

plucked out. Second in value was the "black and tan" robe, with dark-brown, lustrous hair on nose, flanks, and inside of the fore-legs. Its rich color made it of value, though it was no so rare.

One in every hundred robes was apt to be a "blue robe" or "house-color", which had fine long fur, as a rule.

Rarest of all was the robe of a white buffalo, known to the trade as a "buckskin" robe, because it was usually of a dirty cream color. These were so rare as to bring any price, and Carreau was anxious to get one, if he could. But Sitting Bull refused to act in that matter. White buffalo were sacred to his people, and he would not touch the skin of one without due ceremony, much less let it pass into the hands of white men. Carreau could not budge him on such a point. He found Sitting Bull a very good judge of the value of the merchandise he brought in, no easy mark in a bargain. Perhaps for that reason, he urged him to bring in his people to trade, rather than have Sitting Bull bring in the robes himself.

And so, occasionally, Sitting Bull and the Hunkpapa would come rolling over the prairie swells, and their tipis would spring up in a great circle on the plain. Carreau would arrange for a truce with the Mandans, Rees and Hidatsa, who lived in their fortified town close by, and pay them to ferry the visiting Sioux over the river in Bull-boats.

Mr. Joe Dietrich, who was trader at Fort Berthold somewhat later, says that the Village Indians in those days were in almost as great terror of the Sioux as the white men were. And Boller's book offers amusing pictures of their perpetual fear. It is not surprising that the Rees would only ferry over fifteen or twenty Sioux at a time, men and women. They were taking no chances with their enemies. As it was, they knew that, as soon as the trade was ended, the Sioux would probably try to catch some of the Rees outside the fort, or run off the ponies as they went.