

## ELK SWIMMING THE PLATTE

After an exciting chase over the prairies, the Indian hunters have at length driven the elk just where they would like to have him. The elk in his extremity has plunged into the Platte River, and making for the opposite shore, while the hunters are approaching the margin at full gallop, knowing very well that if he is not captured before he reaches the other side, there is slender chance for them. Even in the water he is a dangerous customer, for he has a trick of using his long horns to great advantage, and keeping his enemies at bay.

The Platte varies from half a mile to three quarters in breadth at this point, swollen by recent rains, it is a formidable and rapid river. Very often however it is so shallow, that charettes cross it without the water covering the hubs of the wheels.

*appaloosa* The pie-bald horse is held in great esteem, the manner in which the trappers described their breeding was similar to that used by Jacob of old, among Labans flocks of cattle.

## THE BRAVADO

The buffalo has been wounded in the flank, he is not disabled, not at all desirous of giving up the contest - on the contrary he is ripe for mischief - and full of rage, is making savage onslaughts on his enemies who on their part are tantalizing him in every manner with feints, mock attacks, and general "bagatelle", retreating as he gives battle, and barely escaping some of his awkward plunges. One has approached and flung a lasso, with the intention of throwing him down. They keep up this "fun" until the poor creature is nearly exhausted, and then dispatch him. It is this pluck on the part of the buffalo that commands the admiration of the savage, he will fight until he cannot stand on his feet, a flank shot tending to bring out all his energies and game qualities.

## BUFFALOS DRINKING AND BATHING AT NIGHT

Two things are essential to the well being and comfort of this animal, he must have his water bath, which he usually takes at night, and his earth bath, with which he solaces himself during the day. The "modus operandi" of the latter is curious. He stretches himself out at full length in the prairie and then making a pivot of the center of his body, performs a quick gyration by pushing violently with his fore-legs. He continues this until he raises a cloud of dust and becomes fatigued, when his place is occupied by another who is replaced by a third. They form at last what is called a wallow, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep in the center. The pocket telescope was resorted to in order to see them engaged in this sport, without alarming the animals.

The scene of the sketch is on the Platte. At night the buffalos come to the river banks in legions, to quench thirst and refresh themselves by swimming, Luckily for them they are rarely disturbed at this hour.

When we add to the above that the buffalo affects a particular kind of grass in grazing, and that man affects his sensitive nostrils at a distance of a mile, it must be granted that he is tolerably fastidious in his tastes and luxurious in his habits.

## CROSSING THE KANSAS

In a large company of men, horses, wagons, and equipment, the crossing of the rivers is quite an undertaking and if deep, involving considerable risk and damage. The company's goods and produce must be kept dry at all hazards. In the first place guides are sent out to cross and explore the river at different points, in order to find the best places for embarking and landing, and when the river is deep, the goods must be all unladen from about 30 wagons and charettes, transferred to boats, and ferried across. The horses and mules are compelled to swim and "nolens volens" pitched into the river to take their chances. There is a great deal of fun and merriment intermingled with hard swearing in several languages, the trappers getting rid of their religion and losing their temper at the same time. Sterne's Captain Shandy remarked that "our army swore terribly in Flanders." In this particular accomplishment our devil-may-care trappers have not degenerated.

## CONVERSING BY SIGNS

In one of our hunting excursions we encountered a small party of Indians. Our interpreter was not present and it was desirable to have some information that we stood in need of. The sketch represents the Indian communicating this by signs, which he does by graceful action and significant gesture, so that in the main it is readily comprehended by persons, of course having some practice and experience. Some of the signs are easily interpreted - for instance, joining the palms of the hands and throwing them upward and outward to signify day time; action, reversed, palms downward, night. Time is indicated by pointing directly over head for meridian and at any point from east to west where the sun would probably be at the time for that hour. Sleeping is indicated by inclining the head in the palm of the hand and closing the eyes for a moment, etc.

One of the chief difficulties in acquiring the Indian language is the guttural pronunciation - without this even it is not an easy matter.

## INDIAN RUNNER

It becomes a matter indispensable at times that a communication should take place with a different tribe, either as preliminary to a treaty, to form a truce or a proposal to bury the hatchet and smoke the pipe of peace. The tribe proposing this last remedy you may always rest assured has had the worst of the matter in battle. An Indian runner is selected, noted for craftiness and cunning, who is straight away dispatched on this delicate mission.

