

**THE BUFFALO-  
HUNTERS, AND  
OTHER TALES**

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The Buffalo-Hunters, and Other Tales by Anonymous

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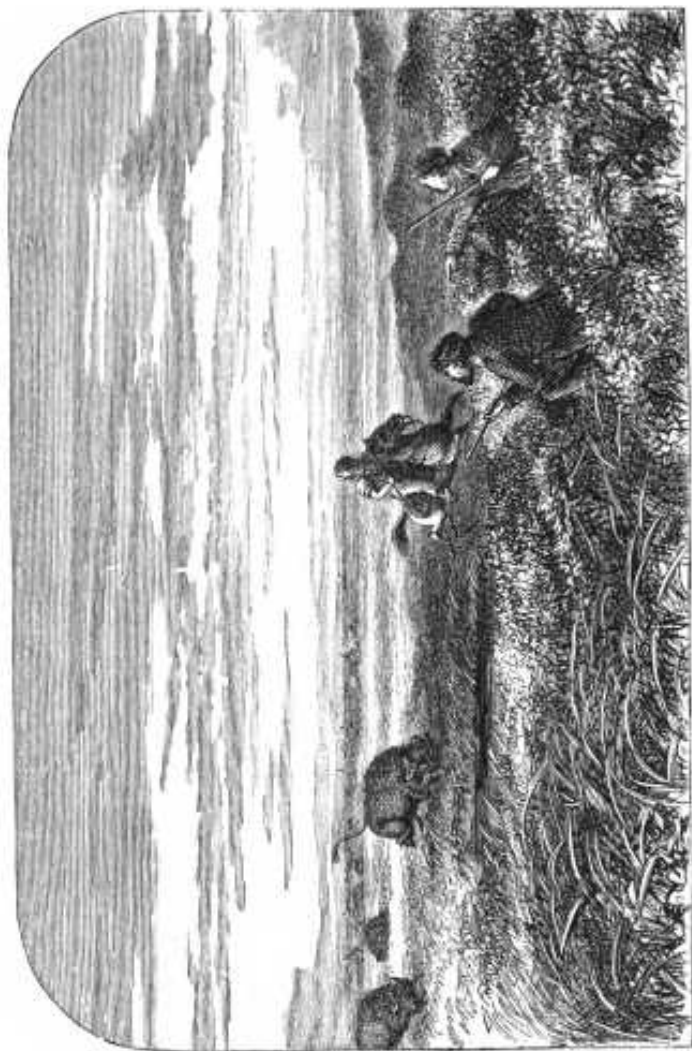
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## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
THE BUFFALO-HUNTERS.....	9
THE CONTESTED MARRIAGE.....	21
A HONEYMOON IN 1848.....	41
OLD WISDOM.....	52
QUAKER LOVE.....	63
THE MOTHER AND SON.....	78
SAYING AND DOING.....	96
CLARA BRANDON.....	115
SINGULAR CAPTIVITY.....	131
JAMES HARVEY.....	141
THE WEST INDIAN PLANTER.....	161
ESTHER MASON.....	178
SEBASTIAN LECLERC.....	196
GOOD COUNSEL BETTER THAN GOOD PAY.....	205





## THE BUFFALO-HUNTERS.

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**A**FTER wandering for several months in the deserts of Sonora, I felt reluctant to return to the restraints of city life without first visiting the Presidio of Tubac. While preparing for this journey, with its perils and fatigues, I felt a sort of regret that my frequent peregrinations had destroyed all the charm of novelty in travelling in this region; there was nothing new to be learned. But I was mistaken: there were certain phases of border life, of the struggle between civilisation and barbarism, with which I was yet to become acquainted.

I journeyed to the Presidio in company with two hunters, who were going on an expedition into the prairies; we were two days on the road, and I afterwards attended them to the San Pedro, a river a short distance from Tubac, forming the boundary of the vast plains which stretched away on the other side, in endless undulations, to the remotest horizon, only limited by the far-distant Missouri. When the hunters disappeared from my view in the tall grass, I stood for a time gazing on the landscape. A small lake lay

just in front, swarming with slimy and hideous reptiles, the sight of which attracted numbers of cranes, that flew from side to side over the muddy waters; long trains and groups of buffaloes were crossing the silent prairie beyond; others, lying down on the slopes, seemed to be overlooking their boundless territories. As if the scene could not be complete without the presence of man, a party of Indian hunters were at the moment descending the San Pedro on rafts made of bundles of reeds supported by empty calabashes, while in the distance a long line of mules, laden with silver ingots, was seen slowly advancing under the conduct of their guides. The sight of this *conducta*, with only a sufficient number of men to load and unload the animals, was a proof of our being in a primitive district: in the other provinces, a regiment of soldiers would have been required to protect the precious burden; and I turned to retrace my steps, thinking over the changes to take place in this part of the country, becoming as it is the refuge of criminals from the pursuit of the law.

After riding a few hours, I perceived that the sun was near its setting, and felt surprised at not having reached the Presidio. In a short time, however, the terrible fact could no longer be doubted: deceived by the interminable succession and sameness of green slopes, I had completely wandered from the right path. I mounted the highest eminence near me, but as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but immense savannahs without tree, house, or shelter; the river, which would have served me as a guide, was hidden by the undulating ground; and two shots which I fired produced neither echo nor reply. I was thus condemned to pass the night in these plains, over which, during the darkness, roamed objects that might well inspire