

AN INDIAN STORY OF POINEER DAYS.

(As was told to Elizabeth P. H. Hammond
by her grandfather, Joseph Smith Hendricks.)

It was one of those evenings in late November that is hard to describe. A cold north wind had been blowing, the mist had been gathering and had dimmed the sun; the stillness, the quietness, the feel in the air, all foretold the coming of a storm.

Early that morning Joe and one of his friends had gone to the canyon for wood. As they returned and Joe was turning into his gate he stood upon his load of wood, looking in every direction slowly and deliberately he shook his head. Bullock, his neighbor, who was watching him remarked, "And the old settler shakes his head." "Yes," answered Joe, "This is one of those days you have to experience to understand, I think winter is here, and I better gather up my small tools, chains and singletrees, they are scattered all over, if I let the snow come on them, I'll not see them till spring."

The clouds had filled the sky and were slowly settling down on the mountains. Joe quickly put his team in the barn, and gathered up his tools and prepared for the long winter.

This done he cut wood for the night. As he paused he could see the storm coming. He looked toward the house and saw the fire burning brightly through the window. Proudly he thought of his girl wife as he saw her pass to and fro before the light of the fire as she prepared the evening meal. With satisfaction he observed the stack of hay in the "stack-yard" knowing he too had wheat in the bin for flour, and vegetables in the cellar. "Well, let it snow, I feel sure I am prepared for the winter.

He carried in the wood for night. His wife Sariah followed him to the door and observed, "It is going to be a bad night, I pity a dog that would have to be out tonight." Finishing his chores he stopped to watch the storm and his eyes fastened upon three objects coming out of the canyon toward the east.

Instinctively, he ran for his gun, and very excitedly told his wife that he believed some deer were coming out of the mountains, by the time he returned to the yard his trained eyes told him it was not deer, but a man on horseback leading a horse, he thought it was a cowboy returning from the range. He dismissed the matter from his mind and returned to the house. Soon he was washed and ready for supper.

'Rye' seeing the horses coming nearer said, "Why Joe, its an Indian and he is coming in here." Joe looked toward his gun, then thought of the Prophets words, "Its better to feed an Indian than to fight him." So he casually walked out of the gate to meet the Indian. He, without any fear came directly toward him and in good Indian fashion with out any greeting dismounted and drawing his blankets closely around him, he said, "Injun keep cold."

And pointing to his horses said, "Caballos hungry."

"Alright," said Joe, "You go into the house get warm. I shall take care of the horses."

When he unpacked the horses he found they were heavily loaded with jerked meat.

It might be well to observe that when an Indian accepts your hospitality, he does it with a confidence and as Joe had suggested he went to the house and the warmth of the open fire in the fire-place soon had him warm and comfortable. In a short time Joe had the horses in the shed and fed and the meat in the meat house and three instead of two sat down to the evening meal.

That night the storm broke in all its fury and for three days and nights it raged, piling up the snow in great drifts and when it broke one would have thought he was in a new and strange country; all the

the fence-posts and buildings had a strange ghost like look. Richmond Utah at that time was not the peach-bearing country it now is, the snow piled up four or five feet deep through the winters.

Not to be frustrated, our Indian friend explained to Joe in broken English and gestures that he had become separated from his tribe while hunting, he also told him where the tribe were in camp for the winter. He marked on the hearth the big water (Snake River) then the Blackfoot and the Portneuf rivers. He carefully explained his tribe would be camped for the winter between the Portneuf and the Blackfoot on the Snake River.

He explained in his broken English and Indian and with gestures with the snow now so deep he could not get to his squaw and papooses but must stay many moons until snow all gone and grass come again. Of course the Indian was allowed to stay and a good comfortable place was provided and the three of them sat at the table all winter. The long cold winter passed slowly, the Indian learned considerable English and Joe improved his vocabulary in the Indian language.

Spring came as the winter had come, almost in a day the warm chinook winds melted the snow very fast, the grass became green and the birds sang gaily as they flitted about, told them it was spring again, and so

Then the Indian went as he had come, unannounced and in good Indian style, no one saw him go.

