

could not himself vouch for the facts."

And again we read, in Coutant's History of Wyoming, the following anecdote of the Big Snow Winter, and of some of its sequels:

"Trappers and Indians have told many stories about the cold winter of 18[44-]45. No one knew just how cold it was, but many white men claim that it could not have been less than sixty degrees below zero. Jim Baker, who was in Wyoming that winter, says that it was the coldest weather he ever experienced. It killed nearly all the horses and ponies belonging to the Indians as well as the trappers. In those days hundreds of herds of buffalo wintered in Wyoming and that year they all froze to death. Elk, antelope and deer largely suffered the same fate. Bridger has also told of this severe winter many times and he said that the cold extended all over Wyoming and Colorado. The Indians never tired of telling of the winter when all their ponies died. In their traditions they made the record on the rocks by the sign of a prostrate horse, which told the story in the forcible language of the aborigines. Jim Baker relates an interesting incident connected with the loss of the horses of the trappers. The band he was connected with that winter, found themselves on foot in the spring and they left their cabins on the headwaters of the North Platte above Saratoga and went southwest into Utah in search of another band belonging to the same company. They became footsore and hungry. There was no game, as everything had been killed by the cold, and consequently the journey was a terrible one, but they at last reached the camp of trappers they were in search of and a council was held as to what should be done. The Utah trappers had saved the most of their horses, but they were in need of more. It was at last decided to go into Southern California and supply fresh mounts; and so they united their forces and set out for the South. Southern California at that time belonged to Mexico, and it was inhabited by Mexicans and Spaniards who had large bands of horses. The trappers had lived so long in the country where might made right, that they possessed no scruples in supplying themselves at the expense of the rich stockmen of the southern country. They found horses more numerous than they expected, and they had little difficulty, Baker said, in gathering up 4,000 head, and with these they started back to Utah. The owners followed for a long distance, but the trappers sent their squaws ahead with the stock and formed themselves into a rear guard to keep off the Mexicans. The trappers, Indian like, greatly rejoiced over their successful foray and, after celebrating the event, they divided up the

herd, and Baker and his friends came on to their old hunting and trapping grounds. But tidings of their approach had reached the Indians, who were greatly excited to hear that a big band of horses were near, offering a chance to replace their dead ponies. No sooner were the trappers comfortably installed in their old cabins, with their horses about them, than they were fiercely attacked by a large band of savages. It was a long, desperate fight, in which many of the Indians paid dearly for their boldness, the unerring rifles of the trappers giving them great odds over the poorly armed red men. Nothing ~~remains~~ remains now to mark the spot where the deadly struggle for supremacy took place, except the names Battle Mountain and Battle Creek, now made famous by remarkably rich veins of copper ore, which names came from the engagement fought by Jim Baker and his fellow trappers with the hostile Indians for the possession of a band of horses, the bitterness of the fight being intensified by the fact that they were the only horses in that part of the country."

Whether a temperature so low as sixty degrees below zero has ever in historic times prevailed over the plains of Wyoming or not, there is reason to believe that buffalo and animals of the deer family can withstand any temperatures to which they are liable in Colorado and Wyoming latitudes—provided, that no other conditions prevent them from travelling to shelter, ^{or from} assembling in herds, ~~and from procuring an abundance of food.~~ Therefore, starvation—due to the universally deep and incruusted snow—was probably a larger factor ~~than~~ than cold, in the widespread extinction of animals in the Big Snow winter of 1844-5.

But however that may be, one point in Mr. Coutant's interesting contribution requires correction; i.e., his statement that Battle Mountain and Battle Creek were named from this ~~fight~~ ^{fight} over California horses. Those places derived their names from an event that transpired several years prior to 1845; viz., the battle of a trapping party led by a German known to the mountain men as "Frapp," (his real name was Henry Fraeb), on the 21st and 22d of August, 1841, in which, against a greatly superior number of Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahos, the trappers defended themselves ~~and~~ and their cavallada in a fort of felled cottonwood trees, known as "Frapp's Fort," in the eastern angle made by the confluence of Battle Creek with the Little Snake River. ^{near Battle and Squaw Mountains;} in which battle, "Frapp" and three others were killed, the Indians losing a much greater number. Squaw Mountain took its name from the squaws of the trappers' camp having hidden on it during the fight. As Jim Baker was in that battle, and furnished, through McIntosh and Reed,

the well known account of it published in El Porvenir, with the names of the 32 men of Fraeb's party (but 27 of whom actually participated in the fight) and of the 4 who were killed, the account from which these facts are taken, he can hardly have said that Battle Mountain and Creek were named from an event that took place several years subsequent to 1841. Mr. Coutant's attributing such a statement to him, must be due to a confusion of data. As Baker and his companions, on returning from California, took their share of the spoils back to their old hunting cabins, and as the Indians attacked them after they were again "comfortably installed in their old cabins with their horses around them," the fact that these cabins were "on the headwaters of the North Platte, above Saratoga," is evidence enough that the attack was not made in the neighborhood of Battle Mountain; and it indicates that it is Battle Lake, near the old Doane-Rambler mine in the Grand Encampment district, that was the scene of the battle over California horses, and whose name commemorates that event. Battle Lake is on a route between Saratoga and the Little Snake River, by way of Grand Encampment Creek.

