

ing and anxiety. The astronomical and surveying parties, under their respective officers, were detached from the main body at the foot of the Great Coteau, and proceeded by the boundary-line track to their several destinations, where they were to commence operations, while the heavy commissariat-train proceeded westward by an easier though more circuitous road to Woody Mountain. We arrived at this site on the 22nd of June, the oxen with loaded waggons having accomplished the journey of 450 miles in 32 days, inclusive of six days' halts or detention. The reconnaissance party, under Mr. Crompton, had arrived at the same place three weeks previously; and had already returned from a successful exploration of the country, for 100 miles to the westward; while all cause for anxiety respecting the delivery of the first instalment of forage from the distant settlements of South-West Montana was removed by the punctual arrival at Woody Mountain of 60 tons of oats on the 1st of June.

The method of freighting adopted by the Americans in the Western plains may be considered worthy of passing notice. Each vehicle is mounted on four broad-rimmed wheels of unusually broad gauge, and the body has nearly vertical sides, the whole height being 12 or 14 feet. Into this huge car 4 tons of grain are packed in bags; two of these waggons are linked closely together as in a railway-train, and to the foremost van are yoked nine pairs of oxen, the pair at the pole and the leading pair being thoroughly broken animals, while the intermediate pairs of oxen are more or less wild and untaught. One teamster manages this formidable charge. The waggon-train is made up of pairs of vans in the same fashion, and the whole makes its way slowly across the unbroken plain at the rate of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile per hour. The drivers do not follow immediately behind each other, in order to avoid the ruts, which are cut to a depth of 6 or 8 inches in the dry ground, and the waggons frequently sink to the axletrees in soft soil. On coming to marshy places or to steep hills, the waggons are detached and taken one at a time over the bad places; an extra string of nine pairs of oxen, making eighteen pairs in all, being frequently employed to extricate a single waggon from a swamp-hole, or to take it up a steep hill. In this way oxen are found to work to the greatest advantage, as in a long string they pull at different times, and thus in turn obtain relief from the fatigue of continuous draught. The oxen are specially suited for marshy ground, as they do not sink in it, nor strain themselves by plunging when in difficulties, as a horse would do. The oxen are not shod in the first instance, as they travel better barefooted across the plains; but as soon as an animal becomes sorefooted, he is shod on one or more feet as may be found necessary. It requires special skill and