

"That gun, my friend, is not a gift. It is in payment for all the work looking after the horses and your trouble mixing with the Indians to bring back a report of what was going on in camp. You have earned the price of that gun five times over. Without your help, I could not have prepared my interpretations or made myself familiar with all the things the Governor had to tell the people in that paper the chiefs and councillors signed."

"Yes," said Hunter, "but I was doing those things for my own pleasure and didn't know that it was any help to you. I would have looked after the horses in any case."

"You must not think," I said, "that I would be so ungrateful and selfish as to take all that pay and not give you something for all your wife has done for us and all the kind friendly acts you have done for me personally." Assuming an angry tone, I said, "Throw the gun away if you wish. It is yours to do what you like with it. I do not need another gun as I have one at home just as good."

He was profuse in his apologies. Luckily I had hit on the only theme that could dissolve his ethical beliefs that a gift must always have compensation.

"You must give those things to my wife as a gift. Do not give her those things as payment for care of your wife, or she will be hurt and refuse them even as a gift." I had not thought of it his way. Such delicate management hadn't occurred to me. To pay his wife for what they considered a friendly service would be putting a price on friendship that would take away the pleasure of doing things for your real friends.

We were both happy on the first leg of our journey towards home. We were well satisfied with our trip. John Hunter was a chief in his own tribe. His name interpreted in English was Little Hunter. He was not a small man as his name would indicate but I found that the name may have been received as a child. He was not a big man but he certainly wasn't little either in physical stature or in character.

"Poundmaker," he said while discussing the meeting, "is not satisfied, nor will he ever be satisfied. He does not think but just talks and keeps on talking. He and some of the others will make trouble. Times will be hard for the prairie Indians once the buffalo are gone. They will have nothing and will not settle on the land until they are nearing starvation. Steinhauer has often told us that we must learn to farm and raise animals to support ourselves for the day when the buffalo will be no more. Now I have to believe him. We are lucky that we already know something about raising grain and vegetables, and besides we still have bush game and fish.