

their former visit, the country, if possible, appeared more arid; it by no means justified the high encomiums that we had heard bestowed upon this far-famed valley. Our expectations probably had been so much raised as scarcely to allow us to give it that credit it really deserves.

The valley of the Sacramento may include a space of one hundred and eighty miles long, by from twenty to fifty miles wide. A large part of this is undoubtedly barren and unproductive, and must for ever remain so. The part that is deemed good soil, is inundated annually, not for any great length of time, yet sufficiently long to make it unfit for advantageous settlement. The high prairie is spoken of as being in general barren, and as affording but little good pasture.

The crops are usually ripe in June, which enables the wheat and Indian corn to be gathered before the summer drought begins. There is usually a rainy season of three months, but during the year of our visit no rain had fallen; and from every crop having failed, the inhabitants had been living upon their cattle. The cattle suffered almost as much as the crops, and large numbers of them died from starvation. On this account, the inhabitants had forborne to kill their cattle for hides, believing it to be a great loss to do so, as the weight was so much depreciated as to pay little more than the labour of slaughter and preparing for market.

The variety of game in this country almost exceeds belief. The elk may be said to predominate, but there are also many bears, black-tailed deer, wolves, foxes, minxes, hares, musk-rats, badgers, antelopes, and *Ovis montana*. The wolf is reported by Dr. Marsh to be the same as the prairie-wolf of the Upper Mississippi, but not the one described by Say. Mr. Peale in his report will probably assimilate it to the small one of Oregon, with large ears. The fox is the same as the gray one of the wooded parts of the United States. According to Mr. Peale, the black-tailed deer is the only species found in this country. The *Ovis montana* has been frequently seen by Dr. Marsh; its coating is altogether hair, without any admixture of wool. No specimens were obtained for the Expedition.

The badger was seen by Dr. Pickering, who attempted to capture one; he found no difficulty in following it, as its movements were not very rapid. After passing over some hills, it made a stand; and as he approached, bristled up, but made no other threatening demonstration, and retreated backwards to its burrow. On his feigning a retreat, it came again forth and exposed itself to be fired at. Dr. Pickering wounded it; but not so much as to prevent its reaching its burrow, and so it escaped. He was satisfied by its movements, that its curiosity was