

9-12-3

already enfeebled by sickness, resulted in delirium, in which he imagined himself to enter the portals of the spirit world. Constant dwelling on the subject in thought by day and in dreams by night would effect and perpetuate the exalted mental condition in which visions of the imagination would have all the seeming reality of actual occurrences. To those acquainted with the spiritual nature of Indians and their implicit faith in dreams all this is perfectly intelligible. His frequent trances would indicate also that, like so many other religious ecstasies, he is subject to cataleptic attacks.

I have not been able to settle satisfactorily the date of this eclipse. From inquiry at the Nautical Almanac office I learn that solar eclipses visible in Nevada and the adjacent territory from 1884 to 1890 occurred as follows: 1884, October 18, partial; 1885, March 16, partial; 1886, March 5, partial; 1887, none; 1888, none; 1889, January 1, total or partial; 1890, none. The total eclipse of January 1, 1889, agrees best with his statement to me on New Year's night, 1892, that it was about two years since he had gone up to heaven when the sun died. It must be noted that Indians generally count years by winters instead of by series of twelve calendar months, a difference which sometimes makes an apparent discrepancy of nearly a year.

In subsequent conversations he added a few minor details in regard to his vision and his doctrine. He asked many questions in regard to the eastern tribes whose delegates had visited him, and was pleased to learn that the delegates from several of these tribes were my friends. He spoke particularly of the large delegation—about twelve in number—from the Cheyenne and Arapaho, who had visited him the preceding summer and taken part in the dance with his people. Nearly all the members of this party were personally known to me, and the leader, Black Coyote, whose picture I had with me and showed to him, had been my principal instructor in the Ghost dance among the Arapaho. While this fact put me on a more confidential footing with Wovoka, it also proved of great assistance in my further investigation on my return to the prairie tribes, as, when they were satisfied from my statements and the specimens which I had brought back that I had indeed seen and talked with the messiah, they were convinced that I was earnestly desirous of understanding their religion aright, and from that time spoke freely and without reserve.

I had my camera and was anxious to get Wovoka's picture. When the subject was mentioned, he replied that his picture had never been made; that a white man had offered him five dollars for permission to take his photograph, but that he had refused. However, as I had been sent from Washington especially to learn and tell the whites all about him and his doctrine, and as he was satisfied from my acquaintance with his friends in the other tribes that I must be a good man, he would allow me to take his picture. As usual in dealing with Indians, he wanted to make the most of his bargain, and demanded two dollars