

made by "sucker" teams hauling lead from Hamilton's settlement, the smelting works of William S. Hamilton, to Galena, a distance of some forty miles. During the summer months, when the prairies were covered with their luxuriant carpets of green, people from the adjoining state of Illinois would come up into the mines, with their ox-teams of five or six or more yokes of oxen, to do all the heavy teaming, hauling the load from the furnaces to Galena, a distance of forty or fifty miles, camping out nights, and sleeping in their wagons. They brought their own provisions with them, and the prairies furnished feed for their cattle. The more frugal and hard-working men saved all the money they could. But as soon as the first frost killed the grass in the fall, they started for their home, to reappear in the spring. The people called them "suckers" because they appeared in the spring and disappeared in the fall like the sucker fish.

From Gratiot's Grove until we reached the Peckatonica, a distance of about twenty miles, we did not meet a human being. It was too early yet for "sucker" teams,<sup>1</sup> nor did we pass any settlement, house, field, or tree. What astonished us most was the utter absence of game. With the exception of a plover or a curlew, and an occasional prairie chicken, the prairie appeared as devoid of living beings as the desert of Sahara. In a few weeks later, when spring had fairly set in, a most wonderful change was manifest. The vast prairie, as far as the eye could reach, was clothed with a carpet of the richest green, interspersed with gorgeous wild flowers of brilliant hues of red, blue, and yellow, in fact of every color of the rainbow — reminding one of the garden of Eden, as our youthful fancies never fail to paint it for us. I could not then realize that in a few months the ice king would ruthlessly destroy and bury under a depth of three or four feet of snow all that glory and magnificence. Towards sundown we reached the Peckatonica, a handsome stream of clear water winding its slow and very

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning teams from Illinois.— Ed.