Coming within sight of the belligerent or rival camp, he does not at once enter their village, but seats himself within sight and here remains patiently until a deputation is sent out to meet him. During the time of waiting he does not know whether his reception will be friendly, or whether they will lead him to the stake for torture. If the last mentioned should be decided on, he at once braces himself up, and meets his fate in a manner that would shame any Christian, for faith in his own belief and fortitude under suffering. He sings his song of defiance and dies exulting.

## LAKE AND MOUNTAIN SCENE

So far as sketching was concerned the borders of these lakes afforded the best positions for views, as the water did not rise in too sudden a perspective and the eye commanded with ease the full extent of mountain scenery beyond, but we were eternally debating the question of ascension to the extreme summits "We never are but always to be blessed." Were we contented? No! What now? We wanted to go to the tops of glittering peaks above us. The truth is, the sirens were singing to us, and very like fools we were listening too. At last a strong practical voice placed a veto on the project, and if Ulysses in Sicily could have possessed himself of the same determined will, he need not have filled his sailors' ears with wax.

The nights on the borders of these lakes were generally so cold that we were compelled to build a huge fire, wrap ourselves in horse blankets and place our feet to the fire, the body of each man forming a radii from a common center. The sleep under these circumstances was sound and refreshing. To be sure, sometimes, it rained through the night and the blanket was like a sieve, but this did not disturb our repose.

## BUFFALO HUNTING NEAR INDEPENDENCE ROCK

In the immediate foreground of the sketch an Indian is running a bull buffalo; in the middle distance on the prairie is one at bay, a hunter is provoking and tantalizing him by feints, he does not precisely wish to lose his life but merely to see how closely he can go without doing so.

The great mass of buffalo pursued by other hunters are making good their escape through a distant defile, while in the extreme distance the lofty peaks of the Sweet Water Mountains close the scene.

Where one party of hunters are successful and another less fortunate, they divide the spoils equally in the most chivalric manner; the motto in vogue is "we must help one another" and we believe this is universal, at least among the whites.

## APPROACHING BUFFALO

The hunters form for themselves a peculiar kind of cap. It has two ears with a flap reaching to the shoulders. This is worn with a double object in view, one of which is to deceive the buffalo in approaching; under such guise the hunter is mistaken by the animal for a wolf and is suffered to approach quite near. The mass of hair covering the forehead of the buffalo obscures his sight and aids the trapper in his deception.

In the sketch a couple of bulls are lying down near the swell of a rolling prairie. A trapper (in the company of an Indian) is stealthily creeping along the rise. As the arrows of the latter make no noise, he is privileged to shoot first, the trapper reserving his fire until the animals regain their feet, when he instantly "draws a bead" using his ram-rod to steady his rifle. This mode of hunting is used only under certain circumstances, running being the favorite method from its affording more excitement.

## HUNTING THE BEAR

As the grizzly bear takes precedence of all his congeners by his enormous weight, power and ferocious disposition, it is a favorable thing for the hunters that the first impulse of the animal is to escape. Indeed it is a rule with the Indians and white hunters not to attack him without a strong party and even then take care not to press him too closely.

The seasons in which they are most dangerous occur either at the time when they mate, suffer from hunger, or when they have cubs, then it is extremely judicious to let them alone.

The hair of the animal is very long towards the fall of the year and varies in colour from grey to dark brown, more or less grizzled by intermixture with grey. When in good condition they weigh from 1500 to 1800 pounds. Trappers and hunters delight to recount at the camp fire startling adventures with Bruin, to the "green-horns", enforcing, at the same time, salutary caution to fool-hardy adventurers, touching this fiercest of all animal tribe found in the mountains.

## THE INDIAN CERTIFICATE

The Sioux' recommendation (who wishes to officiate as guide) is here being read by our Captain. The Indians in their intercourse with the whites, have had sagacity to discover the value of certificates of good character, and procure such testimonials from those whom they have served, in order to recommend themselves to others; preserving these papers with great care. It sometimes happens that the writer (knowing that the poor savage cannot read) gives him a character not at all favorable, in short, tells too much. A recent traveller gives an amusing account of one of these "contretemps." "On meeting with the chief, who assured him that he was one of the best friends of the whites, he exhibited certificates from different white men testifying to his friendly disposition. Among these was one that he desired to be read with special attention, as perhaps it was not quite so favorable as others. It was as follows: "The bearer of this says he is a Comanche chief, that he is the best friend the whites ever had, but I believe he is a d----d rascal so look out for him." The Indian eagerly asked the reason for the reader's smile. The answer was that the paper was not so favorable as it might be, whereupon he (the Indian) immediately destroyed it.

