

EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

was remarkably lean: when in good condition he would doubtless much exceed in weight the estimate I have given. Richardson and two other hunters in company killed two in the course of the afternoon, and saw several others."

Although it was known that parties of Blackfeet were hanging in the route of the caravan, our travellers fortunately escaped being attacked by these dreaded Indians; and on the 14th, having reached the banks of the fine large Shoshoné or Snake, also called Lewis river, they came to a halt for the purpose of erecting a fort, according to their instructions, and also of enjoying a rest of a fortnight or three weeks before renewing their journey. Nearly four months had now elapsed since they had commenced their expedition, and there were various evidences that they were approaching its close. The Snake river, on the banks of which they were encamped, pours its waters directly into the Columbia, and as they tried to form some idea of the great Oregon river from the size of its tributary, it became evident that they were approaching the western shore of the vast North American continent.

Food, however, was becoming scarce, the stock of dried buffalo meat being nearly exhausted; and therefore, while the majority of the party should remain to build a fort on the banks of the Snake river, it was resolved that a hunting party of twelve persons should start on the back track to shoot buffalo, and return to the fort in eight or nine days with the fruits of their diligence. To this party Mr Townsend attached himself. The hunters were successful in procuring buffalo, on which they now entirely fed, besides bringing a quantity in a dried state to the camp. Exposed constantly to the pure air, and having abundant exercise, the appetites of the party were most ravenous. Rising in the morning with the sun, they kindled a fire and roasted ~~their~~ breakfast, which consisted of from one to two pounds of meat. At ten o'clock they lunched on meat; at two they dined on meat; at five they supped on meat; at eight they had a second supper of meat; and during the night, when they awoke, they took a snatch at any meat within reach. Their food was thus entirely meat, without bread or any other article except water, which was their sole beverage. On this plain and substantial fare they enjoyed robust health.

Having heard that a bull in the middle of the forehead was never known to kill a buffalo, Mr Townsend determined to try the experiment. Accordingly one evening, seeing a large bull close at hand, he sallied forth with the utmost caution in the direction of his victim. "The unwieldy brute," he says, "was quietly and unsuspectingly cropping the herbage, and I had arrived to within ten feet of him, when a sudden flashing of the eye, and an impatient motion, told me that I was observed. He raised his enormous head and looked around him, and so truly terrible and grand did he appear, that I must confess I felt awed, almost frightened, at the task I had undertaken. But