

tern butte, and the indomitable oxen arrived here with full supplies, in charge of the commissary, Mr. Herchmer, and his indefatigable waggon-master, Mr. O'Donnell, on the 24th July, on which date the second astronomical party under Lieutenant Galway, marching independently, arrived at the same point to commence operations. The British Commission had thus, in seventeen days, made a further stride of 108 miles to the westward. A few days' detention at this dépôt site afforded opportunities for an examination being made of the three Buttes, and Mr. Dawson, the geologist, reported that they are of igneous origin. They form a little mountain region of themselves, the highest peaks being 6800 feet above the sea, and from the heart of the Buttes precipitous valleys open out, well wooded, and in which there is an abundance of springs, which issue for some distance out on the plain and are there rapidly absorbed. In the recesses of the mountain region, horned sheep were found, and the buffalo in vast numbers are attracted to the luxuriant pasture-grounds that abound on the hill-sides. The deadly combats that have occurred between the Blackfoot and Crow Indians, when meeting in this region in pursuit of the buffalo, have in some degree made it a neutral ground, but a recent battle must have been fought, as the bodies of twenty Crow Indians were found on the plain a few miles from the dépôt camp. They were all scalped, and in consequence of the intense dryness of the atmosphere, the bodies were completely sun-dried and well preserved. From the hill-sides of the western butte, the Rocky Mountains, 115 miles distant, are in full view, and the mountain-peaks, in a rugged and snowy outline, stand out in full relief against the western sky-line. Anyone ascending the northern slopes of the western butte comes to the boundary-line at the same spot where the first view is obtained of the Rocky Mountain peaks. The intermediate country consists of undulating and gravelly plain, over which one passes imperceptibly from the basin of the Missouri to the Saskatchewan Waters at St. Mary's River. This river rises in the mountains, and flows northward boisterously in a channel full of boulders and shingle. No sight could be more welcome than the clear and sparkling waters from the mountains, after the stagnant pools and muddy rivers of the Great Plains. Many granite boulders were found on the plateau near St. Mary's River. The bed rock, from which these blocks must have travelled, is 700 miles distant. Some bituminous coal was found exposed in the river-banks. On crossing St. Mary's River the boundary-line enters the fertile belt which extends for 25 miles to the base of the Rocky Mountains. A great change for the better is now observable in the soil, which is very undulating and even hilly before arriving at the actual base of the moun-