## ROCK FORMATIONS, ETC.

The scene here presented is remarkable. Huge mounds of rock rise suddenly out of the prairie and near their summits and scattered about their sides were boulders seemingly detached, while the dry sandy plain below is covered with the gnarled bushes of the artemesias. This whole region from its elevation and purity of air is said to be favorable to the restoration of health, particularly to consumptives. The respiration of air, so highly charged with aromatic plants, no doubt contributes to this influence.

Our hunters had great sport here with the mountain sheep, wherever they could get access to them. In ascending the rocks in herds, they gave notice of their locality by the loose stones that came rattling along the declivities, and thrown down by them in running. When in good order the meat was similar to our mountain mutton. This animal is blessed with several names; big-horn, argali, and mountain sheep. The horns of the male are enormous in proportion to the body of the animal. We brought home a pair measuring 3 feet long with a circumference of 20 inches at the base. The hunters stated to us that in descending the precipitous sides of the mountains, the sheep frequently leap from a height of 25 or 30 feet, taking care always to alight on their horns.

## LARGE ENCAMPMENT NEAR THE CUT ROCKS

At certain specified times during the year the American Fur Company appoints a "rendezvous" at particular localities (selecting the most available spots) for the purpose of trading with Indians and trappers, and here they congregate from all quarters. The first day is devoted to "high jinks" a species of sturnalia, in which feasting, drinking and gambling form prominent parts. Sometimes an Indian becomes so excited with fire-water that he commences "running a-muck." He is pursued, thrown or knocked down, and secured, in order to keep him from mischief. "Affairs of honor" now and then are adjusted between rival trappers, one of the parties, of course, receiving a complete drubbing, all caused by mixing too much alcohol with their water. Night closes this scene of revelry and confusion. The following days exhibit the strongest contrast to this. The Fur Company's great tent is raised and the Indians erect their picturesque white lodges, the accumulated furs of the hunting season are brought forth, and the company's tent is a besieged and busy place. Now the women come in for their share of ornaments and finery, being, as Tony Lumpkin expresses it, "in a concatenation accordingly," the free trapper most especially bestowing presents on his favorite, regardless of the expense.

To the left in the sketch a party of successful warriors are returning to the camp in single file, their lances decorated with scalps from the enemy. Other Indians near them yelling a welcome, to be followed inevitably by a grand war-dance

festivity, served up with an inordinate quantity of boasting.

## TRAPPING BEAVER

In hunting the beaver two or more trappers are usually in company. On reaching a creek or stream their first attention is given to "sign." If they discover a tree prostrate, it is carefully examined to ascertain if it is the work of beaver, and if thrown for the purpose of daming the stream. Foot prints of the animal on the mud or sand are carefully searched for, and if fresh, they then prepare to set their traps. One of these is baited with "medicine", hidden under the water, and attached to a pole driven firmly on or near the bank. A "float-stick" is made fast to the trap, so that if the beaver should carry it away, the stick remains on the surface of the water, and points out its position.

With all the caution the poor trappers take, they cannot not always escape the lynx eyes of the Indians. The dreadful war-whoop with bullets or arrows about their ears, are the first intimations of danger. They are destroyed in this way from time to time, until by a mere chance their bones are found bleaching on the borders of some stream where they have hunted.

## WILD SCENERY - MAKING A CACHE

The scene represented is a gorge in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains. At the bottom the water is coming down in cascades, caused by the melting snows above, and forms one of the numerous feeders to the mighty Missouri. The defile is comparatively so narrow that the sun only penetrates it at mid-day.

To the left, under some wild cliffs, the trappers are building a "cache," out of the way and secluded places are selected for this purpose, in order to escape the eyes of prying Indians. If the ground has a sod it is carefully cut and placed to one side, a hole is then dug of sufficient capacity to contain all such articles as are to be deposited. This done, it is again filled up and the sod replaced in the same order as it was found. The first rain obliterates the slightest trace left of disturbance, and in our journey out and home, on re-opening them, not one had been molested. In some of these were deposited sugar, tea, and coffee (in tin boxes) without receiving the slightest injury.

## HUNTING THE ELK

Pressed by the hunters after a hard run, the elk, almost dead beaten, has as a last resource jumped into a stream too shallow for him to swim and this seals his fate. The hunters, evidently thinking that nothing but gun powder will save their bacon, are in the back-ground, hurrying on with a ball in reserve if required.