The plundering of Fort Uncompahgre, in southwestern Colorado, and that of Fort Uintah, in northeastern Utah, by the Utes, which resulted in the abandonment of those posts by their owner, from that time forward, were incidents of ^{the winter of} 1844-5; and, although farther discussion of these events must be relegated to another paper, there can be little doubt that they were a part of the consequences of the Big Snow of that winter, or that the Utes were virtually driven to these high-handed acts against the property rights of Robidoux, by the sufferings and life and death emergencies which the Big Snow brought upon them.

It would seem, too, that the buffalo were destroyed in the region about Fort Bridger in the same time and manner as on the Laramie Plain and ~~elsewhere~~ in many other parts of Wyoming and Colorado; for in J. A. Allen's History of the American Bison we read:

"Jules Marcou, ^[a noted pioneer geologist of America, from Switzerland] informs me that a single old buffalo bull made his appearance at Fort Bridger last summer (1875), but that none had been seen there before, according to Dr. Carter, for thirty years."

In the history of forts St. Vrain and Lancaster, the winter of '44-5 was the first in which ^(since established) these posts were not occupied for the usual buffalo trade with the Cheyennes and Arapahos. The advent of ~~deep~~ deep and untraversably-crusts snow on the mountains and piedmont plains, ⁱⁿ the ~~early part~~ ^{early part} of that winter, caused there the virtual extinction of such buffalo bands as had failed to migrate to lower latitudes or lesser altitudes, or to reach life-sustaining

groves of cottonwood or mountain aspi; so that ^{subsequent} any attempt at such trade in the South Platte posts would have been comparatively profitless. The country south of the Arkansas, then, ~~which would be a much better field for exploitation.~~ ~~Even before that fell winter, hunting had visibly decreased the supply of buffalo for the trade at the South Platte posts.~~ Bent, St. Vrain & Co. had already established a small post on the Canadian River in the spring of '44; and through their brave and capable clerk, Hatcher, and ^{during the winter of '44-5,} others, ~~which they carried on the buffalo trade there with the Comanches and Kiowas.~~ They carried on the buffalo trade there with the Comanches and Kiowas. The buffalo that had migrated to the southern country during that ~~winter~~ fall and winter, did not at once resume their old range ~~between the Santa Fe and Oregon trails after the passing of the Big Snow Winter, which indeed never restocked the western part of it, but only gradually returned to the eastern; and in the summer and winter following, they remained chiefly south of the Arkansas.~~ between the Santa Fe and Oregon trails after the passing of the Big Snow Winter, ~~which~~ indeed never restocked the western part of it, but only gradually returned to the eastern; and in the summer and winter following, they remained chiefly south of the Arkansas. To that quarter therefore, for the time being, the Messrs. Bent and St. Vrain turned increased attention, building for the Comanche and Kiowa ~~trade~~ trade of '45-6 their second Canadian River post. ^{Further data on these two posts may be found in Mooney's exposition of Kiowa winter counts, in Abert's Itinerary of 1845, and elsewhere.} That the eastern skirt-plain of the Rocky Mountains, from the southern border of the North Platte Basin southward, was almost destitute of large game in the summer of 1845, there is abundant evidence. It was found so by Colonel Kearney's command, which, in an expedition from Fort Leavenworth to South Pass and back that summer, marched from Fort Laramie to Bent's Fort through an almost deserted land. There were probably a few straggling buffalo near the Chugwater, where some horse-loads of meat were seen; brought into a Cheyenne village by Indian hunters. South of that, an elk or two were seen near Horse Creek, three buffalo and an antelope near Lodgepole, and a few elk on the Cache à la Poudre; but, as a whole, the country was desolate. On reaching the Arkansas, a few miles east of the Pueblo, Captain Cooke, one of ^{Kearney's} officers, wrote: "There is no game. We have not seen a herd of buffalo for sixteen days"; nor were buffalo ^{after that} seen—so far as we can judge by the Captain's journal—till the command reached the vicinity of Chouteau's Island, five days' march below Bent's Fort. In his journal of the march, the Captain wrote of the South Platte country as "a desert," and a "fine range for elephants"; of Cherry Creek Valley, as "devoid of life." But he erred in writing, "there have not been buffalo here for years." For such an expression implies at least several years; while Rufus Sage hunted among dense herds of buffalo on Cherry Creek, near present Denver, in January, 1843;

and Fremont ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ heard that the Arapahos were hunting buffalo on upper Bijou in the first days of ~~the~~ July, 1843, and later in the same month his own party killed a bull at the head of Cherry Creek; and from Sage again we learn that buffalo were hunted in the spring of 1844 on Plum Creek and elsewhere near the South Platte's exit from the mountains, and that antelope and a variety of large game then abounded on various tributaries of the South Platte.

