

out of their doors and chatter an incoherent welcome ; but the salutation which awaited them was not of a kind calculated to encourage a protracted acquaintance of even this unsatisfactory nature, and all civilities were therefore soon at an end.

The *huntists* of the party soon spread themselves over several acres of the town, in the hope of securing a few specimens as mere matter of curiosity. Several hundred shots were fired ; and, if the accounts of our brave *huntists* may be credited, at least one half that number had been killed ; but by some strange fatality or illusion, on arriving at the spot where the ball was seen to strike them, they were not there. Only one was brought to the train, and he, after being subjected to the critical examination of all the excursionists, was turned over to the cook ; and the last that was seen of him, he was rapidly disappearing before the steady gaze of Professor Ayer, who protested meantime that, "it had come to a pretty pass, if this grand excursion was reduced to such a strait that its guests were obliged to subsist on *prairie-dog*."

These prairie-dog cities are a great curiosity in their way. They generally occupy the most dry and elevated table lands of the Plains. The Union Pacific Railroad passes through or near many of them.

The harmless little animals are somewhat the nature, and about one-half the size of the common ground hog or woodchuck. They burrow in the ground, and evidently subsist, without water, upon grass and roots in the near vicinity of their town, as they are never seen far away from it.

Tradition, as well as more modern authority, insists that their apartments are occupied conjointly with owls and rattlesnakes ; but of the truth of this, deponent prefers remaining silent, remarking only, that he has seen,