

others who ventured to cross the "vast desert," which stretched its unknown breadth between him and the land of his desires. *Brave, cool and wary as the savage, with his unerring rifle on his arm, he was more than a match for any red devil he might encounter. Patient under adversity, fertile in resources, he was an invaluable aid at all times; a true friend, and bitter foe.* This type of people is fast passing away.

The change wrought within the last few years has robbed the plains of its most attractive feature, to those who are far away from the scene—the emigrant train. Once, the south bank of the Platte was one broad thoroughfare, whereon the long trains of the emigrants, with their white-covered wagons, could be seen stretching away for many miles in an almost unbroken chain. Now, on the north side of the same river, in almost full view of the "old emigrant road," the cars are bearing the freight and passengers rapidly westward, while the oxen that used to toil so wearily along this route, have been transformed into "western veal" to tickle the palates of those passengers, or else, like Tiny Tim, they have been compelled to "move on" to some new fields of labor.

To give some idea of the great amount of freighting done on these plains we present a few figures, which were taken from the books of freighting firms in Atchison, Kansas. In 1865, this place was the principal point on the Missouri River, from which freight was forwarded to the Great West, including Colorado, Utah, Montana, &c. There were loaded at this place, 4,480 wagons, drawn by 7,310 mules, and 29,720 oxen. To control and drive these trains, an army of 5,610 men was employed. The freight taken by these trains amounted to 27,000 tons. Add to these authenticated accounts, the estimated business of the other shipping points, and the amount is somewhat astounding. Competent authority estimated the amount of freights shipped during that season from Kansas City, Leavenworth, St. Joe, Omaha and Plattsmouth, as being fully equal, if not more than was shipped from Atchison, with a corresponding number of men, wagons, mules and oxen. Assuming these estimates to be correct, we have this result: During 1865, there were employed in this business, 8,960 wagons, 14,620 mules, 59,440 cattle, and 11,220 men, who moved to its destination, 54,000 tons of freight. To

accomplish this, the enormous sum of \$7,289,300 was invested in teams and wagons, alone.

But to return to the river, and leave facts and figures for something more interesting. "But," says the reader, "Ain't the Platte River a fact?" Not much, for at times, after you pass above Julesburg, there is more fancy than fact in the streams. In 1863, teamsters were obliged to excavate pits in the sand of the river-bed before they could find water enough to water their stock. Again, although the main stream looks like a mighty river, broad and majestic, it is as deceiving as the "make up" of a fashionable woman of to-day. Many places it looks broad and deep; try it, and you will find that your feet touch the treacherous sand ere your instep is under water; another place, the water appears to be rippling along over a smooth bottom, close to the surface; try that, and in you go, over your head in water, thick with yellowish sand. You don't like the Platte when you examine it in this manner. The channel is continually shifting, caused by the vast quantities of sand which are continually floating down its muddy tide. The sand is very treacherous, too, and woe to the unlucky wight who attempts to cross this stream before he has become acquainted with the fords. Indeed, he ought to be introduced to the river and all its branches before he undertakes the perilous task. In crossing the river in early times, should the wagons come to a stop, down they sank in the yielding quicksand, until they were so firmly imbedded that it required more than double the original force to pull them out; and often they must be unloaded, to prevent the united teams from pulling them to pieces, while trying to lift the load and wagon from the sandy bed. The stream is generally very shallow during the fall and winter; in many places no more than six or eight inches in depth, over the whole width of the stream. Numerous small islands, and some quite large, are seen while passing along, which will be noticed in their proper place.

The Platte River has not done much for navigation, neither will it, yet it drains the waters of a vast scope of country, thereby rendering the immense valleys fertile; many thousand acres of which, during the past few years, have been taken up and successfully cultivated.

The average width of the river, from where it empties into the Missouri to the