

Among the Indians no sport or excitement could equal a buffalo hunt. There was considerable danger in it, but nothing to compare with the excitement and joy. Every brave kept a trained pony for the buffalo chase--one that was used for nothing else--and the intelligence of some of those animals was wonderful. I really believe the ponies enjoyed a buffalo hunt as keenly as did their masters. When I became possessed of my first buffalo pony the Indian from whom I got it told me of all its good qualities, and laid particular stress upon the fact that the animal always gave warning of approaching danger. I paid little attention to the buck's talk at the time, but it was very distinctly recalled on an occasion I am about to speak of.

The Bark creek country, along the Yellowstone river, was a great feeding ground for the buffaloes and one season we moved our camp down there. Our supply of meat had got very light, and we also wanted robes with which to make lodges. We killed a great many buffaloes during our stay in that locality and were about ready to move. It was decided to have one more hunt before * leaving and preparations were made accordingly. The buffaloes had drifted some distance from our camping ground, and the Indians were in the habit of moving camp from day to day as the chase progressed. When we started off in the last hunt the entire camp went along, and as soon as the herd of buffaloes was sighted the bucks jumped upon their ponies and began the chase.

On this particular occasion I became so intent upon running the buffaloes that I got a long way in advance of the other hunters. I killed a couple of buffaloes and got off my horse to skin them, fastening my pony to the carcass of one of the dead animals. While I was at work my pony began to act strangely. It would run around in a half circle, then back again, and seemed to be trying to attract my attention. I paid no particular heed to the actions of the pony until I recalled what its former owner had told me about its giving warning of danger, when I untied it, jumped upon its back and rode up on a hill to see if anything unusual was occurring. Seeing nothing, I returned to my work. The pony began to daper worse than ever, and I finally became so nervous and frightened that I left the two buffaloes and started back to where we had left the pack animals. I had not gone over two miles before I heard shooting, and glancing over my shoulder in the direction from which I had come, I saw a large party of Crow warriors charging down onto our people. I gave alarm as quickly as I could, but before the Sioux braves could get together the enemy had killed nineteen* of them and departed. My pony had sniffed the danger when I was skinning the buffaloes, but I failed to find the least sign of the attacking party, and supposed my animal was restless at being separated from the rest of the pony herd. If it had not been for the actions of the pony I would have been caught in a nice trap and lost my life. From that time on I always kept a sharp lookout and if my pony gave any signs that there was danger in the air, I heeded him.

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