

and likely to continue some time, rolled off the buffalo into the dust—each parting mutually willing to dissolve the connection.

Progressing southwest from the Canadian river, we reached the head waters of the Blue Water river—a beautiful limestone region or elevated prairie, abounding in game of all kinds. Buffaloes were astonishingly numerous here; and I shall not fear contradiction in saying that I saw, in one view, as many as two thousand head. The country lying between the head of the Blue Water and False Onachita rivers is particularly noted for the abundance and excellence of the wild horses which roam in its fertile prairies.

In one drove I estimated as many as one hundred and twenty head, most of them large and well formed. What struck me as peculiarly remarkable was the predominance of the gray colour; by which I mean to say, there were more, as I thought, of that colour than of any other single colour. The same observation has been made by oriental travellers, of the far-famed stock of Arabia. Several horses were not, of course, of the best class, which is seldom if ever overtaken, it being a natural impossibility that jaded horses, on a journey, can carry one hundred and sixty or one hundred and eighty pounds weight, and outstrip a naked and untired animal of the same species of itself.

At our incampment on the Canadian river, an incident occurred which very fairly tested the endearing qualities of the wild horse, and will enable us to form a pretty correct estimate of his general powers. There was a fine looking animal discovered near the camp by a party of rangers, and several of them gave chase. They run him alternately a distance of about two miles, when they relinquished the pursuit. A third horseman then gave chase on a fresh horse, noted for speed and bottom in a company of one hundred men. The issue proved the vast superiority of the prairie horse, which at first ran before his pursuer at his ease; but being at length pushed for the distance of a quarter of a mile, evinced such prodigious speed and wind, that in the words of the ranger; he "just stood still and looked at him."

The wild horses and mares taken by the rangers, though small, were remarkable for deep, hard, black hoofs, flat sinewy limbs, full fine eyes, and large nostrils—four of the cardinal attributes of the courser.

Of all the varieties of sporting in which I have participated, I have certainly found none so animating as the chase of the wild horse. There are two modes of taking them: one by throwing a running noose around the neck, from a coil in the hand, and the other by fastening one end of the cord to the pommel of the saddle, and the other to a stick about eight feet long, in such a manner that the noose is always open, and ready to put over the horse's head. The first mode requires great practice and address. It is employed by the Spaniards of Mexico and South America; who can, it is said, catch a horse by any foot which may be named.

On the head of Blue Water a party of four of us determined to take a run after wild horses. Having equipped ourselves with a noose and stick, tightened our girths, and tied up our heads, we rode forth into the prairie, and soon discovered a large herd of about one hundred head, quietly grazing, and unaware of our approach. As soon as we approached near enough to be seen by them, and were gradually recognized, the whole body began to nicker, and was soon in commotion, stamping the ground with their fore feet, while a few of the bolder spirits moved up towards us, slowly and doubtfully, eager to ascertain our character. Each rider now stooped on his horse, laying his head close on his horse's neck; and in this manner we silently advanced, watching closely the movements of the herd, and making each a selection of such an animal as pleased his fancy. This part of the sport was very fine; and in the present instance so many elegant forms of both sexes, and all colours

and sizes, presented themselves, that it required not a little promptitude to form a decision. We had not long to deliberate, for by the time we were within one hundred yards, the increased nickering and confusion showed they had winded us, and the whole herd suddenly wheeled round and dashed off over the plain, closely pressed by their eager pursuers. We ran them about two miles, but the rocky nature of the country, and the number of deep ravines crossing our track in every direction, prevented our coming up with such as were desirable. Could we have had a clear run the whole distance, we should doubtless have secured some fine animals, as their numbers prevented their running to advantage—causing them to crowd and impede the progress of each other, by which the disparity as to weight, previously referred to, would have been neutralized. On our return towards the main body of the troops, we saw a large stallion, whose fore leg had been broken in the chase, yet, in spite of this, he managed to hobble off on the remaining three very cleverly.

Nothing in natural scenery can surpass the beauty of the prairie when we visited it; and it may be imagined with what delight we stood on a mound, on one occasion, and took into one view the wild horse, the buffalo, the elk, the deer, and the antelope, in their native strength and beauty, roving free and untrammelled as the air they inhaled. Of each of these different species, with the exception of the elk, a number were killed and taken by the party; in addition to bears, wild turkeys, one wild hare, and numbers of prairie dogs.

From this point we made a short detour south-west, and thence turned north-east, on our return tour, as our provisions of every kind were nearly exhausted; and we were a short time afterwards compelled to subsist on wild meats—part of the time without salt—for the period of thirty-five days.

With what a prurient fancy did we conjure up in our minds the delicate viands, rich sauces, and ruby wines, of your northern Barnums and Niblos. In our reveries by day, and dreams by night, we invoked the spirit of the immortal Ude, to gift us with the art of transmuting the odious buffalo jerk into something palatable and digestible.

Long privation had, by the time we reached the point of departure, sensibly affected our rotundity. Our clothes hung in graceless folds on our gaunt and famished limbs, and we were nearly circumstanced like Falstaff's troop—almost without a shirt among us: the "cankers of a calm world and a long peace."

THE MARINER'S EVENING HYMN.

The twilight veils the day's departing light,
But yonder orb breaks forth to cheer the night;
Let us adore the goodness and the power
Of Him whose mercy shields us every hour.

O tune your hearts aright
To celebrate his praise;
To whom the cloud of night
Is clear as noontide blaze.

His tender mercy, and his goodness too,
Is every night and every morning true.

Hail, Mighty Lord of nature's wide domains,
To whom th' Archangel pours his lofty strains;
Vouchsafe to hear thy creatures' humble lays,
While we attempt to sing the Eternal's praise;
But how shall tainted breath
Invoke that hallow'd name,
Or feeble heirs of death
Omnipotence proclaim:

Yet He, our great High Priest, is ever there,
And consecrates our evening praise and prayer.