

balls whistle nearer than was agreeable to us. They had prepared several lodges together, so as to make one great lodge of at least twenty feet, across the middle of which they had made a wall of dried buffalo meat,* and had made a dog feast, to which they invited me. The customary speech on such occasions was made, as usual; saying that this feast was designed as the greatest compliment they could pay me, and then added: Your Father must be a great man to send out one so young as you, with so many goods, and we hope you will be very charitable, and furnish us with plenty of clothing to keep ourselves, women and children warm, and with plenty of ammunition with which to hunt, etc. To all of which I replied, that unfortunately my father was a poor man, and I was a poor boy, and that I had got these goods on credit to supply their wants, and that unless they hunted well and loaded my boat with furs, I should not be able to pay for these goods, and get more to come back again; but that I would furnish them with clothing to keep them warm, and with arms, traps and ammunition to keep them from starving, and hoped they would hunt well and pay me, so that I could get more goods and continue to trade with them. I took to my house the meat presented, and made them payment in suitable presents of ammunition, etc.†

An Indian thinks it politeness to eat everything that is set before him, and when traders are invited to a feast, what they do not eat, they generally carry home with them in the dish and give it to their men, and send back the dish with a piece of tobacco in it.

*The manner of drying the buffalo meat is this: They take each side and the belly, and cut and spread them out thin, so that they will thoroughly dry through; when fully extended, this makes a sheet of about the size of a deer skin, and when dried they fold them up as they do their deer skins, and pack them into bundles.

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†It is proverbial, with all acquainted with the Indians, that to receive presents from them is by far the most expensive way of obtaining their desirable commodities, as the trader not only has to pay back the full value of the articles, but also something clever in addition for the compliment of the present. It is not uncommon for a Yankton chief to make a present to the trader of all the buffalo robes he brings, and after he has received in return all they are really worth, together with something for the compliment, he remembers a great many little articles, naming them, of which he is in want; and if not gratified, he is offended, or pretends to be so. Though it is, in Indian etiquette, an insult to refuse a present, I have often done so, and advised the Indian that he had better trade in the usual way.

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