

hind, or female red deer, which is almost a pure cream, and is sometimes taken by the Indians in the same way. While touching on this point one can scarcely pass over the references in old books to "The White Indians," as they were called, a nation indefinitely placed by writers in the last century at some point on the Mississippi or the Missouri.

In the "Concise Account of North America," published by Major Rogers, in 1766, it is said: "These Indians live in large towns and have commodious houses; they raise corn, tame the wild cows, and use both their milk and flesh." This is plainly a reference to the Mandans, a singular race which was almost exterminated by small-pox some fifty years ago, and which is probably now extinct. They were of a fairer complexion than the surrounding nations, from whom they differed greatly in manners and customs; and it was a common conjecture, at one time, that they were descendants of the immigrants who left Wales, and sailed westward with Madoc in the twelfth century, and were never heard of afterwards. The Mandans made pottery, and built boats which closely resembled the Welsh coracle. These are well-known facts, and the statements quoted from Rogers are also true, with the exception, perhaps, of the taming of the buffalo, which cannot be vouched for. Maize is called by the North-West half-breeds "Mandan corn" to this day. It was largely cultivated by this remarkable race, who built villages of large timber houses, partly excavated in the ground, wherein numbers of families lived, and in which they stabled their horses in emergencies, feeding them on the bark of cotton wood saplings, which they cut in lengths and used as fuel. Another hazardous conjecture has sometimes been made, that the Mandans were the degenerate remnants of the mound-builders, whose vast earthworks indicate an organized social condition, and could scarcely have been constructed without draught animals. More advanced intelligence, indeed a high degree of civilization must have existed, perhaps contemporarily with the mound-builders in ancient Mexico and Central America; and it is difficult to believe that such stupendous architecture as that of Mitla or Palenque was the result of man's unaided effort.

In the presence of such facts there is no absurdity in the supposition that the bison was once a tame animal, and no violation of probability in Bryant's vision of the mound-builders as a "disciplined and populous race." When the Greek was hewing the Pentelicus and rearing the Parthenon, it is not improbable that the mound-builders of the Ohio were "heaping with long toil the earth,"

"When haply by their stalls the bison lowed,
And bowed his manéd shoulder to the yoke."

The bison seems to have been free from the ordinary diseases of domestic cattle. Untrammelled life and wholesome food no doubt kept it in good condition. Yet it was subject to a complaint peculiar to itself, a kind of itch or mange, called by the plain Indians *Omikewin*. This disease was confined to the bulls, and appeared on them after the rutting season. But it had its analogue in great epidemics which, at long intervals, raged upon the plains, and destroyed thousands of buffaloes of all ages and both sexes. An animal afflicted with this disease presented a sorry spectacle. The coat became loose and fell off in large tufts, leaving the exposed skin scabbed and leathsome with sores. It was contagious, too, and careless hunters, by using saddle-cloths cut from diseased hides, often communicated it to their ponies. The contagion, which spread, and did such mis-