

them not in any of their sports, yet still seems to be on the best of terms; and as he is frequently seen entering and emerging from the same hole, this singular bird may be looked upon as a member of the same family, or at least a retainer whose services are in some way necessary to the comfort and well-being of the animal whose hospitality he shares.

Rattlesnakes, too, and of immense size, dwell in the same lodges with the dogs; but the idea that has been entertained of their living upon sociable terms of companionship is utterly without foundation. The snakes I look upon as loafers, not easily shaken off by the regular inhabitants, and they make use of the dwellings of the dogs as more comfortable quarters than they can find elsewhere. We killed one a short distance from a burrow, which had made a meal of a half-grown dog; and although I do not think they can master the larger animals, the latter are still compelled to let them pass in and out without molestation—a nuisance, like many in more elevated society, that cannot be got rid of.

The first town we visited was much the largest seen on the entire route, being some two or three miles in length by nearly a mile in width at the widest part. In the vicinity were smaller villages—suburbs of the larger town, to all appearance. After spending some three hours in the very heart of the settlements, and until not an inhabitant could be seen in any direction, we resaddled our horses and set off in search of the command. Thus ended my first visit to one of the numerous prairie-dog commonwealths of the Far West.

CHAPTER X.

A Meal of Prairie Dogs.—Arrival at another brackish Water Camp.—Shower at Night, with fresh Water in the Morning.—Return of the Spy Company.—A regular "Northeaster."—Report of the Spies.—Disagreeable Bivouac.—Indians in Camp.—Horses stolen.—A bad Bargain.—Daring of the Indians.—Fine Weather again.—Once more on the Road.—Dog Towns.—Meeting with a Party of Indians.—Horse Meat far from being bad Eating.—Wolves about.—A dreary Desert.—Delicious fresh-water Stream.—Latitude and Longitude again taken.—Pleasant Prospects.—Again encompassed with Difficulties.—A Passage out found.—Steppes.—Mesquit Prairie and Prairie Dogs.—Mountains in the Distance.—Singing Birds, and Thoughts of Home.—Delusive Hopes.—More Horses stolen.—Bed of Large River crossed.—Arrival at the Quintufue.—Large Indian Camp discovered.—Cayguas on all Sides.—Indian Provisions.—A Party sent out.—Farther Advance impossible.—A Night without Water.—Preparations for taking a back Track.—Exciting News.—Firing of Guns heard.—Lieutenant Hull and four Men killed by Cayguas.—A Chase after Indians.—Return to the Quintufue.—Determination to divide the Command.—Description of the Cayguas.

WE had scarcely travelled three miles, after leaving the large dog-town, before we descried the white tops of our wagons at some distance in our rear. Finding a dry mesquit, we broke off some of the larger branches, kindled a fire, and cooked for each man a dog. The meat we found exceedingly sweet, tender, and juicy—resembling that of the squirrel, only that it was much fatter. Our meal over, we next wasted three or four hours in vainly endeavouring to shoot a deer or antelope. Numbers of them were seen; but the hunting parties had scoured their range, killed several of them, and rendered the animals unusually shy. Late in the afternoon we sought the trail of our wagons, and on finding it set off at a pace which brought us up with

the command ere nightfall, encamped near a large, reddish-coloured hill or mountain, and close by a small creek of brackish water—a tributary, doubtless, of the Wichita, or else the main stream.

Scarcely had we finished a scanty supper of poor beef, and hastily rolled ourselves in our blankets, when it commenced raining in torrents—pouring down without intermission for hours, and drenching us completely. Little did we care for this, however, as we had the satisfaction in the morning of getting fresh and pure water in abundance—the first for a week.

After devouring the last of the prairie dogs we had killed the preceding day, wringing our blankets, and drying our clothes as well as we were able, we pursued our journey in a course nearly northwest. We had no little trouble in crossing the creek before us, swollen by the heavy rain of the night previous; but in a couple of hours wagons and all were safely on the opposite side.

After toiling across the soft and muddy prairie a distance of ten miles, we at length reached another running stream, the point at which our guide had left the spy company. Here we halted to await the return of the latter, or until another guide should be sent back. During the night the wind veered round into the northeast, bringing with it a cold, drizzling, and extremely disagreeable rain, which continued the next day. In the mean time the spy company returned, reporting that they had found a large stream to the north, which they confidently believed to be Red River, or one of its main tributaries.

Night came, the cold rain and raw wind still continuing. We were encamped immediately upon the stream, the banks of which were high, and flanked by a narrow skirting of timber. Under this bank I led my

horse at dusk, and tied him fast to a small tree. Here he was protected from the piercing northern blasts, and to afford the same shelter, Doctor Brenham led thither his horse, a noble white animal of the best blood, and confined him to the same tree with mine.