The Southern Cheyennes—whose range, in the forties, was chiefly on the Plains east of the Rockies, between the Arkansas and the Platte— were interviewed by Lieut. J. W. Abert at Bent's Fort in the summers of 1845 and '46; and that officer found them much depressed over the recent ~~failure~~ of the buffalo. Abert reported that in 1845 they had suffered much sickness, "and what was to them a still greater calamity, they were suffering from hunger, not having seen any buffalo, except now and then a single bull." At that time, there were probably no buffalo nearer to Bent's Fort than Chouteau's Island, near present Hartland, where Kearney's hunters seem to have killed some in August. Even in '46, the Southern Cheyennes saw no herds from January (when with William Bent they went 140 miles east of Bent's Fort and hunted at the Santa Fe Crossing of the Arkansas) until the early part of August.

~~the~~ Flatheads, which was on Bitter Root River near present Stevensville. The difficulties which compelled him to return to Sacred Heart, his second abortive journey in December, and his failure to reach St. Mary's until ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ spring, are related as follows:

"The rain and snow had not ceased for several days, and were still falling. They even increased, but after all kinds of difficulties and hardships, caused by the bad weather, we found ourselves on the 27th, after traversing the valley of St. Ignatius, almost at the foot of the mountain. For several days we now wound through thick woods and along the side of cliffs, among the most prodigious cedars. I doubt if Lebanon ever bare any more majestic, or any as mysterious. The silence of these places is unearthly.

"Presently we met two Nez Percés, who were just down from the mountains. They gave us a most terrifying description of the state of the trail. In view, therefore, of the unremitting snowfall, we concluded that the passage was at present impracticable and impossible; moreover, the waters were now coming down from the mountains so fast and in such volume, that we thought of nothing but of returning in haste. We were confronted by a new deluge; the little brooks of the day before were now swollen torrents, rushing uproariously down. They arrested us continually, to make bridges or throw trees across, and unload and load again our pack-animals. After endless miseries, tumbles and headers, we at last came again to the St. Ignatius river, which had risen over ten feet, and was carrying down great masses of tree-trunks. It was not crossed without the greatest danger. Once I found myself under water, and under my mule; but I held fast to my beast, which dragged me to the farther shore. We camped for the night near the large cross planted on the territory of the chief Paulin. The river was still several feet below the top of the bank, and we lay down to sleep without the least uneasiness; but toward midnight one of my men was surprised and amazed to find both his legs in the water. He put his head out of the tent, and lost no time in giving the alarm to his companions. It was, in fact, high time; we found ourselves surrounded by water, as by an immense lake. The plain was flooded throughout its entire extent of some seventy miles. I had barely got on my shoes and cassock and tied up my baggage and provisions, when I found myself in water up to my knees. But here, as in a hundred other places, Providence had furnished us a means of escape; there were two infirm little canoes of bark at the precise spot where we had encamped, and by their means we were enabled to take refuge, with arms and baggage, though all soaked, upon an eminence two miles away. Our horses and

mules had made their way to the mountain-side during the night, where there was still abundant grass. We elected one of the Cœur d'Alènes to go to the mission with the news of our distress, and two days later, five canoes, under two of the chiefs, came to our rescue and carried us back to the village.

"On the 4th of December, I started off again to try to reach the Flatheads, by way of Clark's Fork. On the 8th four Kalispels took me, with two canoes, and we descended the river for four days. When we reached the great lake, the ice began to impede our progress. We were constantly having to land, to regum the thin bark of which our canoes were composed. Thus I found myself stopped for the second time. All navigation had ceased a month before—my pilots declared that to advance was to expose ourselves to imminent danger. I had learned by a letter just received from Father Mengarini that he had only escaped with the greatest difficulty from the snow and the water, and that twelve of his horses had perished in the 'evil forest.' One of the Kalispels offered to carry a message to St. Mary's on snowshoes—so I wrote to Father Mengarini, saying, among other things, 'I have done what I could, with prudence, to come to you; but I have found insurmountable barriers in the snows of the Cœur d'Alène mountains and the overflowed rivers, and now finally the ice stops me on Clark's Fork. I find myself frustrated in my most earnest desire, that of seeing the mother mission once more—of embracing my dear brothers in Jesus Christ, and pouring out upon the hearts of our dear good Flatheads all the attachment and godly love that I bear them. Tell them all sorts of things for me; I shall pass but a sad winter away from them. Tell them that I hope the Lord will grant me the favor of seeing them and taking their hands at the beginning of next spring; for as soon as the river is navigable I shall set out once more.'

"I was not long in descending the river, and on the 17th I reached the Kalispels' [Pend d'Oreilles'] winter quarters. They seemed to have nothing more pressing to do than to procure me the best lodge in the camp, and to make all arrangements to make my stay among them as agreeable and comfortable as the place and their poor circumstances permitted.

"I shall always remember with pleasure the winter of 1844-5, which I had the happiness of spending among these good Indians. The place for wintering was well chosen, picturesque, agreeable and convenient. The camp was placed near a beautiful waterfall, caused by Clark river being blocked up by an immense rock, through which the waters, forcing narrow passages, precipitate themselves. A dense and interminable