

necessary incisions made, after which a span of horses was hitched to the hide, and off it came. The hides were shipped to the nearest railway points in waggons, and the carcasses were left to rot upon the ground. In this way it is estimated that in three years nearly six million animals were destroyed. "But no one," says Dr. Carver (who is responsible for the foregoing statements), "will ever know what immense numbers were killed by these hide-hunters." "At the close," he says, "of one winter a man could go along the banks of Frenchman River for fifty miles by simply jumping from one carcass to another. Considering facts of this kind it is not surprising that some small tame herds and a few old circus animals represent the great herds which less than a quarter of a century ago blackened miles of prairie as a thunder cloud darkens the sky."

In bygone days the Red River plain-hunt often led into the very heart of the Dahcotah country, and frequent conflicts took place in consequence between the half-breeds and the Sioux, in which the latter were often the gainers. Some fifty years ago the English half-breeds, headed by the celebrated William Gaddy, were suddenly attacked on Goose River in Dahcotah by some two thousand mounted Sioux. The half-breeds had encamped, and their horses were nearly all at large on the prairie. In this raid by dexterous tactics the Sioux contrived to band up the plain-hunter's horses before their eyes, and after a short skirmish made off with three hundred choice buffalo runners, a blow from which the English half-breeds did not recover for years. Good runners were valued very highly in those days, and fetched as much as £60 and even £80 sterling each.

But any extended reference to the oft-described Red River plain-hunt, its organization, rules and methods, does not enter into the scope of this article, in which I seek to place on record facts less generally known, and features and incidents which are illustrative rather than striking in themselves. The oddest feature of the plain-hunt was the variety of weapons it called into play; and its most interesting incidents the presence of mind and quickness of perception exhibited by the hunters in emergencies. The most antiquated fire-arms, mended and re-mended for generations by the ingenious Indians, or Metis, until all identity with the originals was completely lost, figured in the scene in company in latter days with ancient pistols and modern revolvers, the Sharp, the Ballard and the Henry repeater. The lance, which was simply a scalping knife warped with sinew to the end of a pole, or the knife alone, was used at close quarters. But the favourite weapon, particularly of the plain Indian, was the bow and arrow. It did not drive the animals frantic like firearms, and was even more deadly and much safer. The bow was about four feet and a quarter long and was made of the osage orange in the south, but of the choke-cherry in the north, a wood which is as tough as English yew. It was wound along its entire length with sinew, and strung with the same, and when drawn by a strong man, has been known to drive the arrow clean through a buffalo and into another. The arrow was half the length of the bow, and was made from the saskatoon, or *poire*, a tall shrub which sends up straight and elastic shoots very suitable for the purpose, and which bears a purple berry once greatly used in making pemmican.

The Sioux arrow was triple-plumed for six inches up from the notch. The arrow head was a piece of hoop-iron like an elongated V, very sharp in point and edge, and warped to the shaft with sinew and Indian glue, made by boiling the sinew down. Three irregular grooves ran along the shaft from feather to head, each in line with a plume, to give rotary motion probably, to the shaft in flight, or as some think, to give outlet to