeks, to give the women a chance to dry the meat and dress the robes, as we had no means of carrying them in their green state.

By this time I had learned considerable of their language and was able to converse tolerably well with them; and, when sitting in the evening with some of the chiefs, they would ask me to talk to them about our people, wishing to know where we were going, and why we were going so far from our white brethren, etc.

An old Frenchman interpreted for us as I talked, he knowing that I could understand enough of their language to detect it if he did not translate my words correctly. I gave them a brief history of the Church, the principles taught by the Prophet Joseph, his and his brother Hyrum's death, and also of the Book of Mormon (having one with me, which I showed them). I also told them

where their forefathers came from, where they first landed, and how they, like us, had been scattered and driven from the rising almost to the setting sun.

These conversations were many, and always very interesting to them. I may here mention that, when I left the nation, the chief with whom I stayed asked me for the Book of Mormon, and told me he would keep it as long as he lived, and his son would keep it after him; for he wanted to have the book that could give the history of their fathers always with them. I handed it to him, and he thanked me, kissing the book, and saying it would be good medicine for his people, for he should feel as though his fathers were with them when he had the book.

Eating, as I had, so much fresh meat without vegetables or bread, and having but little exercise, I did not feel as well as I had done, and found a kind of scurvy breaking out on my right side. I had seen something of the kind on some of the Indians, but nothing so bad as mine. All I could do was to apply buffalo fat to the parts affected.

The time came when we had got our robes dressed and meat sufficiently dried to cache, so that we could leave the next morning. My leg was swollen, and I feared if it continued it might get so bad that I could not walk.

I prayed at night that the Lord would cause the swelling to go down, and give me sufficient strength that I might be able to walk the next day.

The next morning the swelling was gone, and I was able to

walk nine miles.

Here we killed more buffaloes, and stayed a few days to dry meat, which we did by cutting it about an inch thick, and putting it upon sticks above the fire in the lodges.

We next moved on to the upper forks of Running Water River, and very near to the extent of the Poncas' hunting ground. Beyond theirs were lands belonging to the Brules, a tribe of the Sioux.

CHAPTER VI

STRENGTH IN TIME OF NEED – AFFLICTED LIKE JOB, WITH BOILS – SCRAPING WITH A POTSHERD PLEASANT – MY PRAYER ROOM – DRESSING BUFFALO ROBES – DINING ON COTTONWOOD BARK – INDIAN SELF-DENIAL.

I suffered much pain at times with the sores that covered my right side, from my face all the way down to my ankle; but, strange to say, the swelling on my knee, which would increase after each day's travel, so that I could scarcely walk across the lodge, would go down when we had occasion to travel, so that I could walk from one camping place to the next.

Some of my readers may think I imagined this to be the case, but it was no imagination of mine, for this continued for several weeks just as I have stated.

After remaining a few days in camp, I was one mass of boils, from the size of a pea to that of a small marble, and so close together that they touched each other. At times I suffered a great deal of pain, and at other times I suffered with itching, which was terrible. This was when the sores were partially healed, and the surface had become hard, and while in this state I often, on a fine day, would go where I could not be seen, get on the sunny side of a hill, strip off my clothes, and, with a flat stick, scrape my sores.

I had read of Job scraping his boils with a potsherd, and pitied

him, but if he took as much comfort as I did in scraping mine, he had no need of pity; for to me it was a great pleasure to get rid of the itching, and the scraping tended to relieve me in this respect. The boils, however, would only remain healed about a week, when they would begin to swell for a few days, giving much pain, and then break out again, which caused me to feel faint and weak.

Notwithstanding this affliction I felt blessed of the Lord, and was not discouraged. A short distance from the village there was a large patch of plum bush, about two acres in area, with deer tracks through it, and a large space clear of brush in the center. This I chose for my prayer room during my stay there. I asked the Lord to bless and sanctify it for this purpose, which I feel assured He did. I went there three times a day for prayer, and I felt many times, when praying, that the Lord was there.

This was about the last of November; the weather was very cold, and there was some snow on the ground.

It was a busy time for the women, who were all engaged in drying meat, and dressing robes and skins for sale. We had killed up to date, 1,500 buffaloes, besides other game.

It takes from two to three days to dress a robe. In the first place, they scrape it on the flesh side until it becomes thin, then they soak some of the buffalo's brains in warm water, and put this liquor on the flesh side until it will not retain any more. The brain of an animal is sufficient to dress its skin or robe, and sometimes more than sufficient. After the robe or skin has become well

soaked through with the brain liquor, it is stretched tight upon sticks, with the skin side to the sun, if the weather be fine, and if cloudy, a fire is made to dry it. While the drying process is going on, the party dressing it rubs it on the flesh side with a piece of sandstone about the size of a brick. This is continued until it is perfectly dry and soft. All robes and skins are dressed in this manner except small skins, which are rubbed with the hands.

On a fine day, I have seen as many as 70 squaws at work at one time, dressing robes. These robes and skins are their harvest, as much so as a good crop of grain is to the farmer, as they sell all they do not need to traders, who are licensed to purchase from the Indians by the government. A good robe was worth about two dollars in cloth, ammunition, coffee, sugar, salt, etc. Sometimes the Indians would give three or four robes, or even more for a blanket, which was thought to be much better to wear around them than a buffalo robe. The Indians who could afford to wear a blanket, considered themselves much better dressed than their fellows.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.