Two years passed and it was spring again and no one had heard from or about the Indian. One day Joe and his friend Bullock was on their way to Butte, Montana, A busy mining town, with loads of flour and bacon, several other men were in the freight wagon train.

The second day out they camped for the night at the big bend of the Portneuf River, from their camp ground the road gradually rose to some height. And on the other side, a more level strip of ground sheltered under some low lava cliffs. In a tepee of an Indian Chief was held a council of war which lasted well into the night, some prospectors or trappers had killed some Indians and to the Indian, revenge on one white man is as good as another, and the council of Indians had decided to kill the freighters and steal their horses, And provisions burn their wagons, then fall upon the settlers in northern Utah.

Morning came and the freight teams slowly pulled their heavy loads up the hill, Joe was taking lead and as he reached the crest of the hill what should meet his gaze but Indians, hundreds of them it seemed, coming up the road riding single file, a custom when they are on the war path, his trained eyes took the situation in at a glance. He stopped his horses and standing up in the spring seat called to his companions that he could see Indians coming toward them dressed in war paint and eagle feathers.

As the first Indians came near Joe called to them in their own language, but no word came back to them. Joe was having trouble with his four horses, they were afraid of the smell of Indians. Standing on the jockybox and braced he was ready to run for it or shoot. Quickly the line circled around the freighters, as the first circle formed they began closing in, the tension was high, it seemed only for the leader to give the signal, the savage warwhoop, that they might execute their hellish purpose, to kill them outright or take them alive and torture them. Joe turned on his step and yelled to Bullock, "Well, I guess this is it." He tried again and again to make the Indians understand that they were friendly, but not a word from the stoic men. Slowly the circle moved around the wagon train, closer and closer, then at once beside him was the Indian he had befriended two years before. Hope and gladness hovered for a moment, would the Indian recognize him? He thought again of the Prophet's words, "It's better to feed the Indians than fight them."

Joe called to the Indian with a prayer in his heart, but he spoke no word, would not look at him, had he forgotten him in the two years? He thought of his home and family, he was holding the horses with so tight a rein he could not get his gun, his faith was beginning to weaken. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and after many days it

will return to you." But he intended to die fighting so reached for his gun, calling again to the Indian who was now at the head of his horses.

"What are you going to do?" The Indian stood on his horse making signs; would his life soon be over? One cannot read an Indian's face, the air was tense, the Indians gave a loud shout that Joe did not understand, to himself he said, "Oh my God, Help us in this if it is the last." Then clear and loud as a clarion these words rang in his ears.

Richmond Joe, Richmond Joe, Richmond Joe".

Quicker than we can tell it, the situation changed, the Indian slid off his horse, he had received the proper signal from the leader, and running toward Joe who had tied his lines to the break-bar and jumped from the wagon wheel, with out-stretched hand, he said, in broken English, "How Joe, How Joe, How!

The rest of the horsemen came racing their horses at breakneck speed, and for more than an hour, Joe standing at his wagon wheel holding to the break-comb with his left hand, shook hands with Indian braves.

Runners were sent to the Chief; and the Indians took over, they had Joe and his companions drive down the bank of the river, Indian herdsmen took charge of the horses, hunters went out for meat and a big barbecue was prepared and for three days they feasted, and in the evening Joe and Bullock sat in the Big Tepee and smoked the 'pipe of peace!' It was here they were told of the killings of the Indians, and to retaliate the Blackfoot Indians were going on the warpath.

For further protection, as the freighters moved on, a guard of several Indians were sent to accompany and protect the wagon train across the Blackfoot country to the border of the Crow Indian country.

This act of kindness to a lost and hungry Indian on the part of Grandfather Joseph Smith Hendreicks, averted a terrible massacre of the freighters and pioneers in the sparsely settled country in northern Utah and southern Idaho, and teaches us a valuable lesson to listen to the 'Prophets Voice'.