

The tents were pitched around and outside the waggon, while sentries patrolled the outskirts of the camp.

The depôts were necessarily kept in charge of a few men only, and the commissariat-trains travelling from point to point with no escort would have been an easy prey to the attacks of hostile Indians, and some anxiety for the safety of the smaller parties was occasioned by large bands of Indians, numbering 200 and 300, coming at different times to the supply depôts and demanding food. All the Indians of the plains were well mounted and armed with breech-loading rifles, which they procured from the Missouri River traders. Although they paid their visits with friendly assurances, it was evident, from their being in great force and well-armed, that they were prepared for any emergencies. It was owing to the firmness and tact of the members of the Commission, and the discipline infused by the small detachment of Royal Engineers, that the most friendly relations with the Indians were maintained.

The transport-animals had greatly recruited during the fortnight's detention at the mountains, where the pasture was most luxuriant, and they were in excellent condition for the long march to the east. By the 19th September the whole of the British Commission were collected at Woody Mountain, having accomplished 410 miles of the march homewards in 22 days. From this point to Red River hay had been made and stacked at 20 miles' intervals, in anticipation of the equinoctial snow-storms and the destruction of the natural grass by prairie-fires. The autumn season of 1874 was, fortunately, most favourable, and the homeward march to Red River was accomplished without casualty, 861 miles in 43 days. The trains of oxen had been despatched from the Rocky Mountains three weeks earlier, and they reached Red River a week before the horse-trains and the main body of the Commission. Special mention must be made of the extraordinary power and endurance of the oxen. They commenced their march from Moorhead in Minnesota early in May, and from that time till their return to Red River on 5th October, they marched 2400 miles with loaded waggon out and back, at an average rate of travel of 16 miles a day. During the whole of this period they had no other food except such pasture as the country afforded on the march. The horses, on the other hand, received a daily ration of 10 lbs. of oats per diem, and were able to average 22 miles a day with loaded waggon, while on emergencies they were able to make much longer marches, when the want of water or some special occasion required it. The general arrangements of the season just described necessitated the supplies being transported by our transport-train over a line lengthening out at last to