Several of our horses were tied under this bank, the poorer animals being allowed to rough it upon the prairie in front of our encampment, hobbled, and many of them staked, to prevent the storm from driving them off during the night.

On awaking in the morning, it was ascertained that the horse of Doctor B. had been stolen by Indians. The *lariat* was cut, and part of it still fast to the tree. My horse was standing quietly where I had left him, his colour probably preventing the daring robbers from seeing him. Some half dozen horses were taken with Doctor B.'s, among them Mr. Falconer's. Generally the Indians selected the best horses in camp, dark as was the night; but they took themselves in in taking Mr. Falconer's, for he was continually performing some unseemly antics, had frequently caused much fright among our other horses, and was worth but little, even setting his tricks aside.

To show how daring the Indian horse-thieves were, I have but to mention that Doctor Brenham's horse was tied within six yards of the spot where we were sleeping; and after passing the guard, by no means an easy matter, the rascals were compelled to creep within a few feet of us before they could reach their prey. An Indian bow was found in the vicinity of our camp, which the thieves had left in their haste, and one of the artillery mules was shot through with an arrow, the animal probably not being able to move fast enough when the Indians withdrew from our vicinity.

As the day advanced the rain gradually ceased, and before ten o'clock the sun once more appeared. A happier set of men were never seen, for many of us had eaten, slept, and waked in wet clothes and blankets through the eight-and-forty previous hours. Some little time was occupied in filling up the creek with earth and logs, so as to secure a safe passage for the wagons, and about noon the whole expedition was once more on the road, travelling in a northwest direction. During the day we passed through a succession of dog-towns, scattered along every half mile upon the route, as their favourite grass could be procured. Large numbers of the animals were killed by the men—killed for their meat alone.

At night we encamped in front of a small mot or clump of timber, and near a pond of fresh water. However much the rain of the two previous days had annoyed us, we now found that it had saved the expedition. Not a drop of water, save that which had recently fallen, could be found in any direction, and little doubt was entertained that we must inevitably have perished had it not been for the heavy storms.

A party of three hunters came in after we had encamped, and reported that they had fallen in with a party of nine Indians during the day, and had held a "talk" with them. The fellows spoke Spanish, although badly, and were very insolent in their bearing. They did not dare attack our men, however, and finally rode off yelling across the prairie. They were doubtless Caygüas,* and belonged to the party that had stolen our horses the night before.

* Mr. Navarro, who was well acquainted with the different tribes south of Red River, told me they were *Caygüas*, and gave the name this spelling. It is pronounced *Kiwaá*, yet it is generally written *Kioway*.

Another party of our men shortly after came in, their horses loaded down with deer, antelope, and other meat which they had killed during the day. The mess to which I was attached received a large ration of meat, which those who sent it said was young buffalo. It was fat, tender, and very juicy—the most delicious meat, I then thought, I had ever tasted—and what with some fine mushrooms we had found on the march, together with broiled antelope liver, we made a sumptuous meal. Not a little surprised were we afterward, when we ascertained that the meat we had partaken of so heartily, and praised so much, was the flesh of a *mustang*!

After having tied our horses close at hand, many of them to the wagons, and taken up our quarters in their immediate vicinity, we stretched ourselves upon the ground, and slept soundly, without a visit from Indians or disturbance of any kind, until near morning, when a pack of wolves, drawn to our camp by the smell of fresh meat, set up a dismal howling. A heavy dew, the first we had noticed since our departure from Austin, had fallen during the night, and the day broke with difficulty through a heavy fog: but at about eight o'clock the sun made his appearance, dispersing fog, wolves, dew, and all.

Our course of the previous day, northwest, which was considered the right one, we were still enabled to keep, with an excellent road for the first five miles of our morning's march. About noon we reached a singular tract, unlike anything we had previously seen. North and south, as far as the eye could reach, nothing could be seen but a sandy plain, covered with scrub-oak bushes, two or three feet high, upon which were found innumerable acorns of a large size. This desert, although the wheels of the wagons sank several inches

in the sand, we were obliged to cross. Night set in before the passage was made—horses, cattle, and drivers alike tired out with the excessive fatigues of the day. We were fortunate, however, in finding a cool and pure stream of fresh running water just on the western edge of the waste. On the opposite side, the prairie had been recently burned, the fresh grass just springing up, and here we encamped.

At this camp the latitude and longitude were taken by Lieutenant Hull. The result of the observation, which, from the instruments not being in order, could not be depended upon, I inserted in my note-book, but have now forgotten. Lieutenant H. said that we could not be more than a hundred miles from the settlements, that we could easily reach them in ten days, and expressed himself highly pleased with the prospect before us. Little did he then anticipate the horrible fate that was soon to befall himself, or the many gloomy days of travel, of starvation, and of uncertainty in store for those whose spirits he had elevated by anticipations of soon reaching the settlements.

