

bed-quilts, the pelts being cut into strips and braided into thick braids, which are then sewed together and covered with cloth, making a quilt unsurpassed for warmth.

An immense annual export, which cannot properly come under the head of fur, is made by the company in the shape of buffalo robes. In the autumn of 1870 the line of forts along the Saskatchewan River, in the Plain country, had traded 30,000 robes before the first of January; and for every one traded fully as many more in the shape of skins of parchment had been purchased, or consumed in the thousand wants of savage life. The number of buffaloes annually killed in the territory seems incredible; 12,000 are said to fall by the Blackfeet alone. It is only during a part of the winter that the coat is "prime," as the phrase is. Before the first of November the hair is not long enough to make a marketable robe. After the middle of January it gets ragged, and its rich black-brown is bleached by the weather to the color of dirty tow, especially along the animal's back. During the summer months the hair is very short, and frequently rubbed entirely off in many places, from the animal's habit of wallowing in the mud. The robe of commerce is generally taken from cows, and sometimes from young bulls, but never from old bulls, whose hides are much too thick and heavy. In the winter months the latter are covered all over with thick, long and curly fur; a mane of light-brown hair and fur, like that of a lion, only larger, envelopes his neck; a long glossy dewlap, hanging from his chin like a deep fringe, sweeps the ground; which, with his savage-looking muzzle,