In comparison with a deer and antelope, this animal is a little sluggish, but has a most noble presence, often carrying ten antlers on his head, and is extremely graceful, in size about that of a large sized mule. In winter they congregate in large herds numbering several hundreds and travel immense distances. In season, the venison of the elk, although coarser than the deer, is a capital addition to the larder.

## DISTANT VIEW OF THE LAKE - MOUNTAIN OF WINDS

We reached this point about sunset on our way to the lakes, and from fatigue rested here for the night. It gave me ample time to obtain a sketch from the bluff rock to the left, which completely overlooked one of the lakes, the object of our pilgrimage.

Solitude brooded over the scene, and with the exception of our party, the eye wandered in vain to discover a living being or sign of habitation. Like Selkirk in the Island of Juan Fernandez,

"We were monarchs of all we surveyed,  
Our right there were none to dispute."

The rays of the declining sun glimmered on the distant tops of the snow covered peaks, while darkness had already begun to cast its pall on the valley below, the air becoming sensibly cooler as night advanced. In the gorge or pass at the foot of the rock, our men were engaged in building a huge bon-fire, singing "chansons d'amour" and waiting for Farncois and his mule to bring along the mountain sheep our hunters had secured, for it must be confessed that hunger took the "pas" of natural scenery with all its charms - sometimes. The fumes of roast meat needed no gong to hurry us around the camp fire, making us as savage, to use an ingenious simile of Mrs. Malaprop's, "as an allegory on the banks of the Nile."

## INDIAN ENCAMPMENT

Reclining against his beaver and buffalo packs, the warrior is enjoying his "dolce far niente" while smoking his calumet. If disposed to be ceremonious, he throws his first two whiffs upward, muttering some words between, the next in similar manner towards the ground. Sometimes he varies the ceremony by merely throwing the stem upwards and then commencing to inhale, excludes the smoke alternately now through his nostrils and again encircling above his head in a small cloud.

At a little distance (screened from the sun by a blanket overhead) is seated his mild and patient help-mate, ready to receive his imperial orders, and execute them with cheerfulness. On the broad prairie beyond, his vassals encircle the camp fire, roasting their meat, and all agog for any foray their pugnacious leader may hit upon, never in any case you may be sure, for the benefit of the adverse party or their neighbors.

## LAKE SCENE

From the foreground the eye of the spectator is conducted through a gentle slope with groups of mountain pines at intervals, to a peninsular jutting out into the glorious sheet of water; thence it wanders across the lake to a bare salmon-colored granite rock, rising abruptly out of its depths, clothed towards the top with stunted trees and hardy evergreen; still more distant is the eternal ice and snow barrier, that shuts in the scene. The solitary rock lying near the end of the lake, most probably formed at one time a part of the mountain to the right, the interval between having become dammed up and trees growing upon it. A horrible crash must have attended the advent of this huge fellow and he has lain so long that vegetation has covered entirely the upper surface.

From these rocks we caught some noble trout. Losing on the route our hooks, we now formed them of common wire and large pins. The fish were unsophisticated and bit immediately we placed the bait near their mouths in the clear water.

Everything must have an end - time elapsed - we were in our saddles and the enchanting scene left as solitary as ever.

## MEDICINE CIRCLES

The curious circles represented in the sketch we found on the upper waters of the Platte, near our encampment for the night, and puzzled ourselves sufficiently in surmises touching their origin and import. They formed nearly complete circles of about twenty feet in diameter, composed of buffalo skulls, with noses pointing each to the center. We were informed by the trappers and old mountain "voyageurs", of their having met with them in other districts, composed entirely of human skulls, but could give us no further information as to their purpose. The word "medicine" being equivalent in meaning to our word "charm." It is more than probably that they formed some part of a superstitious ceremony.

At night, as the light of the moon shimmered on these bleached skulls, we were forcibly reminded of the incantation scene in the opera of Der Freyschutz, and it would only have required a light in each cranium to have made the resemblance still more apparent.

On the mound covering graves of Indians, we frequently found a buffalo skull placed at the head; sometimes two, one at either end.

## INDIAN RETURNING TO CAMP WITH GAME

The Red Men seem to be exempt from one curse that is quite general in civilized life, we allude to ennui. Low spirits and despair are not their attributes. Our Indian in the sketch, finding that all the larger animals have been driven off, is glad to return home with smaller game. In default of this, he would have contentedly gone to sleep without anything, indeed without much seeming inconvenience, he could continue his fast for a day or two. He has been tortured in his youth by the most painful contrivances, to give him endurance and courage; "par exemple," one of these consist in peircing with a knife the skin over the shoulder blades, splints are run through, and then suspended by a lariat, resting his whole weight on them. There are other ordeals still worse, if he goes through them without a murmur he is considered equal to any fate.

