

little about the business, had not observed the precaution of fastening the trap to something permanent.

"While breakfast was being prepared, and the horses were filling themselves with grass, the unlucky trapper went in quest of his trap. A wolf had been caught, and as he dragged the trap along, he left a very distinct trace in the grass, by which he was easily followed. But he had crept into a very thick patch of brush, made almost impenetrable by a rank growth of hazel. And how was the trap to be recovered? The wolf was doubtless alive, and it would be very hazardous to attempt to enter his place of refuge. An effort was made to encourage the dogs to go in, but they recollected the rough fare they experienced the previous evening, and would not go beyond the edge of the thicket. In the midst of his perplexities, the young trapper was relieved by the arrival of two of the company, one of whom climbed a pin-oak tree that stood in the edge of the brush, and from the top of which he had a fair view of the formidable occupant of the brush-patch, and shot him with his rifle. All danger being now removed, the dead wolf was dragged from his fastness, with one of his fore feet in the trap. He was of the largest kind, and almost black. As there were no wolves to be seen on the prairie in the morning, it was feared that all of them had been led off by the one in the trap; and that trap and wolf would not be seen again.

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"In the journal before me, nothing is noted of much importance, until they reached the Kansas river, an affluent to the Missouri. The river rises in the plains west, and runs east into the Missouri. It was about three hundred and thirty yards wide. The party were able to ford it. When they were about ten miles from this river, they saw, as they thought, several Indians; but they soon lost sight of them. As they approached the Kansas, they observed a great many horse tracks, some of which were very fresh, and several places where buffalo had been killed by the Indians. They were evidently in the neighborhood of Indian villages. Big White said they were the Kansas tribe, a fierce and warlike nation. They had lived higher up the Missouri, where they were involved in a number of unfortunate wars with some of the neighboring tribes, which nearly resulted in their extinction. They had been nearly broken down, and lost quite a number of their braves. They were driven down towards the Kansas, about one hundred miles.

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"The company encamped on the west side of the Kansas river, and about a mile and a half from it, on the border of a prairie. They had not been there long before they saw a small party of

Kansas Indians, passing not very far from the company. Some of the men approached them, making signs of friendship, and induced them to come to the camp. They cast very inquisitive looks upon the white men, and at first seemed rather alarmed; but the kindness of the party towards them soon dispelled their fears. By the aid of the Mandan chief, who partially understood their language, and acted as a kind of interpreter, Captain Williams learned that they belonged to the Kansas nation, and had been out on a hunt to procure buffalo meat. They represented one of their villages as being about six miles down the Kansas river. With a view of securing their friendship, Captain Williams gave them several presents, with which they were greatly pleased. In return they gave Captain Williams some buffalo meat, upon which his men feasted very heartily that night.

"Having passed three days with this tribe, Captain Williams resumed his journey with his men, greeted with the best wishes of these unsophisticated children of nature, for their future good luck. He was advised by Big White to bear more to the west, to avoid the broken, hilly country near the Missouri, and to avoid the difficulty sometimes experienced in crossing its tributaries near their mouths. The hostile parties of Indians, too, with whom they might fall in, would not be very large, and of course less formidable, as their villages were generally near the Missouri. Captain Williams, therefore, determined to cross the Platte, a short distance below the junction of the north and south forks, and pursued his course accordingly. The company traveled over a dry, elevated, rich prairie country. Buffalo were seen in great numbers. Elk, deer and the antelope were frequently to be seen, scampering and curveting, and sometimes gazing with wild curiosity upon the company as they passed along. Frequent signs of Indians were seen through the day, but the fears of the party were not excited, as they were made, in all probability, by the hunting parties of the Kansas.

"An hour before sunset the company came to a halt to refresh themselves and horses. This evening a dog that had been exchanged for a horse overtook them, and seemed much pleased with rejoining his old acquaintances. There was a piece of rawhide attached to his neck, by which he had been tied, and which he had cut, and in this way made his escape. How he passed, without being attacked by wolves and torn to pieces, was a matter of surprise to the party, who had observed that wolves were very numerous. At dark a light was observed across the prairie, which was most likely that of an Indian camp. The company put out their fires, mounted their horses, and traveled eight or ten miles further, and then unpacked and fettered their horses, and turned

them out to graze, whilst they wrapped themselves up in their blankets and laid themselves down to sleep. The light of the ensuing morning revealed to the men the most extensive and beautiful prospect they had ever seen. They found themselves on the most elevated point in a grand prairie that spread almost immeasurably in every direction. In every way they looked, a beautiful sea-green surface spread onward and onward, until it united with the utmost verge of the sky, bearing a striking resemblance to the undulating surface of the ocean. The prairie was dotted, here and there, with bands of the different kinds of animals, which at that early day were very numerous in the far west. Far away in the distance was to be seen a herd of buffalo, some quietly grazing and others reposing upon the grass. Near at hand was a band of hungry and roguish-looking wolves, curiously eyeing the company, and patiently licking their lips in anticipation of the sweet morsels and bones they expected to pick up about the camp when the party were gone. In this beautiful, exciting panorama of nature were the elk and the antelope, the one crowned with his stately, wide-spreading antlers; the other sweeping and curveting around with so much grace and ease, as scarcely to appear to make a single muscular effort. And then, hard-by, was a little village of prairie dogs, the industrious inhabitants of which were up at the first break of day, yelping and skipping about, darting into their holes, and as quickly coming out again, and in this way expressing the surprise and curiosity created by the presence of these intruders upon their territory. Although the company was delighted with the scene they did not think it a safe policy to occupy so conspicuous a place very long, as they might be espied many miles in every direction by any roving bands of Indians that might be in that region. Without, therefore, enjoying their usual morning repast, they hurried off, and traveled until noon, when they came to timber, in which they passed several hours of repose both to themselves and their horses.

"In the latter part of this day, a rumbling, rolling noise was heard by the company, in the south, resembling distant thunder. Big White, who was an experienced buffalo hunter, said that it was made by the running of a very large herd of frightened buffalo, and, as the sound became more and more distinct, he stated that they, in all probability, were coming toward the company, a circumstance that would be attended with danger, if they were as numerous as the noise indicated.

"For one hour the thundering continued, becoming more and more audible, until the dark rolling mass of living, moving animals were seen on the verge of the horizon, coming directly