

Well do I remember the day in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-four, in the month of November, when seven strong, hearty men, full of life and vigor, strode forth from the camp on the river-side, with rifles over their shoulders, for the purpose of making a hunting excursion to the Eagle Hills, that lay at the distance of ten or twelve miles from the camp. These seven men were De Vere, Peter Santon, Tom Danton, Paul Harlon, and Jim Logan, trappers, Red Plume my Assiniboin guide, and last, but, in his own estimation, by no means least, your humble servant.

There had been a slight fall of snow the night before, but it had been so slight as not to interfere with our excursion. The air was quite bracing, but not extremely cold; and we walked briskly forward over the frozen ground, toward the white, snow-covered hills that rose so grandly and majestically before us. We purposed remaining in the region of the hills for two or three days; but had brought provisions enough with us for only two meals, as we expected to shoot game enough to supply us. In fact, the expectation of finding game was what had lured us from camp. In case we should be disappointed we had the camp to fall back on; so with light and joyful hearts we proceeded on our way.

It was nearly noon when we reached the hills. By this time we were all pretty hungry, and the jerked venison and bear steaks we had brought with us proved quite agreeable and refreshing. We partook of lunch upon the bank of a frozen stream, after which operation we once more trudged forward. Our destination was a hut somewhere in this region, though precisely where no one in our party could determine. The hut had been built a summer or two previous by a hunter, who had afterwards explained to the trappers where to go to find it. He had given them general directions, and, anticipating no difficulty, we proceeded on our way.

Once or twice we came across footprints of deer and other animals. The hills were covered with snow, and the tracks were plainly visible. We passed along over frozen ground, crossed frozen

streams, crept cautiously along the edge of fearful precipices, and wandered in a labyrinth of hills and mountain crag, until the sun went down behind the western edge of the horizon, and darkness came upon the scene. No hut, or anything like a hut, could be seen. We had undoubtedly proceeded in the wrong direction, and nothing remained for us to do but retrace our steps.

At the suggestion of the worthy Peter Santon, we made our resting-place for the night beneath an overhanging crag, and thoroughly exhausted, we soon dropped asleep. In spite of my exhaustion, I was restless, and I waked up once or twice, and listened to the howling of the wind as it rushed through the valleys and among the lofty pines with a shrill piping sound, as of a child in pain. Towards morning I dropped in a sound nap, and slept until broad daylight. My comrades were up and doing before me, and had got out the jerked venison, and were prepared for the morning meal.

We did full justice to the venison, by devouring every scrap there was to be had; after which we shouldered our rifles and prepared to march. Peter Santon took the lead. It was our intention to reach camp as soon as possible. All our dreams of luting in the Eagle Hills had vanished. Once more we saw in anticipation the gleaming camp-fire on the camp of the Saskatchewan, and the cheerful traces of our friends. The snow was still falling. It was growing deeper.

For more than one hour we stumbled on. Now through an immense drift; now floundering in some concealed ravine; now clambering up hill and down. All traces of a path had vanished, but the resolute trapper pushed on. His courage had not as yet flagged. His countenance had not, as yet wavered. He was calm and collected as over.

At length he reached the summit of a hill, up which we had resolutely clambered, and there paused. He cast his eyes downward. We were thousands of feet above the adjacent plain, and in a region of perpetual snow. We looked upon Peter Santon's face. It was hard and resolute, yet blanched to icy pallor. Great drops of beaded sweat stood upon