On starting the next morning after this observation was made, and ascending a high ridge of hills in the vicinity, the country before us was found extremely rough and broken. We pushed forward, however, some one way, some another—buffeting, turning, and twisting about, without order or system, until nearly dark. Long and tiresome marches, bad water, and not half enough of even the worst provisions, had combined to weaken and dispirit the men, render them impatient of control, and inclined to disobey all orders. The consequence was, that one party would go in this direction in quest of grapes or plums, another in that, hunting for game or water, and nearly all discipline was lost. It is diffi-

cult, and requires a most efficient officer to keep even regular soldiers under subjection, when half starved and broken down by fatigue—nothing can restrain volunteers under such circumstances.

After crossing and recrossing deep gullies, our progress in one direction impeded by steep hills, and in another by yawning ravines, we finally encamped at night not two miles from where we began our day's march, although we had really travelled fifteen. Large plum patches had been found during the day, and such an inordinate craving had our men for almost any species of vegetable, that the country for miles in every direction was scoured, midnight coming before all the different parties arrived in camp.

A passage out of our difficulties was found next morning, and after winding about until noon among the hills, we at length reached a beautiful table-land covered with mesquit-trees.

So suddenly did we leave the rough and uneven surface of the valley, and so striking was the transition, that the scenic world of the theatre—and particularly the change from the humble cottage of the dancing girl to the Hindoo paradise in "La Bayadere"—was brought forcibly to the mind.

On starting in the morning, nothing was to be seen but a rough and rugged succession of hills before us—piled one upon another, each succeeding hill rising above its neighbour. At the summit of the highest of these hills the beautiful and fertile plain opened suddenly to view, giving scope to our vision and our hopes that was unanticipated and thrice welcome. The country between the Cross Timbers and the Rocky Mountains rises by high *steppes*, for the different lines of hills can be called by no other name. As the traveller jour-

neys westward, he meets, at long intervals, ridges of hills and mountains, running nearly north and south, presenting the most serious barriers to his farther advance. As he ascends these, he anticipates a corresponding descent on the opposite side; but in a majority of instances, on reaching the summits, he finds nothing before him but a level and fertile prairie.

We halted an hour or two, on reaching the beautiful table-land, to rest our weary cattle and give our horses an opportunity to graze. Little villages of prairie dogs were scattered about upon the prairie, and numbers were shot by the men, to help out their scanty rations. The fat of this animal, old hunters say, is an infallible remedy for the rheumatism. In the evening we resumed the march, and at sundown encamped upon the banks of a running stream of fresh water. The blue tops of three or four high mountains were discerned in the distance, which, such phases did hope ascribe to them, we thought answered the description Carlos had given of *The Crows*.

We were awakened early the next morning by the warbling of innumerable singing-birds, perched among the bushes along the borders of the stream. Among the notes I recognised those of the robin, the lark, and the blue-bird, and as it was the first time any of them had been heard since the commencement of our journey, thoughts of home and civilization came fresh to the heart here among the western wilds. How these birds ever strayed so far from their usual haunts, for they are seldom found except in the immediate vicinity of settlements, is more than I can imagine. There they were, however, telling us of scenes to which we had long been strangers, and giving us pleasing but fallacious promises of a speedy return to the abodes of at

least semi-civilization. In our fond imaginings they typified the dove, telling us that the wilderness had been passed; but, alas! their song, like the siren's, was uttered but to deceive.

Inspiring as was the singing of these birds, we were obliged to leave them in the middle of their matinal concert, and pursue our weary march. Throughout the day we had an excellent road, and when night came we had made something like twenty miles, still in a northwest direction, which was considered our true course. The mountains that had been seen the day before were now plainly visible, and well answered the description Carlos had given of the landmarks in the neighbourhood of the Narrows of Red River. The opinion advanced by many, that we were approaching the end of our journey, spread a general joy through camp; and this opinion received fresh strength upon the return of two small hunting parties after night, who reported that they had seen what appeared to be Mexican cart tracks upon the prairie. With thankful hearts we swallowed our scanty supper that night, and the burden of our dreams, after *retiring* to rest upon the ground, was of bread and butter, potatoes, and the other substantial of life—things that had long been strangers to our mouths, but were fresh in our memories.

Early the next morning it was ascertained that several horses and mules were missing, and although diligent search was made by their owners, they were never recovered. The night had been clear and bright, the guard neither seeing nor hearing aught to excite their suspicions; but the animals were stolen, doubtless, by a marauding party of Indians.

The march was once more resumed, several well-