

reporting my success to Red Thunder, his Indian friends, with knives, tomahawks, and torches, were soon on their way to this lucky Godsend, in their estimation. To partake of such meat, I knew I could not. My last pint of corn was being roasted. I had some apprehensions that my absent men had been killed, which was the least of my fears; but there was greater danger that they had been lost or buried in the snow—particularly the latter; thoughts of such accidents had often occurred to my mind. In any case, if they failed to return with supplies, my only alternative was to write an account of matters and things, and make up my last bed.

On the twelfth day of their absence, I had been straining my eyes with melancholy reflections till about four o'clock in the afternoon, when I retired to the house to smother care and anxiety in smoke. I had not long been at the pipe when a general shout of joy was raised at the Indian camps—"The white men are coming!" I was not slow to see for myself; and here they came, loaded with dried buffalo meat, and the welcome news that Broken Leg with a lot of his young men would bring ample supplies in a few days. This was good news. When, with marks of reproach, I asked them why they had not returned sooner, they told me they had been two and a half days buried in the snow. I could not doubt them, for I was aware that such things happened every winter on these plains.

Not many winters before this, an Indian, with eight white men, saw a storm approaching, and with all haste made for a little clump of trees for shelter. But when within half a mile of the goal, they were compelled by the severity of the storm, to lie down and be covered with the avalanche of snow falling. The wind and drift are so powerful that people cannot face them and breathe. These nine persons remained under snow for three days; but for the Indian, the whites would all have perished. He had been caught before; he kept himself raised to near the surface by packing the snow under him, which also kept him in a cooler atmosphere, so the place where he was, continued dry, though warm. He could, moreover, being near the surface, with only a thin layer of snow over him, discern when the storm had abated.