

This region abounds in magnesia, insomuch that Glauber's salt is found almost everywhere, and in several places in great quantities in the crystallized state. Rattle-snakes and other dangerous reptiles, which are met with at every step, would be a scourge to the country, if the savages had not discovered, in a root that is very common in these parts, an infallible specific against all poisonous bites.

Although we were still three days' journey from the Black Hills, they were already distinctly visible. Everywhere we were in the midst of buffalo. If the earth is shankless and yields but little, Providence has provided in a different way for the subsistence of the Indians and travelers who traverse these regions. We killed without any trouble six buffalo a day for the forty persons who constituted our camp. In all my travels I have never wearied of watching with admiration these truly majestic animals, with their rugged necks, shoulders and heads. If their peaceable nature was not known, their aspect alone would terrify one. But they are timid and without malice, and never offer to do harm, except in their own defense, when they are wounded and hard pressed. Their strength is extraordinary, and though they appear clumsy, they run notwithstanding with great speed; it takes a good horse to follow them very far.

In this same region, bands of wild or runaway horses are very numerous; much skill and a long-winded horse are required to catch them. The Spanish-Mexicans and, as a rule, the Indians, are expert in this kind of chase; it is seldom that they miss casting their lasso about an animal's neck, though at full speed.