

is only for an instant, as the next moment they are pushed headlong over the abyss. Then comes a terrible scene. Those in the rear, pursued and urged on by the horsemen, force those ahead of them over the precipice, until all, save a few perhaps which preferred to meet death by the arrows and bullets of the hunters, have been driven into this frightful death-pit.

It is said that the Indians in their superstition believed when they had succeeded in driving a herd to a precipice that if they allowed any of them to escape they would never be successful in their hunts again. Thus they acted with the determination of killing every one, and this they generally accomplished.

The merciless chase was, of course, the main cause of the disappearance of the buffalo, but not the sole cause. Large numbers of the animals perished in the great prairie fires. On the approach of the flames the buffalo, instead of taking to flight, as one would naturally be led to suppose, waited till his ruthless destroyer reached him and stood overwhelmed by fear. He made no effort whatever to escape, but with haggard eye awaited the approach of the flame and was burnt to death. Great numbers were also drowned every spring. When upon emerging from the woods, they began to find their way northwards, in many places rivers of considerable size would impede their progress, and the ice at that time of the year having become unsafe, hundreds of them would crash through, and in the panic which

invariably followed, all would be drowned. Notwithstanding the great numbers thus destroyed, they were comparatively few to the thousands which were done away with in the chase. Thus man and not nature has been mainly instrumental in the annihilation of the buffalo.

Why were means not taken to prevent the extinction of the lordly bison? Undoubtedly it was impossible in the vast prairies of the North-West to prevent unlimited destruction on the part of the greedy and ruthless Indians. What might have been done was to domesticate the buffalo. Sir Donald A. Smith has several tame buffaloes, about all left in Canada, at Silver Heights, near Winnipeg. Americans from the Western States, a few years ago, bought our last herd, which had been domesticated at Stony Mountain, Man. These experiments prove that the plan of domesticating the bison might have been successfully carried out. This means would not have preserved the vast herds which once roamed over the prairies, but it would have prevented the entire disappearance of a noble animal, closely associated with the history of the continent. Even yet the species might be preserved were the few tame buffaloes, scattered throughout the country, brought together and properly looked after, but this will have to be done very soon, or only seign robes and whitened bones strewn over the plains of the North-West will be left to recall the former monarch of the prairies.

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