

chief to horses, all over the territories some twelve years ago, was believed at the time to have originated in this way. Like wild creatures generally, the bison was free from deformities. I have often been told, however, that androgynous animals were not infrequently killed in the chase, an assertion which is stoutly maintained by old plain-hunters who profess to have seen them. Others think the so-called hermaphrodites were simply animals which when calves had been emasculated by wolves, or, as was sometimes the case, by hunters in rude sport. These beasts, whatever they were, grew to an enormous size, and were called by the English and French half-breeds, "The Burdash," a name which is probably Norman French, for it is not Indian. If I am not mistaken the word *Breduche* in the patois of the French Canadian peasant designates an animal of both genders. Its Cree name was *Ayā-quāyu*, meaning "of neither sex." Such an animal, with its colossal frame, its vast front, and spreading horns was a striking object in a great herd, and, when killed in season, yielded what was known as the "beaver robe." This robe was greatly prized for its immense size and glossy, silk-like coat, and sold, twenty years ago, for ten times the price of the best robe of commerce.

Reference was made at the beginning of this article to the abundance of buffaloes within recent times. According to the Hon. H. H. Sibley, of Minnesota, the last animals ever seen east of the Mississippi were killed by the Sioux at Trempe à l'Eau, in upper Wisconsin, in 1832. For many years afterwards they were still very numerous on the great western and north-western plains. In 1868 the late James McKay, the well-known Red River half-breed trader and hunter, told me that some ten years before he had travelled with ponies for twenty days through a continuous herd, and on all sides, as far as he could see, the prairies were black with animals. It was not in fact until the construction of the first Pacific railway that a serious inroad was made upon their numbers. Indeed, as Dr. Carver very truly says, "As the Indians hunted them the race would probably have lasted for ever." But the building of that railway, and the subsequent extension of the Northern Pacific line, rang the knell of the buffalo. Immense numbers, it is true, had been annually slaughtered in the great plain hunt of the Red River half-breeds; a system which was organized early in this century, and continued in full force down to about 1869, after which it began to languish. Many of the hunters formed small settlements in the interior, and instead of returning to Red River, sold their robes, etc., to traders on the spot. In its palmy days the plain hunt annually attracted nearly half the population of Red River. Fully four thousand people, including men, women and children, and a thousand carts, went off in early summer to the plains, and when the great herds were reached, and the "runs" took place, as many as two thousand animals were often killed in a single day. No doubt this involved great waste; but food and leather were the objects of the plain hunters, as well as robes, and, hence, their destruction bore but a small proportion to the immense slaughter, in recent years, by the American pot-and-hide hunters. These men, in order to gratify the cravings of wealthy citizens for tongues and humps, were formed into large parties, with lavish outfits supplied by eastern firms, and being within easy reach of the great herds by rail the work of extermination speedily began. In due time the pot-hunting gave way to hide-hunting, which was found to be more profitable, and then the havoc became truly stupendous. The hunters' weapons were of the best, and their method so systematic, that the very skinning was done by horse-power. The dead bison was fastened to a stake and the