Near the lodge, his squaw is busily employed in preparing a buffalo robe, and near her, in the water, "there are his young barbarians all at play."

FORDING THE RIVER. TRAPPER TRYING ITS DEPTH, ETC.

The caravan having reached the banks of the river, the first thing to be ascertained is whether the wagons and charettes can cross without resort to boats or damage to the goods with which they are laden.

A trusty and experienced man is now selected whose business it is to cross the river and try its depths, and then return by a different route, looking out the shallowest parts and marking them in his mind's eye as a trail for the company.

The sketch represents the trapper on his return, proceeding cautiously. When he has reached the caravan, finding the river fordable the whole body is put in motion (single file) with the guide at their head, and in this manner they make their way safely to the opposite bank.

The sun being near down, the encampment is formed, fires lighted. Hump ribs are at a premium, good jokes also, and then like Sancho, they bless the man that invented sleep, lie down anywhere and are in a moment oblivious to all trouble present and prospective.

## THE MOUNTAIN TORRENT

While sketching this wild scene, we observed our Commander and a mountaineer riding round to various points, and to our question when he returned, whether he intended to cross, he answered - Yes. Not the slightest necessity existed for this (except that the river looked a little in opposition) as we had to return again, but this wilfulness on the part of the torrent settled the question. As my companion P----- had been drowned in a similar crossing, the prospect was not overpleasant. In a little while the mountaineer called out to us "Allons nous en, mes amis. J'si trouve la place." We joined him and in he plunged. The water rushed with such force that although it was near his arm pit on one side, it was below his knee on the other, at the same time drifting him down the river, but we saw him reach the opposite shore in safety. Now our leader said to us, "Keep your horse's nose out of the water and let him have his own way." Whereupon in he went and we after him. The greatest danger was in drifting opposite a perpendicular bank on the other side, where the horses and riders both would infallibly have drowned, but it carried us beyond it and gave a good landing. After a shake or two in the manner of a canine, he said, "You swim, dont you?" "No." "Well," he remarked, "neither do I. It will teach you self-reliance, you know not what you can do until you have tried."

## PAWNEES RUNNING BUFFALO

The hunter has singled out and disengaged from the main body of the buffalo his preference, and is now running and about to shoot him, while others are in hot pursuit of the retreating band, on the rise of the hill. These hills militate against the speed of the animal, as their great weight in front soon tires them down. The Pawnees are slaughtering them mainly for their furs. The robes they manufacture are for the market, and they shew great skill and considerable taste comparatively in ornamenting them in colours. Women are chiefly engaged in tanning the inner side of the robes, and are adepts in giving softness and pliability to the skin. The larger ones are generally prepared in halves and sewed together very neatly at the centre. When ready they are packed in bundles of about a dozen and conveyed to the forts or stations nearest to their camps for trading.

## THE BEE HUNTER

This industrious little harbinger of civilization is fast spreading over the fertile plains of the far west, and may as well have the credit also of having discovered the axiom that "a straight line is the shortest distance between two given points," long before that old fussy fellow Euclid ever dreamed of it.

The mode of finding their hives is illustrated in the sketch. A piece of honey-comb is secured to the top of the bush, this attracts the wild bees, and when several are buzzing about it, the hunters diligently watch them, and as soon as one is ready to start keeps his eye on him. As he flies direct, the hunter runs with his eyes upward, and never loses sight of him until he reaches his destination, usually an old hoblow tree. Axes are now brought into requisition, the tree felled, split open, and the household of the poor insects laid bare, filled to overflowing with its sweets, sometimes extending to eight or ten feet along the trunk. The Indians are remarkably fond of this savory food and receive usually a portion from the good natured hunters.

To the left is seen a community of prairie dogs, a species of marmot, and probably derives its present title from barking like a young pup. The hillock at the entrance of their subterranean dwellings would make a cart load of earth. They lay up no provision for the winter, and the trappers say, sleep the greater part of that season, closing the entrance to their

dens previously. A small species of owl lives among the community, and seems to be welcome, the rattle snake also intrudes, but is avoided and by no means considered friendly. As you approach their habitations they always set up a chorus of barking; in proceeding nearer they each throw their tails in the air and dive down into their burrows.